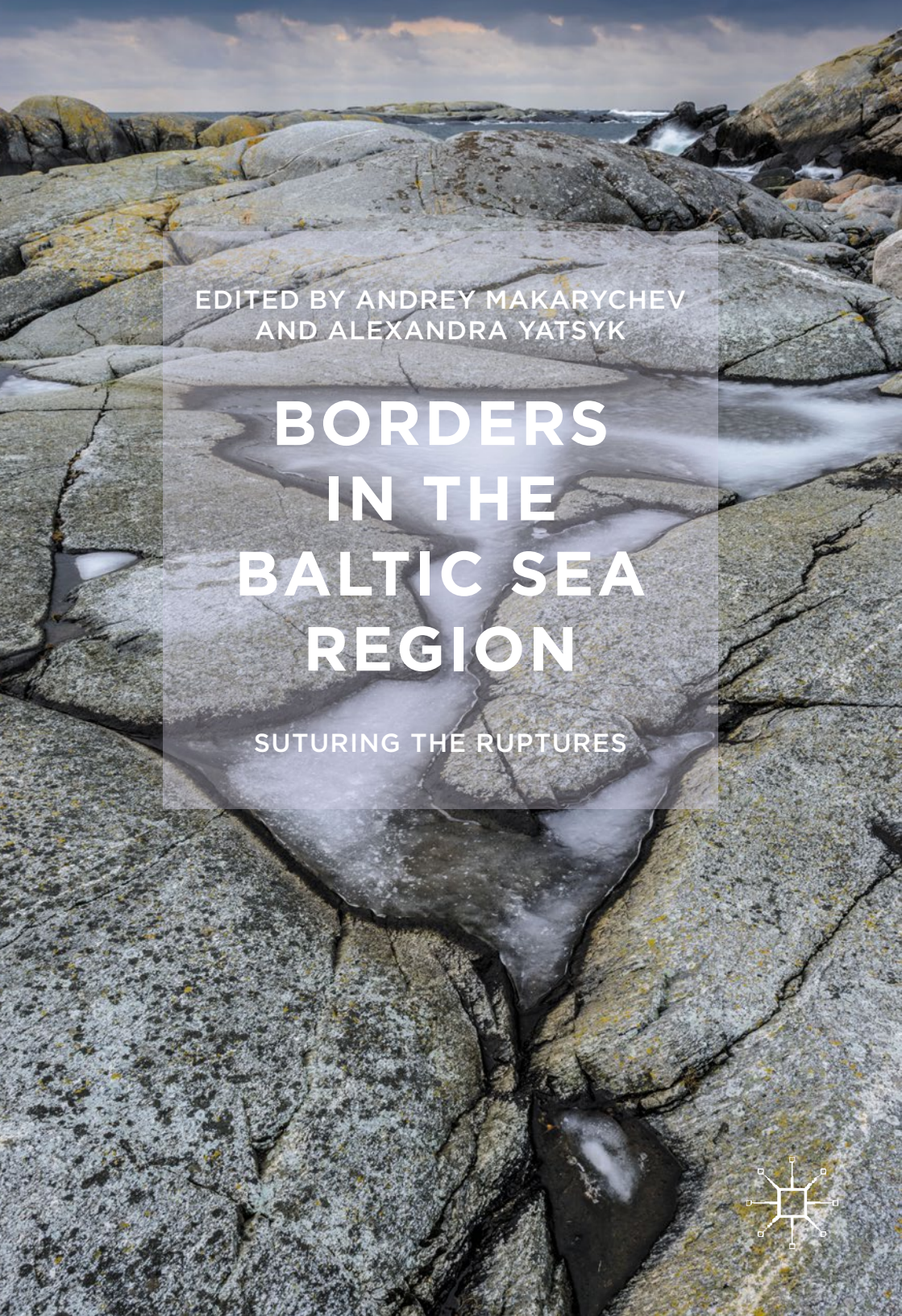
EDITED BY ANDREY MAKARYCHEV
AND ALEXANDRA YATSYK
BORDERS
IN THE
BALTIC SEA
REGION
SUTURING THE RUPTURES

Borders in the Baltic Sea Region

Andrey Makarychev • Alexandra Yatsyk
Editors

Borders in the Baltic Sea Region

Suturing the Ruptures

palgrave
macmillan

Editors
Andrey Makarychev
University of Tartu
Tartu, Estonia

Alexandra Yatsyk
Kazan Federal University
Kazan, Russia

ISBN 978-1-352-00013-9 ISBN 978-1-352-00014-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016956605

Cover illustration: © Jari Hakala / Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
The registered company address is: The Campus, 4 Crinan Street,
London, N1 9XW, United Kingdom

Acknowledgements

This book is a result of the linkage programme Borders, People, Institutions: New Trends in the Baltic Sea Region, implemented by the University of Tartu, Estonia, and Free University of Berlin between 2014 and 2016 and kindly supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. We are thankful to Professor Klaus Segbers and the staff of the Centre of East European Studies, who were the German coordinators of the project. The editors and authors are thankful to the Skytte Institute of Political Studies in the University of Tartu whose efforts of smoothing and facilitating this three-year project made it a success story. We also express our warm gratitude to Dr Olga Gulina for her strong support in the initial phase of the project.

We acknowledge the research funding (IUT20-39) from the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, the Jean Monnet project titled "The EU's engagement with Russia and post-Soviet neighbors" (#564891-EPP-1-2015-1-EE-EPPJMO- MODULE, 2015–2017), and the "EU-PREACC" (PIRSES- GA-2012-318911, 2013–2017) project, which contributed in different (administrative, academic and inspirational) ways to making this edited volume possible.

Contents

Notes on Contributors

Kjetil Duvold is a Senior Lecturer in Political Science at Dalarna University College. His research revolves around democratisation, political culture, ethnic relations and party systems in Central and Eastern Europe, with a special focus on the Baltic states.

Elizaveta Gaufman received her PhD in political science from the University of Tübingen in 2015. She is working on the intersection of political science, media studies and semiotics, combining international relations theory with other fields of study. She has published on migration, nationalism, sexuality, new media and the crisis in Ukraine.

Thomas Hoffmann is Visiting Associated Professor at Tallinn Law School at Tallinn Technical University, Estonia and a DAAD Lecturer in Law. He previously worked as an associated lawyer in an international law firm in Kiev and Berlin and as a research fellow of the Institute of East European Law in Kiel, Germany.

Aki-Mauri Huhtinen is a military professor at the Finnish National Defence University in the Department of Leadership and Military Pedagogy. His areas of expertise are military leadership, command and control, the philosophy of science in military organisational research and the philosophy of war.

Dovilė Jakniūnaitė is Associate Professor at the Department of International Relations at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University and Head of the Institute's Russia and Central Eastern European Studies Centre. Her research interests include Russian foreign policy and identity politics, border studies, security studies, Lithuanian foreign policy and international relations theory.

Angela Kachuyevski is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Arcadia University in suburban Philadelphia. Her research falls in the fields of conflict resolution and critical security studies, and focuses on divided societies, particularly conflicts involving Russian-speaking minorities in Ukraine, the Baltic states and Moldova.

Elena Kropatcheva is a researcher at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH), Germany. She holds a PhD and her research interests include international relations, European and Eurasian security policy, international security organisations, energy geopolitics, and domestic and foreign policies of Russia and Ukraine.

Thomas Linsenmaier is a PhD candidate at the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu, and a Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for EU–Russia Studies (CEURUS). His research interests revolve around international relations theory and European integration, which he combines with a regional focus on Eastern Europe.

Andrey Makarychev is Visiting Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Tartu, Estonia. His areas of expertise are political discourses, norms and identities as seen from different domestic and international perspectives. Previously, he held research and teaching positions at the Free University of Berlin (Germany), the Danish Institute for International Studies (Copenhagen, Denmark), the Centre for Conflict Studies (ETH, Zurich, Switzerland), and George Mason University (Fairfax, Virginia, USA).

Klaus Segbers directs the Centre for Global Politics at the Free University of Berlin, Germany. He also has served as Professor of Political Science, International Relations and East European Politics at the Free University of Berlin (FUB) since 1996. Prior to that, he was a Professor of International Relations at the University of Konstanz.

Živilė Marija Vaicekauskaitė holds master's degree in European Studies from the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University. Her academic interests are transatlantic security cooperation, EU foreign policy and political economy of European integration.

Anastasia Vishnevskaya is currently working on her PhD about regional development and minority policies in Russia and China at the Freie Universität of Berlin and the Renmin University of Beijing. Her areas of interest are nation-building, rights of ethnic minorities and post-Soviet development of Central Asia. She holds a scholarship from the German Hans-Seidel-Stiftung (Hans Seidel Foundation) and is based in Berlin.

Alexandra Yatsyk is Visiting Researcher at the Centre Russian and Eurasian Studies (University of Uppsala, Sweden) and Head of the Centre for Cultural Studies of Post-Socialism (Kazan Federal University, Russia). Her research interests include representations of post-Soviet national identities, sports and cultural mega-events, Russia's protest art and biopolitics.

List of Tables

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Baltic Sea Region—Scars, Seams and Stitches

Andrey Makarychev and Klaus Segbers

This book is a result of a networked project designed and implemented by the Centre for East European Studies at the Free University in Berlin and the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Science at the University of Tartu. The research agenda that gave a start to this book in 2014 focused on a variety of bordering and de-bordering practices unfolding in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), an area that is usually considered to be the most successful example of region-building in a wider Europe. In the literature, the BSR is often referred to as a model for other regions-in-the-making, located at the intersection of the EU and Russia, and a possible source of spill-over effects and sharing of best practices with other regions constituting the EU–Russia common neighbourhood.

The contributions to this volume stem from the general assumption that the BSR represents a socially constructed interface where not only the West and the East meet but also where Nordic Europe interlaces with continental Europe. The region develops under the strong influence of major international actors, the EU and NATO, who play crucial roles in

A. Makarychev (✉) • K. Segbers
Free University Berlin, Berlin, Germany

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_1

shaping security practices and the institutional contours of the region. It is not incidental that quite a number of border-crossing initiatives (the Northern Dimension, the German–Polish–Russian "trialogue", the Nord Stream and the Eastern Partnership) in one way or another have their "Baltic roots". Apparently, the BSR possesses a meaningful experience of conflict mediation, prevention and resolution, and its different actors utilize and take advantage of socialization mechanisms engrained in the Baltic Sea regional project.

The BSR is exposed to two significant challenges that partly create opportunities. The first huge challenge is the new global landscape emerging after the end of the East–West conflict, particularly after 1989. The traditional international system based on nation states is being replaced by new constellations characterized by relatively new actors (for instance, transnational corporations, banking and financial agencies and networks of non-governmental organizations), but also traditional administrative units which are now growing into a separate category of actors on their own, like global city regions. Policies are more than ever driven by mass media and social networks, which explains new, evolving policy styles, which are significantly more short-lived and inconsistent than what was seen in previous periods. Global flows are gaining ever more relevance in the fields of capital, human mobility (migration), content (information and entertainment) and resources, all of which are crossing borders with limited state capacities to control them. Gaps between the expectations of people and the capabilities of governments have become a serious policy issue, exacerbated by an increasing number of failing or failed states. In theory, such an environment could also stimulate activities in new, or newly emerging regional spaces, like the BSR.

The second big challenge is related to a number of partially overlapping crises in Europe, of which the Baltic area is a part and thus cannot avoid exposure to negative fallout. These are the unresolved Euro-banking crisis; massive and broadly uncontrolled immigration from the Middle East and Northern Africa; a recidivist and partly home-grown terrorism; an assertive and rule-averse Russia; the British exit ("Brexit") from the EU, with potential consequences for Scotland and Catalonia; and a rising far-right populism in Europe and in the United States. These areas of crises are interlinked and partly mutually reinforcing. The established European agencies for addressing these problems are mostly inefficient or even invisible. The younger generation of Europeans takes all

the positive features of integration for granted, not perceiving the importance of defending or re-establishing the European project. The EU will most probably survive these cataclysms, but in a different form, with a rather diverse portfolio of different integration fields and various degrees of integration. This will encourage new forms of cooperation, and here there may be a chance for a stronger Baltic cooperation network. On regional and local levels, cooperation may be enabled and it may lead to "easier" solutions than one might see on the national level. But, at the same time, as local ties do not always depend on friendly historical legacies and potential economic and social patterns of competition, they may also be more sensitive to conflicts and to cultural narratives perhaps not as conducive to closer cooperation.

Based on different case studies, the chapters collected in this volume contribute to the conceptualization of the BSR as a peculiar borderland case; for example, it is a complex region formed and located at the intersection of different cultural, ethnic, religious and civilizational flows and poles. As such, it has an international visibility, and preconditions are created for mobility of populations and for the flow/exchange of cultures. The borderland location is conducive to the different articulations of regional and national identities, often containing strong anti-imperial (and, in a wider sense, anti-hegemonic) potential. Many of the authors of this volume deem that political subjectivities of international actors are inseparable from the dynamics of Self–Other relations and, concomitantly, from their border-making and/or border-unmaking potential. Analysis of political borders is closely related to the political goals and instruments applied by each party, as opposed to the concepts of technical instrumentality, administrative management logic or legal compliance. Political borders, unlike geographic ones, are intended or unintended products of actors' discourses and policies and are shaped by both broad issues (such as the state of bilateral or multilateral partnerships) and specific matters (for example, the dynamics of a visa regime or contentions over energy market regulations).

Since borders are the most important element of any nation's political distinction, regional identity is neither (pre)given nor is it a fixed policy platform, but rather a set of intersubjective characteristics. Thus, issues of political borders pop up each time in every discussion of international socialization, for instance, the dynamics of rapprochement and alienation between key actors and the correlation of conflict and cooperation in a

relationship between them. Borders are key elements of identity-making, so any attempt to differentiate identities is a political move, grounded in symbolizing and valorizing dissimilarities, as opposed to erasing them.

However, the latest developments in the BSR suggest we should not overrate the capabilities of regional institutions to mitigate conflicts that normatively and politically divide neighbouring countries. It is very likely that the institutional forms of Baltic Sea regionalism will develop under a heavy influence of EU–Russia splits and disagreements over the core issues of pan-European significance, and that many of the BSR countries will pursue their individual—rather than regionally coordinated—strategies towards Russia. Consequently, the gamut of issues that affect the BSR will represent a peculiar combination of a networking type of regionalism (promoted by the EU) and great power management practices (favoured by Russia). As the most recent developments demonstrate, militarization of the region is one of the unfortunate yet possible scenarios spurred by developments in Ukraine.

The key controversy of Baltic regionalism can be explained by the very structure of the BSR-building project, which from the outset was conceived to attain two major political goals. One was to provide the basis for consolidating regional cooperation between partners who share a similar normative background, and who are eager to pool resources for the sake of building a coherent regional society. Key drivers for change in this region-making process were the EU and Nordic countries, who were instrumental in successfully integrating the three Baltic states in European and Euro-Atlantic institutions and in spreading EU-based normative and institutional standards across the region. The EU enlargement in 2004 could be seen as having successfully fulfilled this goal.

The second goal for the BSR was to engage Russia through a number of institutional bridges, such as city-to-city partnerships, transborder Euro-regions, and the Northern Dimension programme. The chief idea was to create a cohesive space for the interaction of all regional actors and thus avoid East–West divides. Recent domestic and international developments in Russia have questioned the viability of this political goal. The Russian government has become more and more centralized, thus making it difficult to involve Russian local partners in cross-border cooperation projects. The Russia-supported military insurgency in Ukraine has rung alarm bells in all European countries, making it nearly impossible for Russia not to be perceived as a security threat in

the BSR. For its part, the Russian government considers NATO's reactive policies endanger its security. This increases the security dilemma in the region and undermines possible cooperation frameworks between the EU and Russia.

While the first political goal of the Baltic Sea Region has been successful and the actors have moved to the next stage of cooperation, the second goal seems to be failing. Instead of promoting regional networking and plugging in to existing interactive opportunities, Moscow during its presidency in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) simply transposed to the regional policy various issues from discussions at the EU–Russia level (such as visa facilitation talks) and tried to impose a political agenda (such as "fighting extremism"). In some areas, BSR priorities are direct challenges to Russia's interests, such as diversification of energy sources, energy efficiency programs and new energy-saving technologies. All this raises a question of how eager and capable Russia is to associate itself with the BSR economically, politically and in the security field.

As the crisis in the Ukraine–Russia relations made clear, the institutional structures of the Baltic regionalism face negative impacts from adjacent conflict-ridden areas, which challenge the cohesion of the region and stimulate a new type of regional discourse. In the rhetoric is found the idea that the actors seek greater security and protection, and thus recycling old distinctions between political and security considerations. Recognizing the double impossibility of a fully integrated Russia and one that is altogether excluded, this book seeks to single out different strategies that regional actors in the BSR apply in relations with each other and in their regional policies. For describing these strategies some authors use the metaphors of "locking and unlocking", "construction and deconstruction", "making and unmaking", and "bordering and de-bordering"; the probability of each depends upon an unstable constellation of political discourses produced by regional actors and their communication with each other (Makarychev and Yatsyk 2014, 34–45). It is one purpose of this book to unveil the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, engagement and disengagement, and to uncover its repercussions for the BSR.

Against this backdrop, the concept of suture can be used as an academic metaphor that describes the intricacies of inside–outside interrelations and dynamics between different actors. In post-structuralist scholarship, "suture" implies "the mapping of external difference onto the inside"

(Nolan 2009, 109), or "inscription of the exterior in the interior" (Nolan 2009, 54). In the case of suture, external difference becomes internal. In academic literature there were only a few attempts to introduce the idea of the suture to the field of border studies (Kazharski and Makarychev 2015, 328–339). Mark Salter (2012, 734) defines suture "as a process of knitting together the inside and the outside and the resultant scar". Although he tends to see the suture mainly through the lens of sovereignty, in fact this is an interactive concept: "the border-crossing subject stiches him/herself into the narrative of belonging; so too does the sovereign state incorporate the subject as a border-crosser that can be accepted or rejected, defining what populations can move" (Salter 2012, 740). In this sense the characterization of the suture as "the neglected limit of politics" (Salter 2012, 740) implies its inherent propensity to define the relations of inclusion and exclusion.

Suturing might have two dimensions—temporal and spatial. In a temporal sense, the suture supposes the cementing of identity by means of recurrent references to historical experiences that serve to infuse old meanings into this identity. This is how nostalgic discourses work: they reconnect contemporary identity to its historical predecessors. Spatially, the concept of the suture can be applied to complex situations when no strict line of demarcation between competing or rival identities is possible, which gives a green light for applying this concept in the field of regional studies.

Arguably, the most important characteristic of the suture is the subject's ability to borrow meanings from outside in order to stabilize its own dispersed/dislocated identity up to the point of ideological closure, with all external elements being ousted, so that the semantic "field is neatly 'sown up'". As a result, one single subject centralizes the field and "appears to dominate and run the process" (Žižek 2012b, 155). Suture paradoxically produces an effect of self-enclosure with no need for an exterior. Therefore, the political field appears "as a naturalized organic whole" (Žižek 2012b, 157). In particular, Žižek (2012a) explains: "[Suture] became part of the deconstructionist jargon, functioning as a vague notion rather than as a strict concept, as synonymous with 'closure': 'suture' signalled that the gap, the opening, of a structure was obliterated, enabling the structure to (mis)perceive itself as a self-enclosed totality of representation.… It designated the operation by means of which the field of ideological experience

get 'sutured', its circle closed, and the de-centred structural necessity rendered invisible." (pp. 621–622).

Thus, the destination point in the suturing process is a foreclosure that is often attributed to all modern nation states with their proclivity to appropriate "the meanings of space…. [t]hey become located within particular regimes of meaning and action" (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007, XI), which might lead to the unfolding of totalizing practices with bordering effects and "a consequent effacement of internal differences and multiplicity" (Monticelli 2008, 194). The political problem starts when some "elements of the semiotic space which are not identifiable from the point of view of its self-description come to be expelled from ... this space as excessive …. What does not find a place within the structural unity of the self-description is insignificant and irrelevant: it simply does not exist." (Monticelli 2008, 195).

The tendency towards an "autonomous closure", inherent for any suturing experience, might lead to disconnections and miscommunications that, for instance, can take the form of "sclerotized dialogue, which indicates the lack of openness towards otherness" (Ponzio 2009, 143). Yet since "alterity is located inside the subject … the subject cannot become a closed totality …. The other is necessary to the constitution of the ego and its world, but, at the same time, it is a constitutive impediment to the integrity and the definitive closure" (Ponzio 2009, 142). Totalization, in whatever form it comes, is never complete and is always a trend, a tendency, which can be counter-balanced by political momentum coming from the existence of "the position of a within—outside" (Monticelli 2008, 198). "The work on the border, by rethinking the relationship between the inside and the outside … functions as an interruption of totalization" (Monticelli 2008, 176–177). This is directly related to the concept of the boundary that, against the backdrop of what was said above, appears as an ambivalent theoretical tool that can be understood, on the one hand, as an instrument of potential closure, and, on the other hand, "as the space by/in which detotalizing dialogue might take place" (Monticelli 2008, 205). A system functioning as a self-enclosed whole is impossible. Moreover, a given system can only pretend "to enclose reality in its entirety" (Monticelli 2008, 191).

Therefore, suturing denotes a specific mix of de-bordering and re-bordering under which a dispersed identity is stabilized by means of incorporating elements of a different semiotic order. Concomitantly, external

meanings are used as reference points for fixing dislocated and unstable identities. In this sense the suture is different from the foreclosure in which "the movement of difference is effaced and removed to the outside, while boundaries are traced in order for the system to be a self-contained and coherent whole" (Monticelli 2008, 177). Suture—as autocommunication—"implies appropriation of external cultural products by investing them with their own functions and meanings" (Schoenle and Shine 2006, 25), and "relies on fabricated or genuine memories shared by group members" (Schoenle and Shine 2006, 10). Likewise,

> "[It] constrains the terms of political debate, fails to provide an idiom for the discussion of actual political practice, creates or involves group identities that are largely fictive (in the sense that they lack a social reality behind them or that they are insulated from the course of world events and therefore remain stubbornly static) yet define who is to be considered a political actor, and creates rigid boundaries between group 'selves' where one could imagine much more fluid membership circulation". (Schoenle and Shine 2006, 12)

For studies in regionalism and borders the concept of the suture can be instrumental in explaining how the inside and the outside relate to each other and what effects may grow out of their interdependence. The suture characterizes dispersed, fragmented and existentially insecure identities, which borrow significant meanings (concepts, ideas) from the outside to interiorize them and thus stabilize their identities. In a radical way, suture leads to foreclosure—to a state of self-sufficiency and isolation from the outside. A good example of this has been how the EU and Russia have, mostly, effectively worked together in common regions of interest. A variety of Russia's contemporary discourses on Europe, on the one hand, seek to bind Russia to Europe (though they are interpreted differently), and on the other hand, to delink Russia's identity from the dominant European normative order and thus to disavow the indispensability of Europe not just as a mere interlocutor, but, more significantly, as a source of discursive legitimacy for Russia's European ambitions. Arguably, through defining its identity in overwhelmingly European terms and thus borrowing European vocabulary Russia slides into the self-descriptive genre of political discourse that is largely connotative with auto-communication. Russia becomes an uncooperative neighbour, even using European political language, which nicely illustrates the concept of the suture as applica-

ble for political analysis. Russia's hegemonic discourse under Putin, which is constitutively grounded in self-inflicted marginalization (Makarychev 2015), and a series of self-addressing and self-referential narratives are meant basically for a domestic audience; they have a relatively limited purchase outside of the Kremlin's regime of signification. Using analogy between political discourses and literary genres, one may characterize Russia's hegemonic discourse as narcissistic and thus introspective, introverted, self-conscious, self-reflective, self-informing, auto-referential, and auto-representational. These characteristics are conducive to the discursive "making of fictive worlds" of myths and propaganda as powerful forms of control.

This is exactly what can be used for comprehending the key controversy of the Baltic region-making project, initially bent on creating a coherent and prosperous regional society through gradual incorporation of countries of the former Soviet Union. Yet what worked with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania did not work with Russia, whose precarious status as an inner Baltic actor and its "Othering" reflects the duality of the suturing process. However, the suturing of external reality is always incomplete. It is this irreducible and inassimilable otherness of Russia that leaves "the decentred traces" inside the Baltic regional society-in-the-making. Thus, "external difference is always an internal one" (Žižek 2001, 57), which demonstrates an inherent impossibility for the region "to fully become itself" (Žižek 2001, 58).

Yet the evolution of Baltic regionalism can also be viewed as a story of suturing the region in the conception of Europe as a normative power that is destined to set standards for others, and first of all for neighbours, through spreading norms that are believed to be universally acceptable and cosmopolitan. The EU, as many authors claim, tends to see others as extensions of the European self and prefers frontiers and transition zones to strictly defined borders. Within the framework of this approach a number of border-unlocking, or border-disabling, strategies can be discussed, including ideational/normative diffusion, policy learning, fostering emulation and competition. However, a clear evidence of the limits of Europe's normative power is the example of Russia. The expectations from the early 1990s that the Russian Federation and its people could be closely associated with Europe's rules and agencies did not survive reality tests after 2011, at the latest. The offers for a "Partnership for Modernization", particularly fuelled by German interests, failed dramatically, due to very different interpretations of "modernity".

As seen through this prism, the EU–Russia dimension plays a key role in most regional contexts. The EU has its policy strategy in the region. However, cooperating with Moscow was always a difficult task for Brussels both politically and technically. This is why in this book we discuss both the EU's and Russia's policies in the Baltic Sea Region as conflictual yet interconnected. Therefore, the question of whether the EU's region-building efforts can engage Russia and what are the main obstacles to this is one of the pivotal questions for most of our authors.

It is mainly in the BSR that the EU has offered Russia partnership and mechanisms of international socialization in a regional set of institutions, with the Northern Dimension being a pioneer in this respect. Since the 1990s, Russia's North West was optimistically perceived as a peculiar region of Russia, which due to its cultural, historical and geo-economic characteristics is destined to integrate with Europe and set standards for all of Russia. With all its controversies, the Nord Stream project can serve as one of the few examples of economic compatibility between Russia and the major gas-consuming countries in Western Europe. In the same vein, with all its limitations, the Russian–Polish agreement on a visa-free border-crossing regime is a good argument for further comprehensive visa facilitation bargaining between Russia and the EU. The Russian Foreign Ministry recognized the possibilities of a facilitated visa regime in the Baltic Sea region, referring to the positive example of Russia's agreements with Norway, Poland and Lithuania. The Russian Foreign Ministry explicitly assumed that the Moscow–Warsaw–Berlin nexus is a forum for promoting regionally reached arrangements in the wider EU.

Yet paradoxically, these experiences were hardly conducive to a fruitful political dialogue. Russia proved unable to counter its negative othering through promoting its own long-term regional projects in the BSR, and it chose to compensate for the deficit of strategy with a distancing from the EU and refusing to join the EU-centred normative order. Russia's—mostly rhetorical—claims for equality in the absence of long-term alternative strategies of region-building were conducive to the reproduction on a regional level of the communication disconnects between Moscow and Brussels. Security considerations played an important role as well. Russia is fully aware that from the 1990s Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania perceived Baltic Sea regionalism as a step to EU and NATO membership. In spite of the optimistic expectations for a thicker EU–Russia convergence on regional levels, the two parties steadily keep drifting apart from each other. Identity-wise, Russia's association with the European idea, with all the

undeniable intersubjectivity of Russia–EU relations, turned out to be insufficiently strong. Moscow often claims that in the BSR, Russia faces serious problems in dealing with the EU. The Kremlin in fact accuses the EU of applying allegedly protectionist measures against Russian investment, impeding Gazprom's business and derailing, for political reasons, joint projects like the launching of a unified energy system to embrace Russia, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Russia sees EU enlargement, of which Baltic regionalism is a pivotal part, as a menace to Russian economic interests. Identity-wise, the Kremlin's intransigence stems from the Baltic states' unfriendliness to Russia and their deliberate intention to keep Russia as far away from the EU and NATO as possible. Moscow believes that the Baltic region-building narrative in the 1990s was based on a presumption of an inevitable identity clash of Baltic Europe with Russia as its "Big Other". Russia also appears to be dissatisfied with some institutional arrangements in this region. In particular, it complains that the Union of Baltic Sea States (UBSS) functions as an offspring of the EU, instead of playing a more independent role. In the meantime, Russia's expectations to use the UBSS as a platform for politically pressuring the Baltic countries to change their policies towards Russian-speaking minorities largely failed. And, certainly, Russia's references to the possibility of remilitarizing Kaliningrad as a possible response to US military plans in Eastern and Central Europe reveals the resilience of *realpolitik* logic in the Kremlin.

Instead of a gradual approximation between the EU and Russia, what is happening is an increasing de-coupling and de-coordination between those two actors. The ruling group in Moscow has a quite instrumental attitude toward inter- and transnational rules, and this policy is broadly popular in Russia. But at the same time, the future of Russia is far from certain. It has an enormous dependency on carbon-based energy sources leading to a symbiotic relationship between energy rent distribution and an authoritarian form of political governance. The dramatic drop of global oil prices and the shale gas revolution in the United States and elsewhere has affected Russia's economy, as oil and gas prices have fallen. There are huge problems in Russia with inflation, and there are social tensions in certain sectors of society. All of these problems are furthered by a long list of expensive programs, from armaments to social promises (the indexation of pensions), from the world football championship in 2018 to establishing infrastructure to and in Crimea. The current wars in Eastern Ukraine and Syria are further contracting the Russian economy.

In this book we undertake a multidisciplinary analysis of a plethora of conceptually interrelated issues binding the group of countries of the BSR. We seek to combine diverse disciplinary perspectives on myriad issues pertaining to border-crossing practices in the BSR. Political science and international relations elucidate key factors shaping state-to-state relations in this part of Europe as seen from the perspective of border management and border-crossing. Judicial analysis seems indispensable for understanding the existing legal frameworks for transborder flows, exchanges and contacts between people. Cultural and communication studies are crucial for properly comprehending the role of information flows and different media in the construction of mutual (mis) perceptions and, in the long run, identity-making, including cultural and communication barriers that affect social interactions in borderland regions.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on the reappearance of security issues as a direct effect of the crisis in Ukraine and Russia's policy towards this country, and the reaction to it in the BSR. *Thomas Linsenmaier* offers an interpretative framework for understanding recent developments in the BSR from the perspective of the English School of international relations. Seen through its lens, the BSR represents a particular subset of relations in the interplay between European and post-Soviet international societies. Baltic Sea regionalism, the conscious attempt at constructing institutions to provide for order along the Baltic rim, is heavily implicated by, and vulnerable to, dynamics occurring in the wider constellation. This is felt in the repercussions of the Ukraine crisis, which reverberates also in the BSR as cooperative frameworks are put under strain. The Baltic security constellation remains susceptible to changes at the deeper level of interstate practices. Russia's reversion to "old ways" within the post-Soviet society, and its use of coercion to change borders along with the recurrence of the practice of spheres of influence, challenges the very basis upon which Baltic Sea regionalism had been designed. By means of negative spillover, the unsettling dynamics of the Ukraine crisis are not remaining locally confined, but unfold along the overlap of the two regional societies, such as in the Baltic area. This becomes visible not least in the polarization of the inter-regional constellation in the BSR, signalling a shift in ways of "doing" security. Ostensibly, these changes indicate a (re)configuration of interstate practices. At the same time, this does not (yet) amount to a "back to the future" scenario. Transformed patterns of practice (still) remain stable within European

society. Instead, we witness a reconfiguration of the larger inter-regional interplay, which bears repercussions also for the subset of relations forming the BSR.

Elena Kropacheva in her chapter claims that the Ukrainian crisis, having become the most dramatic event in European security since the end of the Cold War, has led to the re-conceptualization of Russian–Western relations and Russia's role in Europe. She analyses the effects of the crisis on security processes in the BSR. This chapter starts with an overview of the state of affairs and patterns of cooperation, competition and conflict before the Ukrainian crisis. Thereby it examines different cooperation initiatives that increased the security and stability in the region as well as those security arrangements that shaped its borderlines. It then studies the impact of the Ukrainian crisis on these security dynamics in the BSR in terms of changing patterns of cooperation, competition and conflict, threat perceptions and overall security arrangements.

Aki-Mauri Huhtinen's chapter touches upon the ongoing debate of the past twenty-five years over the intricacies and evolution of information, which has traditionally been seen as a neutral means of enabling not only political and economic integration, but also integration in the military domain. However, the nature of the discussion changed rapidly during 2014, with experts and decision-makers increasingly emphasizing the threats implicit in the information network and within communications. Ostensibly, the Baltic states are turning into a kind of post-Cold War relay station between the United States and Russia, especially when it comes to energy production and logistics. Baltic culture, economics and information are being weaponized, and the Baltic countries are forming a rhizome of different interests that are becoming increasingly difficult to conceptualize.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing securitization of the BSR agenda, the second part of the book explores different strategies of knitting together the regional milieu through various institutional arrangements and practices of governance. *Dovile Jakniunaite* and *Živilė Marija Vaicekauskaitė* claim that the BSR is a relatively recent construct, which maintains its existence despite the lack of leadership or clear understanding of its role. One of the main drivers maintaining it was the desire to include Russia in European regional structures. However, security perceptions in the BSR have changed since the beginning of 2014. Now, any cooperation format with Russia seems improbable, and not only because of Moscow's actions

in Ukraine but also because of its general unwillingness to make compromises or concessions. Therefore, the question arises sooner or later: how it is possible to continue regional building when one of its hegemonic players is uncooperative? The chapter analyses the situation from three angles: threat perceptions (how differing views on security consolidate or divide the region); institutional design (the role of institutional constraints and the problem of leadership); and regional identity (in what sense the BSR "exists").

Andrey Makarychev and *Thomas Hoffmann* examine how the governments of Russia and Estonia tackle the whole gamut of issues pertaining to the Russian-speaking population of Estonia. They identify and unpack legal, political and security aspects of the existence and functioning of this community and deploy them in different contexts, in particular, those related to Estonia's relations with the EU, EU–Russia conflicts and the refugee crisis in Europe.

In his chapter, *Kjetil Duvold* discusses the meaning of "left" and "right" in Estonia and Latvia. The two countries stand out in a regional context in the sense that no left-of-centre parties have managed to establish themselves as parties of government. Moreover, the left/right division can be seen as effectively fused with the ethnic divisions in the sense that the majority populations tend to vote for parties of the right wing and the minority populations opt for left-wing parties. This chapter raises a question of whether this division coincides with self-placement on the left/right scale, whether it also matches differences in policy preferences, and, finally, if it may have something to do with attitudes towards the Soviet past.

Assja Vishnevskaya starts her contribution to the volume arguing that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union many integration attempts mushroomed on the post-Soviet territory. The results were not necessarily impressive. Most regional organizations remained paper tigers. Due to the variety of cultures and historical backgrounds of the newly independent states, as well as geographical proximity and distance between them, one could have expected new stronger regions (in economic, political and institutional respects) to emerge. However, it happened only in the Baltic region, which the author analyses in a comparative frame using the contrasting example of Central Asia. Economic relations between the five Central Asian countries are loose, transborder mobility is low, their political relations are spoiled by regular border conflicts, and even the need to cooperate within the framework of transborder water resources does

not facilitate cooperation. Unlike Central Asian countries, the three Baltic states have a shared common ground ever since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. They have jointly become members of the EU and NATO and share a common agenda within these organizations. The author explains the striking differences between the two geographic regions through institutions in the BSR and their stabilizing effect, and through the prism of critical geography, a discipline that ascertains that *perceptions* of geopolitical reality are not less important than "hard" geopolitical facts like landscape or water resources. How did the mutual perceptions of the national elites after independence influence the region-building projects in the two cases? How different were threat perceptions? What symbols were used in the nation-building discourses? Finding answers to these questions can help one better understand the success and failure of region-making after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The third part of the book concentrates on how BSR countries engaged with societal practices of regional and national identity-making, with a variety of different public policies of cultural representation that opened up spaces for inclusion and border-unmaking. *Alexandra Yatsyk* in her chapter seeks to uncover how Estonia after the 1990s defined itself in films, contemporary art and the Song and Dance Festival. By focusing on these spheres of national cultural production as containing different but meaningful narratives of Estonianness, she addresses the representations of ruptures and their possible sutures as particularly exemplified by debates on Estonia's Soviet past and on the Russophone population. Using the latter as conceptual "hot spots" of national identity discourse, she draws a line between hegemonic interpretations of these matters, and counter-hegemonic ones.

Elizaveta Gaufman posits that despite the fact that the EU perceives itself as a "normative power" and strives to remove boundaries within, it inadvertently creates borders against the outside. After their accession to the EU and especially to NATO, the Baltic countries are predominantly viewed in Russia as being part of the Other and adherents of "Gayropa" values. Thus, the cultural othering of the Baltic countries is not only carried out geopolitically but also in cultural terms, often employing the narratives of deviant values and alleged adherence to fascism. The latter narrative has become especially prominent after the Bronze Soldier controversy in Estonia and has been extrapolated to the other Baltic states as well. Thus, the Baltic states are increasingly associated in Russia with "pestilential Western influence".

Angela Kachuyevski draws upon the concept of identity boundaries to explore how border-locking dynamics might be transformed into border unlocking dynamics and how identity threats might be deconstructed. Her chapter begins with a brief discussion of the challenges of societal integration in Latvia before turning to outline the analytical framework. She draws upon the concept of societal security and securitization theory to capture how and why issues typically seen as belonging to the minority rights and human rights fields have been recast as existential threats to the Latvian state. The chapter then touches upon identity boundaries as an analytic tool to assess how the intersubjective process of boundary construction is challenged by regional politics but opens up possible avenues for greater inclusion on a domestic level.

References

Kazharski, Aliaksei, and Andrey Makarychev. 2015. Suturing the Neighborhood? Russia and the EU in Conflictual Intersubjectivity. *Problems of Post-Communism* 62(6) (November–December): 328–339.

Makarychev, Andrey. 2015. Self-Inflicted Marginalization? Illiberal Russia in Search for Its Own Reality. Barcelona: *Notes Internacionals CIDOB* 121.

Makarychev, Andrey, and Alexandra Yatsyk. 2014. (Un)locking Political Borders: Implications for EU-Russia Relations in Eastern Europe. *Problems of Post-Communism* 61(6) (November–December): 34–45.

Monticelli, Daniele. 2008. *Wholeness and Its Remainders: Theoretical Procedures of Totalization and Detotalization in Semiotics, Philosophy and Politics*. Tartu: Tartu University Press.

Nolan, Steve. 2009. *Film, Lacan and the Subject of Religion. A Psychoanalytical Approach to Religious Film Analysis*. London and New York: Continuum.

Ponzio, Augusto. 2009. Sign, Dialogue, and Alterity. *Semiotica* 173(1/4): 129–154.

Rajaram, Prem Kumar, and Carl Grundy-Warr.2007. *Borderscapes. Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.

Salter, Mark. 2012. Theory of the /: The Suture and Critical Border Studies. *Geopolitics* 17: 734–755.

Schoenle, Andreas, and Jeremy Shine. 2006. Introduction. In *Lotman and Cultural Studies. Encounters and Extensions*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Žižek, Slavoj. 2001. *The Fright of Read Tears: Krzystof Kieslowski between Theory and Post-Theory*. London: British Film Institute.

———. 2012a. *Less than Nothing. Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Marxism*. London and New York: Verso.
———. 2012b. "Suture". Forty Years Later. In *Concept and Form. Vol. 2: Interviews and Essays on the Cahiers Pour l'Analyse*, eds. Peter Hallward and Knox Peden, 147–168. London and New York: Verso.

PART I

Security Resurfaced: Rebordering on the Horizon?

CHAPTER 2

The Baltic Sea Region: Practicing Security at the Overlap of the European and the Post-Soviet Society of States

Thomas Linsenmaier

Introduction

The Baltic Sea Region (BSR) has long been considered a model case of a cooperative subregion at the fringes of the European Union (EU) (see Tassinari 2005). Efforts to ameliorate dividing lines along the Baltic rim date back to the Cold War, when the Helsinki process set in motion a rapprochement between East and West. In the post-Cold War period, cooperation in the area further intensified, resulting in a gradual "thickening" of the institutional framework. Successively, myriad cooperative platforms were established, which together form the substrate of BSR regionalism. With consequent rounds of EU enlargement, the Baltic Sea has effectively become an "internal EU sea" (Gänzle 2011, 1)—with one important exception, the Russian Federation. The presence of the latter is consequential as, by means of incorporating Russia, the BSR spans across the regional divide and incorporates an element of (EU-)Europe's "outside". In other words, the BSR is located at an overlap of two regional international societies, the European regional international society and

T. Linsenmaier (✉)
Johan Skytte Institute of Political Science, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_2

a post-Soviet regional international society (Gänzle 2011, 12–16), with Russia being the sole interlocutor of the post-Soviet society in the BSR.[1]

Hence, the political dynamics in the area need to be understood before consideration of the background of the cross-regional character of the BSR. The following discussion explicitly does this by investigating ways in which an external event, the unfolding of the Ukraine crisis, reverberates in the Baltic Sea area. Under the impression of the Ukraine crisis, and Russia's assertive role in particular, BSR regionalism has come under strain, accompanied by a readjustment of the security constellation in the area (see Etzold and Steinicke 2015). The negative security dynamics instilled by the Ukraine crisis have spilled over from the geographic theatre of their original occurrence and have come to affect the workings of the BSR.

Yet, rather than indicating a "back to the future" scenario (Mearsheimer 1990; Rynning 2015) in the BSR, both phenomena it is argued are derivative of a normative disconnect, and more precisely the *actualisation* of this disconnect in practice at the deep structural level. Rather than shifts in the balance of power or the mutual (in)compatibility of identities, it is the underlying configuration of international practices—of "primary institutions" in the conceptual vocabulary of the English School of international relations (IR)—that assumes analytical centre stage. Seen in this light, the repercussions of Russia's conduct within the post-Soviet space do not (at least not yet) amount to structural change. Rather, Russia practising war, a practice that has been eliminated from the repertoire of practices *within* the European society, made visible a more enduring normative rupture, the divide between the two regional societies at the deep structural level. Muted for much of the post-Cold War period, this rupture (re)gained political salience when, under the impression of the Ukraine conflict, prevailing ambiguity over Russia's normative outlook was resolved. The dynamics currently displayed in the area, arguably derivative of this enduring "gap", then put on display the failure of the institutional framework, despite having facilitated a degree of interstate cooperation, to generate desired socialisation effects.

Utilising the conceptual apparatus of the English School, this chapter contributes to understanding current developments in the BSR, by devising an interpretative framework within which the BSR can be fittingly approached—perhaps more fittingly than what the conceptual language of much mainstream IR allows for. What is required in order to apprehend the seemingly sudden shifts of dynamics in the BSR, I contend, is concep-

tual (re)description—or a devising of a more appropriate vocabulary. In this way, the present effort ties in with the more empirically driven contributions to this volume.

At the same time, by applying the English School framework to the BSR, the chapter contributes to current debates within the English School (see Buzan 2014) and its regional strand in particular (see Buzan 2014, 180–181). Approaching the BSR through the regional international society lens brings into view the *theoretical* consequences of taking seriously the regional level in English School theorising. It illustrates how the dynamics within one regional international society —more specifically, "Russia's 'deniable' intervention in Ukraine" (Allison 2014)—reverberate in the interplay between regional international societies—here the interplay between the post-Soviet and the European regional society. The discussion highlights how conditions at the deep structural level, in the case of the BSR structural heterogeneity deriving from its location at the intersection of two regional societies, inform phenomena occurring at the surface-level of international society, such as regionalism and, crucially, also security. On this basis, the (so far neglected) role of ambiguity is highlighted as a factor in the creation and maintenance of cooperative frameworks. In the same vein, the primacy of international society over security is (re)asserted, putting forth the argument "international society first, security second".

The international society perspective is opted for, since counter to realism it provides for a social reading of international politics and thereby eschews the inescapability of a "back to the future" scenario on the European continent. At the same time, against IR constructivism, the English School perspective avoids the actor-centeredness of identity research and the danger of arbitrariness it entails.[2] With an emphasis on primary institutional analysis, English School theory, while sociological in spirit and relational in outlook, remains firmly structural. Rather than the play of identities itself, it focuses on the underlying deep structural conditions that make possible certain identities in the first place.[3]

The remainder of the chapter first introduces the English School's conceptual apparatus, in particular, its take on the regional level, placing the concept of regional international society centre stage. Next, it consequently elaborates on the relationship between deep structural level ("primary institutions") and surface level phenomena such as regionalism (defined in terms of "secondary institutions") or international security. The conceptual framework is then deployed to locate the BSR at the inter-

section of the European society on the one side and the post-Soviet society on the other. The fourth section turns towards regionalism and the security constellation in the BSR, two surface-level phenomena that remain dependent upon (and indeed vulnerable to) developments at the deep structural level, such as the external shock triggered by the Ukraine crisis. The chapter closes with a reflection on the implications of approaching the BSR through the English School regional lens and points to potential lessons the BSR holds for English School theorising.

The English School at the Regional Level

Spurred by Buzan's (2004, 205–227) initial contribution, a vital strand of scholarship has developed within the English School that investigates the place and role of the regional level in English School theory (for an overview, see Buzan 2014, 180–181). Paramount to this endeavour is the transfer of the concept of international society to the regional level, to define the contours of *regional* international society.

Following Buzan, regional international societies here are understood as "sub-global manifestations of social structure" (Buzan 2004, 206). A regional international society is distinctive, and can be distinguished, analytically, from its outside by means of structural, that is, primary-institutional, differentiation. Primary institutions in turn are understood as "durable and recognised patterns of shared practices rooted in values held commonly by the members of interstate societies" (Buzan 2004, 181). They are, in other words, the fundamental practices of international society, such as diplomacy, war, international law, the great powers, and the balance of power.[4] If international society can be thought of as a "web of sociality", primary institutions can be pictured as the threads providing the web with pattern and texture.

In English School theorising, primary institutions are furthermore distinguished from secondary institutions (see Buzan 2004, 167–176, 181–182; 2014, 16–17). Whereas primary institutions constitute the deep structure of international society, secondary institutions materialise as surface level phenomena such as international regimes or organisations which, crucially, remain predicated on developments at the deep structural level. The "by design" construction of secondary institutions stands in contrast to the evolutionary character of primary institutions (Buzan 2004, 167). BSR-specific examples of secondary institutions are the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), Vision and

Strategies Around the Baltic Sea (VASAB), the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), or the EU's Northern Dimension, which in conjunction form the secondary institutional substrate of BSR regionalism.

Regional differentiation then occurs on the basis of the presence of a primary institution that is unique to the region, or conversely the absence of an otherwise widely shared institution, or finally a regionally specific interpretation of an institution; all provide for and serve as analytical markers of regional differentiation (see Schouenborg 2013, 9; Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009, 232).[5] Yet, primary institutional differentiation alone does not by itself suffice to establish a boundary between a regional international society and its "outside". Primary institutional differentiation is not an objective category but a socially constructed category, requiring the School to develop a sensitivity for the contingency of meaning, of relations of sameness and difference. It follows that primary institutional differentiation becomes salient in and through patterns of recognition that determine the inside/outside divide of any international society (Linsenmaier 2015, 455; see also Ringmar 2014). Membership in international society, be it regional or global, is ultimately tied to recognition and therefore to ongoing processes of identity formation; the vexed question of Russia's place in, or rather its positioning *towards*, international society being illustrative in this regard (see Neumann 1996; Morozov 2015b).

Regrettably, the drawing of regional boundaries and the inside/outside dynamics this instils so far has received little attention in the scholarship on regional international societies. It can be argued, however, that not unlike the state (see Walker 1993) the emergence of regional international societies occurs with the drawing of boundaries between inside/outside (regional) international society. The boundaries of (regional) international societies are not "given", nor are they determined by some objectively discernible pattern of sameness and difference in primary institutional configurations. Rather, the boundaries of (regional) international societies are constituted by denoting Self and Other and by means of performatively enacting the Self upon the Other (see Campbell 1992).

At the same time, the delineation of inside/outside international society is not reducible to relations of identity either. The English School perspective remains distinct from, and is not subsumable under, the identity perspective. While, for example, Russia's identity may well incorporate the notion of "Europe", this identity is not—at least not fully—recognised by the members of the European regional international society. As a consequence, legitimate conduct in the relations between the European

society and Russia take the form of "practices of non-recognition" rather than "practices of recognition" (see Ringmar 2014, 447–451). On the level of practice—that is, on the level of (configurations of) primary institutions and therefore *on the level of (regional) international society*—Russia remains "outside" the European society. Capable of illuminating such a convolute positioning, the English School perspective succeeds in analytically carving out the intricacies of the inside/outside dynamics of international society.

Importantly, the "outside" is not, and analytically should not be treated as, merely adjunct to the "inside". The "outside" is *necessary*, is *constitutive* of the "inside" of international society (Ringmar 2014), regional and global alike. The relationship with the "outsiders" must be understood as *constitutive* for the European regional international society (Browning and Christou 2010; Morozov and Rumelili 2012), just as the notion of "Europe" is constitutive of—or rather, one facet of—Russia's identity (Neumann 1999). Taking into account the relationship between a regional society and its "outside" is a matter not of analytical fancy but of *ontological necessity*.

Unlike the state, however, the inside/outside dynamics triggered by regional international societies do not materialise in an equally sharp dichotomy. Regions do not, due to their ontological status as second-order societies, form a similarly hegemonic identity.[6] Rather than replicating the bordering practices of the state, regional societies empirically overlap along borderlands such as the BSR, making the latter a locus of boundary-drawing, of border-making and unmaking, between the European and the post-Soviet regional international society (see Makarychev and Yatsyk 2014). In this way, regional international societies remain closely entangled with their "outside", with other regional societies. The inescapability of the "Other within", the impossibility of fully expelling the "outsider" given its constitutive necessity and its haunting the society at/from the fringes (see Laclau and Mouffe 1985), as exemplified by the presence of Russia in the BSR, remains a continuous source of instability. Regional international societies, like *any* society, thus remain vulnerable to the unsettling effects of the Self's contamination with the Other.

Acknowledging the role the "outside" plays for *any* international society is perhaps the most significant theoretical ramification the School's move to the regional level entails. Regional international society is not simply international society "writ small". Applying the concept at the regional level requires taking into account the necessarily open character

of regional international societies, their existence amidst a multiplicity of regional societies, and crucially the "interplay between regional international societies" (Linsenmaier 2015). Viewed through this lens, the current dynamics in the BSR need to be understood before contemplation of the background of Russia's presence in a geographic area otherwise fully enclosed within the European regional society.

Having fleshed out the conceptual contours of international society at the regional level, the following section elucidates on this basis the occurrence of surface level phenomena such as regionalism and international security. While defining the underlying conditions of possibility, the primary institutional configuration does not, however, fully determine developments but influences them in more complex ways. Conceptually grasping these linkages requires, first, clarifying the relationship between primary and secondary institutions (that is, accounting for regionalism) as a surface level phenomenon in international society. Second, the argument is then extended to the other surface level phenomenon here considered, namely international security.

Regionalism Within and Across Regional International Society

"Regionalism" here is understood as a set of institutional frameworks consciously created to facilitate interstate cooperation within a geographically confined area. Materialising through international regimes or organisations, regionalism, in the conceptual vocabulary of the English School, represents a secondary institutional phenomenon. BSR regionalism hence can be considered a cluster of BSR-specific secondary institutions, that is, secondary institutions covering all or at least a significant portion of the states located along the Baltic rim.[7]

Under the condition of regional differentiation, regionalism can serve a dual purpose. First, regionalism may come as an attempt to merely facilitate interstate cooperation (regulative effects). Second, however, regionalism can also be deployed to instigate change, or more specifically international socialisation (constitutive effects). If constructed across a regional boundary, regionalism therefore may come as an attempt to ameliorate the divide and its separating effects. Differently put, it may come as a strategy of "border unmaking" (Makarychev and Yatsyk 2014, 34), as in the Baltic Sea area, where BSR regionalism, besides facilitating interstate cooperation, is also an attempt to suture the divide between European and the post-Soviet society. Yet, the inclusion of an element of the "out-

side", institutionally enclosing Russia as the "Other within", simultaneously makes the interplay susceptible to influences emanating from the wider constellation (for example, the Ukraine crisis). As elucidated below (Makarychev and Yatsyk 2014, 17–21), these spillovers of negative security dynamics can be accounted for by the ways in which regionalism as a secondary institutional phenomenon remains predicated on and vulnerable to changes in the deep, primary institutional structure.

The relationship between primary and secondary institutions here is modelled following Spandler (2015). In Spandler's model, primary and secondary institutions are understood as two "distinct constitutive layers of international society" (Spandler 2015, 617) that interact with each other through "vertical linkages" and, mediated by practice, in this way bring about stability and change.

Top-down secondary institutions impinge on the deep structure, comprised of primary institutions, by informing practice. While mostly working to the effect of perpetuating stability (Spandler 2015, 214–217), secondary institutions nonetheless can also function as a site of change, leading to the transformation of practice (Spandler 2015, 617–621). For example, they may work as a site of socialisation, facilitating convergence of patterns of practice. It is the latter, the transformative facet of secondary institutions, which underpins many of the cooperative frameworks in the BSR, particularly those purposefully designed to span the boundary between an institutionally EU-centric European society and its changing "outside", Russia more specifically.

Bottom-up secondary institutional frameworks are in turn conditioned by the deep structural level and "to a certain extent … must reflect the meanings inherent in prevalent primary institutions" (Spandler 2015, 617). Secondary institutions must, in other words, be "in tune" with the underlying primary institutional structure. BSR regionalism in this sense can be regarded as predicated on, first, the primary institutional configuration at the level of deep structure and, second, congruence of membership at the deep level (that is, of regional international society) and at the surface level (that is, of international regimes and organisations).

Change then occurs either incrementally through endogenous dynamics or as the result of external shocks. The latter take shape as "[m]ajor wars, crisis, and fundamental power shifts," or "changes at the global level of international society" (Spandler 2015, 619). These externally induced shocks resonate within (regional) international society by creating "discursive contexts in which contradictions become plainly apparent

and can be openly addressed" (Spandler 2015, 618). For Spandler, having in mind the constellation *within* international society rather than between regional societies, this means bringing into the open horizontal contradictions between primary institutions, or vertical contradictions between primary and secondary institutions *within one and the same configuration*. Yet, when viewed through the regional lens, the upsetting of patterns of practice does not necessarily follow from *change* occurring elsewhere in international society. Instead, an external shock may merely make visible an *already existing* normative rupture *between* regional societies. It may expose how nominally one and the same primary institution acquires different meaning in different regional contexts: its "polysemy" (Costa-Buranelli 2015) *in practice*. The effect of an external shock then is to make visible, and therefore politically salient, regional differentiation.

The upshot of this is that the way an external shock reverberates within a given structural context crucially depends on the prevailing primary institutional configuration it impinges upon; notably, whether it is a homogeneous (intra-regional) or heterogeneous (cross-regional) structural context, that is, whether it is located *within* or *between* regional international societies. Impinging on a heterogeneous structural context such as the BSR, an external shock may merely work to the effect of resolving ambiguity that had previously glossed over differences in meaning.

Given that secondary institutions require a "fitting" basis in the underlying primary institutional configuration, the creation and maintenance of secondary institutions across regional boundaries is predicated on their pluralist capacity and their capacity to allow for a degree of ambiguity and to accommodate a certain "play" of meaning. As social practices, primary institutions do not have an essential meaning but are inscribed with meaning in and through discourse. The polysemy of primary institutions across regional contexts requires secondary institutional frameworks spanning across regional boundaries to somehow accommodate this overflow of meaning. Ambiguity, understood as a condition allowing for the multiplicity of meaning, thereby works as a facilitating factor. In fact, cross-regional secondary institutional frameworks can be put in place *because of* a certain degree of ambiguity, *not despite* it. *Within* (regional) international society, secondary institutions may well reflect temporarily fixed (though not "inherent") meanings inscribed to prevalent primary institutions. *Across* regional international societies, however, such commonality of meaning cannot be presumed. This predicament is important, considering that most (indeed the vast majority) of secondary institutions span across mul-

tiple structural contexts and hence remain vulnerable to developments (for example, changes or modifications in the meaning of primary institutions) occurring at the deep structural level.

The *actualisation* of practice and the accompanying fixation of meaning—the transformation of an "element" into a "moment" of discourse (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 105)—induced by an external shock effectively resolves ambiguity. Bringing differences of meaning into the open, an external shock lays bare the essential lack of what was previously believed to be the "common grounds" upon which secondary institutional frameworks could be constructed, the essential lack of commonality at the level of primary institutions. Making visible, and therefore politically salient, regional differentiation, an external shock then reverberates in a cross-regional constellation by shattering the very basis for cross-regional secondary institutions, with the effect of putting these cooperative frameworks under strain.

As will be argued, the Ukraine crisis confronted the BSR as such an external shock, triggering the spillover of negative security dynamics from the post-Soviet society into the BSR. While the coming under strain of BSR regionalism can be accounted for by the resolve of ambiguity at the primary institutional level and by regional differentiation subsequently becoming salient, the ensuing polarisation of the security constellation in the Baltic Sea area requires further clarification of the ways in which security in international society is conditioned by the underlying configuration of primary institutions.

Security in (Regional) International Society

The analytical emphasis on configurations of primary institutions in accounting for BSR regionalism, in principle, also extends to the second facet of BSR dynamics here considered: dynamics of international security. From an English School point of view, theorising the relationship between the deep structure of international society and surface-level phenomena in international society, and I contend both security and regionalism to be instances of surface level phenomena, carries wider implications, exceeding 'low' politics and extending to the realm of 'high' politics of international security (see also Buzan 2015; 2014, 181–185).

Patterns of amity and enmity, "the structure of international security" (Buzan and Wæver 2003), similarly to regionalism, materialise on the basis of configurations of primary institutions. "Security", if understood not as

"given" but as a socially constructed category, indeed as patterns of securitisations (Buzan et al. 1998), is shaped by and remains implicated by deep structural conditions. As suggested by Buzan (2015, 132–134), primary institutions can be regarded as providing the "normative framing of securitization". Securitisations are, in other words, not entirely free-floating and they are not performed in a normative vacuum but instead are performed within a normative context in the absence of which securitising moves would be neither meaningful nor socially consequential. Securitisations, if they are to succeed, need to link up with existing structures of meaning; they need to draw on discursive resources available in international society. And it is precisely primary institutions that "set the normative framework that either facilitates or obstructs particular securitizations" (Buzan 2015, 132). Patterns of securitisation in the BSR therefore can be expected to diverge: the members of the European society perform securitisations upon the basis of the primary institutional configuration of the European society and Russia performs its securitisations on the basis of the post-Soviet primary institutional configuration.

Rather than being determined by the distribution of material capabilities, security in international society, particularly denoting "the vulnerable in international society" (Clark 2013), that which is to become the "referent object" of securitisation (Buzan et al. 1998, 36–40; Buzan 2014, 185), and what counts as a threat in turn, are contingent categories. Similarly, the ways of countering the threat—legitimate practices of "doing" security (see Adler and Greve 2009)—derive from the deep structural level of primary institutions. Whether security as one of the elementary goals of social life (Bull 1977, 4) is pursued by means of great power management, alliances, balance of power, war or, indeed, alternative modes of security governance, such as the practice of security community (Adler and Barnett 1998; Adler 2008), depends on the prevailing configuration of primary institutions in (regional) international society, and more specifically the presence of any particular practice functionally geared towards the attainment of security.

Approached in this way, international society or regional instances thereof is prior to the structure of international security; regional international society is prior to regional security complexes (cf. Buzan and Wæver 2003).[8] The presence of two distinct regional societies in the Baltic Sea area (see below, pp. 12–16) defines the security constellation in the area. While the succinct unfolding of security dynamics along the inter-regional divide may well be viewed through the lens of regional security complexes, the evolution of the current security constellation in the BSR, as well as

along the larger overlap of the European and the post-Soviet regional society, needs to be understood with regard to prevailing conditions at the deep structural level, that is, on the basis of the primary institutional configuration of (or rather the interplay *between*) the two regional international societies.

This reading of international security poses a challenge to conventional English School theorising. Understanding security in international society as discursively constructed presupposes, ontologically, the availability of the discursive resources deployed in the performance of a securitising move. Yet, with the discursive resources being made available by primary institutional configurations, discourse (or differently put the deep structure of international society) *precedes* securitisation. If accepted, this claim is consequential as it questions the conventional account of the emergence of international society. Giving priority to primary institutions means that it is not mechanistic interaction driven by, perhaps most fundamentally, security concerns that eventually leads to the formation of an international society (cf. Buzan 1993); rather, it is sociality in a fundamental way that *precedes* and defines the conditions of possibility for these security dynamics. In this sense, Buzan's argument is put upside down: discourse, or differently put, primary institutions come first, security second.

While considerations of security in international society undoubtedly open up a wide field, the main aim here was merely to establish the linkage between the deep structural level of international society and security as a surface level phenomenon in international society; indeed, to assert the primacy of the former over the latter. It follows that the evolving security constellation in the BSR, similarly to BSR regionalism, needs to be understood before the background of the interplay between the European and the post-Soviet regional international societies. Both surface level phenomena are implicated by the deep structural level, that is, by configurations of primary institutions.[9] The latter therefore gains analytical primacy when considering current developments in the BSR.

Locating the BSR at the Intersection of the European and the Post-Soviet Society

Having defined the conceptual framework, the following section puts forward an English School reading of the political dynamics currently displayed in the BSR. It begins by locating the BSR at the overlap of the European and the post-Soviet society, which means to distinguish the two

regional societies on the basis of their diverging configurations of primary configurations. While a comprehensive primary institutional analysis of the European and the post-Soviet society is beyond the scope of this chapter, it instead singles out for closer inspection those primary institutions that are most prevalent in the light of the present concerns with BSR regionalism (that is sovereignty, international law) and security dynamics (that is war) in the Baltic Sea area (for a discussion of the practice of borders, see Vishnevskaya, this volume). The aim of this section therefore is merely to substantiate the initial claim that there is differentiation in the configuration of primary institutions, which then locates the BSR at the intersection of the two regional societies.

The European Regional International Society

Present day European regional international society, not least due to its highly solidarist character, is perhaps the least disputed instance of a regional international society. Within the European society the reinterpretation of a number of primary institutions (see Diez et al. 2011; Diez and Whitman 2002) has had such a profound transformative impact on the conduct of interstate relations that, as a consequence of this "domestication", the very character of European politics as international politics today can be questioned.

"Inside"—that is *among the members of*—the European society, war has ceased to be a legitimate practice in the conduct of interstate relations. The primary institution of war, in other words, has been eliminated from the European configuration of primary institutions and is no longer part of the repertoire of practices of the European society.[10] War has become "unthinkable" in the relations between "European" states. In terms of security practice, the European society can be regarded as an instance, perhaps the most developed one, of a security community (Wæver 1998; Adler and Barnett 1998).[11] Note however, that whereas war has been eliminated "inside" the European society, war as an institution persists in the conduct towards the extra-regional "outside". Here, the inside/outside distinction becomes decisive. War, as a security practice in general (see Buzan 2014, 182–184), is practiced differently "inside" than it is practiced towards the "outside" of international society (see also Pejcinovic 2013). Alongside the (non)practice of war, the balance of power has also been radically transformed within the European society. Rather than balancing material power, the members of the European society today—when inter-

acting with other members of the European society—are enmeshed into the "power politics of identity" (Bially-Mattern 2001). Similarly, alliance politics in the European society and patterns of alignment are no longer driven by the distribution of material capabilities but by the "distribution" of identities (see Barnett 1996). While this presents but a crude insight into the security practices of the European society, the elimination of war as a fundamental practice of "doing" security is key. Besides war, other practices related to security have also been transformed, reflecting the clustering of—and therefore the cascading of change in—primary institutions. Having replaced the practice of war with another mode of "doing" security, the European society marks itself off as a "zone of peace" from the wider international contexts, including the post-Soviet society, by the absence of the institution of war.

Turning towards the structural basis for BSR regionalism, the EU can be initially taken as a secondary institutional proxy for extrapolating the primary institutional configuration underpinning interstate cooperative frameworks within the European society (Diez et al. 2011; Diez and Whitman 2002). Most centrally, within the European society, the primary institution of sovereignty has been fundamentally transformed, the practice of "modern" sovereignty giving way to the "pooling" of sovereignty as the "post-modern" variant of the practice (Diez et al. 2011, 126–127; Ruggie 1993). Not least due to this reinterpretation of sovereignty in the context of European integration towards a "post-modern" understanding, non-interference is also understood and practiced less restrictively. Within the European society, practices of "interference" are bound to considerations of legitimacy. Crucial in this respect is the voluntary, lawful character of any act of "interference" and, to put it bluntly, the exclusion of the use of military force as a legitimate means deployed for this purpose. Accompanying the "domestication" of interstate relations within the European society has been a steady bolstering of its legal framework, manifest in the constitutionalization of the EU legal order.[12] Within the European society, the institution of international law has been transformed into the *acquis communitaire*, presupposing "the acceptance of supranational law by the member states" (crucially, supremacy and direct effect of European law) and being "explicitly solidarist in its content and intentions" (Diez et al. 2011, 128).

With the gradual expansion of the European society since the end of the Cold War, notably through rounds of northern and eastern EU enlargement, most of the Baltic Sea area has effectively become internalised to the

European society. As a consequence, international politics in the area, both in terms of interstate cooperation as well as in terms of security dynamics, is shaped to a large extent by the configuration of primary institutions that make Europe "post-modern". It is the presence of Russia, however, that prevents the dynamics in the BSR from being exhaustively captured in terms of—and importantly therefore also *on* the terms of—the European society; with Russia as the "Other within", the BSR acquires the status of a borderland located between the European and the post-Soviet regional society.

Russia as the "Outsider Within": "Outside" the European Society, "Inside" and Projecting the Post-Soviet Society to the BSR

The positioning of Russia within, or rather *towards*, the European society is contentious, and historically it has been so, and as such it has sparked much debate. Historically, featuring at the fringes of the European society (Neumann 1996, 2011; Watson 1984), Russia during much of the twentieth century moved to the core of a Soviet-led regional society (see Schouenborg 2012, 141–145) until, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the breakup of the "Eastern bloc", it once again found itself in, and increasingly retreated towards, a position of being semi-peripheral to the European society and indeed the Western-centric global international society (see Morozov 2015a, b). Essential for the present discussion is that Russia never completed the transition to become a *full* member of the European society, to be "fully inside". In the context of the European society, Russia therefore remains essentially an "outsider"; yet due to the manifold ways it impinges on the workings of the European society in the BSR, it is better understood as the "Other within".

Russia's positioning within international society is not exhausted, however, by its "exclusion and (self-)exclusion" from Europe (Prozorov 2007). Russia's identity is not exhausted by its relations with Europe or "the West". Whereas Russia may be relegated to a subaltern position in its relations with "the West", at the same time it acts imperially within the post-Soviet space, a complexity which finds its apt labelling in Russia as a "subaltern empire" (Morozov 2013, 2015b). It would be plainly reductionist, and analytically obstructive, to reduce Russia to either one or the other relationship. The immediate context, Russia's embedding within the post-Soviet society, has to factor into consideration Russia's interaction with the European society. It is not an atomistic Russian Self that

enters into interaction with the "outside" (e.g., the European society), but Russia *as a member of the post-Soviet society*. Seen through the lens of regional international society, "outside" of the European international society—and more precisely located to its "East"—is where the "inside" of another, the post-Soviet regional, society begins. Russia constitutes a member of this regional society; it indeed functions as the regional core and is also structurally conditioned by this context. The regional international society perspective conceptually takes into account the post-Soviet space as a crucial element in Russia's discursive context.

The very idea of a post-Soviet regional society may be objected to on the basis of the repeated failure of regionalist initiatives (see Wirminghaus 2012), the failure to solidarise the post-Soviet space. Or, one may challenge the societal element of a post-Soviet society, claiming the absence of a shared identity or even "common interests and common values" sufficient to—as in Bull's (1977, 13) definition of international society—make the post-Soviet states "conceive themselves bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another". Yet, even if one were to agree with such a sceptic reading of the societal character of the post-Soviet space (which I do not), the claim of a post-Soviet society can nonetheless be maintained on the basis of a structural reading of international society, that is, by focusing first and foremost on configurations of primary institutions. As argued in the following, seen through this lens the post-Soviet space presents itself as a distinctive regional society and as such is analytically distinguishable from its "outside".

Much of the scepticism towards considering the post-Soviet space as a regional society is due to the unusual nature of "binding forces" (see Buzan 2004, 129–132) holding the regional configuration in place. In contrast to other regional international societies, the post-Soviet society presents itself as a regional society "by default", defined negatively by its members' unwillingness, or their inability to "escape", the post-Soviet condition and to join another society. In the absence of a strong sense of shared identity, or even common interests and values sufficient to provide the societal "glue", the post-Soviet society instead relies on a mix of coercion and calculation rather than belief. A pivotal role in providing these binding forces thereby falls to Russia. As the regional core, Russia, by practicing a sphere of influence (Hast 2014; Ferguson 2016), strongly shapes and to an extent imposes the structural conditions, the configuration of primary institutions, within the post-Soviet society.[13]

In the post-Soviet society, the primary institution of war continues to be present. Among the states of the post-Soviet society the use of force remains a legitimate practice in the conduct of interstate relations, as vividly demonstrated by the persistence of a number of protracted conflicts in the region, the Russo–Georgian war, or finally the military conflict in eastern Ukraine. The presence of war as a primary institution in the post-Soviet society is crucial as it stands in stark contrast with the prevailing ways of "doing" security within the European society. The primary institutional configurations of the two regional societies thus fundamentally differ and can be distinguished along established patterns of security practice: the (non)practice of war in particular. The salience of the institution of war as a primary institution of the post-Soviet society is furthermore reinforced by the continued prevalence of traditional balance-of-power thinking, the latter becoming manifest in, for example, Russian fears of encirclement by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or in the stand-off between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Similarly, patterns of alignment in the post-Soviet space (that is, the Collective Security Treaty Organization or GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development) suggest an enduring concern with the distribution of material power among the members of the society.

Turning towards primary institutions prevalent for regionalism, the primary institution of sovereignty is interpreted in a pronouncedly "modern" fashion in the post-Soviet society. Derived from this understanding of sovereignty, the principle of non-interference formally as well as rhetorically represents a cornerstone of relations among the states of the post-Soviet society. In spite of this, the label "modern" nevertheless may be too crude a categorisation to adequately capture the structural conditions in the post-Soviet space. The notion suggests a pluralist society, whereas the regional configuration *in practice* is not as pluralist. The practice of sovereignty within the post-Soviet space is qualified by the distinguished role of Russia. The latter, despite its advocacy of pluralist principles at the global level, does not similarly practice these principles regionally (Kaczmarska 2015). Instead, Russia unilaterally resorts to what Alderson and Hurrell (2000, 67) have called "coerced solidarism", taking form as the recurrent meddling in the internal affairs of other members of the post-Soviet society, in what Russia considers to be its "near abroad". Importantly, such interference in the post-Soviet space is neither lawful nor voluntary. Instead, it is practiced unilaterally—and unidirectionally—by Russia, either by means of open coercion, or more subtly through the strategic deploy-

ment of soft power instruments (Tsygankov 2006). When it comes to the practice of international law, Russia's "post-Soviet practice of international law" (Mälksoo 2015, 153–184), rather than aligning with the Western interpretation of the practice, creates a simulacrum thereof (Mälksoo 2015, 185), as most recently demonstrated in Russia's legal "justification" of its intervention in Ukraine (see Allison 2014, 1258–1268). Crucially, as Mälksoo (2015) points out, such an instrumental approach to international law in many ways draws on Russia's Soviet legacy and therefore can aptly be labelled "post-Soviet". Importantly, this practice of international law is not unique to Russia but, variations notwithstanding, is reflected throughout the post-Soviet space.

While admittedly no more than a superficial overview of the structural fabric of both regional societies, this illustration nevertheless provides sufficient support to claim the prevalence of regional differentiation. The two regional societies, the European society and the post-Soviet society, can be analytically distinguished on the basis of their underlying primary institutional configurations, notably by the presence or absence of the institution of war and diverging interpretations of a set of primary institutions underpinning the construction and maintenance of cooperative secondary institutional frameworks (that is, regionalism).

Cooperative Regionalism and Changing Security Dynamics Along the Baltic Rim

Having set out the primary institutional differentiation between the European and the post-Soviet society, this section turns towards the BSR to elucidate how, given its location at the intersection of two regional societies, the Ukraine crisis reverberates in the Baltic Sea area. Long considered a model case of interstate cooperation (see Tassinari 2005) and with security concerns successively muted in the aftermath of the Cold War, the BSR now, under the impression of the Ukraine crisis, has come to be in danger of destabilisation (see Etzold and Steinicke 2015).

The BSR here is regarded as a particular subset of relations in the wider constellation of the interplay between the European society and the post-Soviet society (see Linsenmaier 2015, 460–462), Russia in particular. Falling short of constituting a regional society itself, the political dynamics of the BSR nevertheless display a degree of distinctiveness, not least as a result of conscious efforts to foster interstate cooperation in the area, notably the creation of BSR-specific institutional frameworks (that

is, most centrally the CBSS, but also the EUSBSR, HELCOM, VASAB, or the EU's Northern Dimension) and, to an extent, a result of attempts at cultivating a BSR identity. As a political project of region-building, yet cross-regional in the sense of inter-societal, BSR regionalism is purposively designed rather than organically evolved. In other words, it takes form as a conglomerate of secondary institutions. As such, BSR regionalism materialises at the surface level of international society. Crucially, it thereby combines the regulative (interstate cooperation) and the socialising (constitutive) dimension of secondary institutions: the pluralist and the solidarising element of BSR regionalism, respectively.

With the expansion of the European society through successive rounds of EU enlargement, the Baltic Sea area, over time, has become almost entirely enclosed within the European society, leaving the "only major gap to be bridged … the one between the EU and Russia" (Morozov 2004, 317). Cooperation among the Baltic Sea states thus could, to a large extent, draw on the normative fabric provided by the primary institutional configuration of the European society. The EU then subsequently became the secondary institutional locus for interstate cooperation in the area (e.g., Gänzle 2011, 3, 5), at least among the members of the European society. Unsurprisingly, the increasingly EU-centric character of the BSR, culminating in the EU's devising of the EUSBSR, was met with sustained critique by the only remaining "outsider", Russia.

Russia's dissatisfaction with the progressive structuring of the BSR in and on the terms of the European society is consequential as Russia remains a significant factor in the unfolding of political dynamics in the BSR, preventing them from actually taking shape as politics "inside" the European society. The presence of Russia, which has never completed its "quest for international society" (Aalto 2007) and did not, by means of convergence of primary institutions, make the transition to eventually join the European society, upsets the workings of the European primary institutional configuration in the Baltic Sea area. As an effective "outsider", Russia prevents structural closure, and instead turns BSR dynamics into an instance of interplay between regional societies. As a consequence, the BSR remains predicated on the prevailing configuration of primary institutions at the deep structural level, that is, the salience of regional differentiation cutting across the Baltic Sea area.

In this respect it is worth highlighting that BSR frameworks were from the outset consciously designed to span across the boundary between the European society and its—changing—"outside", to ameliorate and indeed

to suture the inside/outside divide. At the same time, the cross-regional character of BSR regionalism poses a continuous challenge to the functioning and the efficiency of the secondary institutional frameworks devised for this purpose. Secondary institutions spanning the BSR do not, and due to their cross-regional character *cannot*, reflect meanings "inherent" to underlying primary institutions. Under the condition of regional differentiation, meanings remain multiple and primary institutions "polysemic".

What made possible BSR regionalism during much of the post-Cold War period, in spite of the two constitutive layers of international society being "out-of-tune", was the prevalence of an air of ambiguity about the differences in meaning that would come to constitute the boundary between the European society and its "outside". Regional differentiation at the 'Eastern' boundary of the European society was simply not actualised in practice. As a consequence, it did not become politically salient. In this way, prevailing ambiguity over *actual* meanings of primary institutions (that is, their *meaning in practice*) inside/outside the European society put in place the very conditions of possibility for BSR regionalism. In absence of normative convergence, ambiguity provided a surrogate, it compensated for the essential lack of what was believed to be—or anticipated to *become*—the "common grounds" upon which secondary institutions in the Baltic Sea area could be, and were, established. In this way, BSR regionalism is neither indicative of, nor did it bring about, primary institutional convergence. Primary institutional differentiation in the BSR—latently—endured.

Importantly, this means that the "misfit" between the two constitutive layers of international society already preceded the Ukraine crisis. This tension can be seen to account for the limited functionality of BSR secondary institutional frameworks, particularly with regard to desired socialisation effects. While BSR secondary institutions by means of their "pluralist capacity" were able to pragmatically accommodate the polysemy of primary institutions in the Baltic Sea area, that is, diverging practices and/or diverging interpretations of practices, ensuing interstate cooperation did not result in normative convergence. Russia's uncomfortable positioning within the CBSS and the persisting "gap" then became readily apparent in its 2013 presidency of the CBSS (see Makarychev and Sergunin 2013). Even those secondary institutional frameworks explicitly designed to manage the interplay, such as the EU's Northern Dimension, fell short of generating the anticipated socialisation effects—when it came to Russia.

Overall, the cross-regional dimension of BSR regionalism, in spite of the "mushrooming" of secondary institutions in the area, can therefore be characterised as "shallow", that is confined to a degree of interstate cooperation, yet without generating significant socialisation effects, even before the Ukraine crisis. Already constrained by the latently prevailing condition of regional differentiation, once the Ukraine crisis broke out BSR regionalism eventually severely came under strain, accompanied by the polarisation of the security constellation.

The Ukraine crisis then confronted the BSR as an external shock. It brought into the open and made politically salient the differentiation in primary institutional configurations. Russia's annexation of Crimea and the consequent escalation of military conflict in eastern Ukraine meant an actualisation in practice of the primary institutional configuration of the post-Soviet society. Ambiguity with regard to Russia's normative outlook was resolved as a consequence. The realisation of the normative disconnect is nicely captured in a remark by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who, commenting on Russia's actions in Ukraine, reportedly concluded "he [Putin] lives in another world" (Merkel 2014, cited in Hill 2015, 44); "within another structural context" or "primary institutional configuration", one may say, using the conceptual vocabulary presented above. Suddenly, Russia's intervention in defence of another vision of international order (Morozov 2015a, 33) became plainly visible. With Russia's actualisation of the post-Soviet configuration of practices, notably the primary institutions of war, (non)intervention, as well as its "post-Soviet" practice of international law, ambiguity over prevailing understandings has been resolved. Making manifest what previously had remained latent, the Ukraine conflict made politically salient the normative rupture between the European and the post-Soviet society. The identity relationship between the European society and Russia constructed on this basis consequently became more antagonistic, shifting the type of interplay towards a more confrontational constellation (see Linsenmaier 2015, 460–462). It is this actualisation in practice of the regional boundary that subsequently made possible the performance of securitisations and, as a consequence, brought about the polarisation of the security constellation in the Baltic Sea area.

The cancellation of the 2014 Council of the Baltic Sea States Summit under the impression of Russia's annexation of Crimea was perhaps the most startling sign of BSR regionalism coming under strain. It is noteworthy that no CBSS ministerial has taken place since. While the CBSS, along with the entire set of BSR institutions, formally persists, day-to-day coop-

eration in the Baltic Sea area has been further complicated, not least due to EU–Russia sanctions, resulting in severe downgrading and downscaling of multilateral cooperation with Russia (Etzold and Steinicke 2015, 2). This observation applies to BSR institutions more generally and indeed for the European security architecture at large.[14] In other words, under the impression of the Ukraine crisis even the regulative dimension, in addition to the already inoperative constitutive dimension, of BSR secondary institutions has become increasingly defunct. While it is not (yet) institutions that are being dismantled, the social fabric underpinning cooperative frameworks, notably trust, has already effectively been corroded (Morozov 2015a, 33).

Besides regionalism coming under strain, Russia's actions in Ukraine have furthermore led to a polarisation of the security constellation in the BSR. While mutual securitizations in the Baltic Sea area had been muted in the wake of EU/NATO Eastern enlargement, even in the relationship between Russia and the Baltic states which in this sense constitutes the "weakest link in the Baltic rim" (Morozov 2004, 317), they became heightened once again under the impressions of the Ukraine crisis. Importantly, the securitisations currently performed in the area, often no more than the reactivation of old templates of securitisation (see Adler and Greve 2009, 74), draw on the normative frames made available by the underlying configurations of primary institutions. Given regional differentiation, patterns of securitisation in the BSR therefore diverge along the regional boundary, giving rise to what Mölder (2011) has labelled a "cooperative security dilemma". The danger of a militarisation of the BSR is a direct consequence, visible in the recurrent airspace violations by Russia, the military build-up in the Kaliningrad exclave, the holding of large-scale military exercises, or, in response thereof, the increased NATO presence in the area. Similarly, the gravitating of non-NATO members Finland and Sweden towards the Western alliance (see Etzold and Steinicke 2015, 3) can be seen in this light, occurring not, or not primarily, out of a concern for material balancing, but following the pattern of securitisation of the European society. While neither a BSR-specific secondary institution nor one exclusive to the European society (see Webber 2011), the presence of NATO is nevertheless essential for the security dynamics in the Baltic Sea area. NATO as a secondary institution regulates security practice "inside" the European society, and serves as the vehicle through which most members of the European society practice their (military) security towards the "outside".

Finally, also the mutual imposition of sanctions by the members of the European society and Russia follows the pattern of diverging securitisations in the area—whereas both sides increasingly conceive each other as a threat—therefore leading to a polarisation of the security constellation in the BSR. The negative security dynamics instilled by the Ukraine crisis have spilled over from the geographic theatre of their original occurrence and have come to affect also the security constellation in the BSR.

Conclusion

Viewed through the regional international society lens, the BSR presents itself as a particular subset of relations in the wider interplay between the European regional society on the one side and Russia as a member of the post-Soviet regional society on the other. It is due to the presence of Russia that the BSR remains vulnerable to developments in the wider configuration, that is, susceptible to influences—namely external shocks—originating elsewhere along the overlap (that is, the spillover) or indeed from within either of the two regional international societies. The Ukraine crisis reverberates in the BSR as an external shock, forcing into the open, and therefore making politically salient, the normative rupture which, although latently present, had been veiled by an air of ambiguity and therefore remained inconsequential for much of the post-Cold War period. Once meanings became fixed, however, through their actualisation in practice, namely by Russia's conduct within the post-Soviet society (that is, Russia practicing war), ambiguity was resolved and the normative rupture became consequential. So far, the secondary institutional framework of the BSR remains in place, at least formally; exposure of regional differentiation, in other words, has not yet led to the unravelling of the BSR. At the same time, however, BSR regionalism has increasingly come under strain, accompanied by a polarisation of the security constellation in the area. The speed and ease with which these adjustments occurred once again indicates the presence, although latently, of the normative rupture already prior to the Ukraine crisis. Perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, the BSR then can be found characterised by continuity rather than change at the deep structural level. The BSR is, and was, built across the intersection of two regional societies; politics in the Baltic Sea area thus have to be understood on this basis.

Russia's positioning, structurally as both an "outsider" to the European society (entanglement in terms of identity notwithstanding) yet "inside"

the post-Soviet society, is key to understanding current developments in the BSR. An analytical grasp of this positioning is made possible by the English School's focus on configurations of primary institutions. At present, Russia may not even any longer aspire to membership in the "thick" European society (see Sakwa 2011), at least not on the terms of this society (that is, "false" Europe [Neumann 1996]). Instead, Russia may seek recognition *towards* the European society, that is, recognition *on its own* (i.e., "great power") terms. The BSR may therefore come to witness a renewed, or rather the resumption of a discontinued, "recognition game" (Ringmar 2002), whereby recognition does *not*, however, imply eventual convergence but *recognition of status* (see Zarakol 2011, 201–239).

Russia's persistent positioning "not-fully-in", as an "outsider" to the European society, furthermore highlights the limits of socialisation in(to) international society, of the constitutive effects of secondary institutions such as those spanning the BSR. In this way, it exposes the limits of international society purposively constructed, the making of a "contractual society" (Roshchin 2013) and the convergence-based expansion of international society (Buzan 2010). The English School must furthermore be careful not to conceive socialisation in(to) international society in overly linear terms but to recognise contingency and, importantly, the agency of the "outsider", which—with a view on the BSR—primarily means taking into account Russia's post-coloniality.

At the same time, exploring the workings of the BSR secondary institutional framework urges a further specifying of the relationship between the two institutional layers of international institutions, primary and secondary. The capacity of the BSR secondary institutional framework to facilitate a degree of pluralist interstate cooperation (regulative effects), in spite of a latently persisting normative rupture, stands in contrast with the failure of BSR regionalism to bring about convergence in the practice of primary institutions (constitutive effects). This suggests that the regulative and the constitutive dimension of secondary institutions *can* appear in conjoint, but they do *not necessarily* do so. The School's account of secondary institutions would moreover benefit from further elaborating the role of ambiguity in the creation and maintenance of secondary institutions (that is, specifying what determines the extent to which the two constitutive layers of international society must be "in-tune"). Differently put, this means to explore the pluralist capacity of secondary institutions, their capacity to functionally allow for and pragmatically accommodate—to a certain degree—the polysemy of primary institutions.

Applying the English School regional lens to the BSR also demonstrates the analytical added value of the regional international society perspective. It espouses the "back to the future" scenario (Mearsheimer 1990; Rynning 2015) by emphasising diverging patterns of legitimate practice *within* and *between* regional international societies, and the essential contingency of the latter. By taking into account the structural effects of regional differentiations, it moreover can account for the limited engagement in the BSR of some of the key members of the European society post-Ukraine. With the European society facing multiple crises internally, "keeping the core intact" (Wæver 1996, 228–229), the security imperative flowing from the very *raison de système* of the society, takes precedence over relations with the outside. The regional lens makes intelligible the prudence of such an approach, given that any major reconfiguration of the European society would not leave the interplay with the post-Soviet society (that is, at the Baltic intersection) unaffected. In short, the regional perspective matters. It matters by highlighting the different workings of security in a regionally fragmented international society; international society comes first, security comes second.

When considering the ramifications of the Ukraine crisis for the BSR, taking seriously regional differentiation and with it diverging dispositions of practice finally suggests one *empirically* determine the boundaries of the realm within which Russia practices war (that is, including/excluding the Baltic states) as well as Russia's conception of legitimate conduct towards the "outside". Defining the parameters for order(ing) the BSR should be made a matter of *empirical* investigation based on appropriate conceptual language, not a matter decided on basis of theoretical templates.

Notes

1. Two clarifications are required: First, while the concept of "region" remains contested in IR, here the term refers to "regional international society" as defined below. Second, the Baltic states are considered part of the European regional international society given their successful "entry" into the European society, as indicated by their EU membership. Albeit closely entangled and indeed largely overlapping in terms of membership, the EU as a secondary institutional phenomenon is not synonymous with the underlying European regional society.

2. By "actor-centeredness" I mean departing from the assumption of, at least partially, essential(ised) subjects and focusing on their *inter*-action. The charge of arbitrariness relates to a tendency to single out a mostly dyadic relationship for analysis with little justification of this particular set of identities and how they relate or separate themselves from other (non)related sets.
3. In this sense, the present reading of the English School as social structural theory is more akin to, and draws on, perspectives emphasising the role of discourse rather than "middle-ground" constructivism. Identity here is understood rather as a proxy for underlying configurations of primary institutions.
4. Bull's five primary institutions should be understood as examples, not as a definitive or exhaustive list. There is an extensive debate about the nature and range of primary institutions currently going on within the English School (for an overview, see Buzan 2014, 173–178).
5. As Schouenborg (2013, 9) notes, an institution that is not shared among all regional international societies can hardly be considered "global", which is why I here refer to them as "widely shared" instead. (For the additional distinction between "regional" and "sub-global", see Schouenborg 2013, 9–10).
6. Second-order societies are themselves comprised of collective entities such as states, as opposed to first-order societies, which are comprised of human individuals.
7. This excludes global level (for example, the United Nations or the World Trade Organization) as well wider European (that is the EU) or (pan-)European (e.g., NATO, the Council of Europe, or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) secondary institutions. While these BSR-exceeding secondary institutions no less inform international practice in the area, the distinctiveness of the political dynamics in the BSR stems from the mediating effects of BSR-specific institutions.
8. The analytical plane of Regional Security Complex Theory therefore works *complementarily* to the regional international society perspective, but the latter acquires ontological primacy.
9. At the same time, secondary institutions and international security implicate each other. Aligning the above-outlined English School perspective on secondary institutions and international security opens up avenues to probe into the prospects of order in world politics. Due to limitations of space, the combined workings of second-

ary institutions and security cannot be elaborated here in more detail. Yet, the main contention is that together with their primary institutional base, the two surface level phenomena form a triangular relationship in which each of the constitutive parts mutually affect the workings of each other. Conjoint, this geometry defines a field in which order in world politics can be conceived.

10. The primary institution of war brings into view an epistemological problem: the mere absence of war empirically does not necessarily indicate the elimination of war as a practice. The practice of war is a disposition rather than a constant stream of actualisations of practice. The presence of the institution of war does not, as with Waltz (1959), suggest a perennial state of war; it means that war *may* at any time occur.
11. Although the European security community is embedded into a wider "Western" security community, the European society, by means of primary institutional differentiation (i.e., ontologically prior to the play of security dynamics) remains nevertheless distinctive from "the West".
12. The relevance of the EU regulatory framework for the primary institutional configuration of the European society does not presuppose congruence between the EU as a secondary institutional framework and the underlying European regional society. The EU regulatory framework significantly exceeds the EU's borders.
13. It is due to Russia's preponderant role in the region that the primary institutional configuration of the post-Soviet society here is derived mostly from extrapolating Russia's practices. Given that Russia is the sole interlocutor of the post-Soviet space in the BSR, the focus on Russia's practice is moreover most illuminating.
14. Cooperation in HELCOM, focusing on environmental issues, as well as cooperation within the EU's Northern Dimension are, according to Etzold and Steinicke (2015, 2), still functional.

References

Aalto, Pami. 2007. Russia's Quest for International Society and the Prospects for Regional-Level International Societies. *International Relations* 21(4): 459–478.

Adler, Emanuel. 2008. The Spread of Security Communities: Communities of Practice, Self-Restraint, and NATO's Post Cold War Transformation. *European Journal of International Relations* 14(2): 195–230.

Adler, Emanuel, and Michael Barnett, eds. 1998. *Security Communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adler, Emanuel, and Patricia Greve. 2009. When Security Community Meets Balance of Power: Overlapping Regional Mechanisms of Security Governance. *Review of International Studies* 35(1): 59–84.

Alderson, Kai, and Andrew Hurrell. 2000. International Society and the Academic Study of International Relations. In *Hedley Bull on International Society*, eds. Kai Alderson and Andrew Hurrell, 20–53. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Allison, Roy. 2014. Russian 'Deniable' Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules. *International Affairs* 90(6): 1255–1297.

Barnett, Michael. 1996. Identity and Alliances in the Middle East. In *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, 400–447. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bially-Mattern, Janice. 2001. The Power Politics of Identity. *European Journal of International Relations* 7(3): 349–397.

Browning, Christopher S., and George Christou. 2010. The Constitutive Power of Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Dimension. *Political Geography* 29(2): 109–118.

Bull, Hedley. 1977. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Buzan, Barry. 1993. From International System to International Society: Structural Realism and Regime Theory Meet the English School. *International Organization* 47(3): 327–352.

———. 2004. *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Structure of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2010. Culture and International Society. *International Affairs* 86(1): 1–25.

———. 2014. *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations*. Cambridge: Polity.

———. 2015. The English School: A Neglected Approach to International Security. *Security Dialogue* 46(2): 126–143.

Buzan, Barry, and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez. 2009. Conclusion. In *International Society and the Middle East: English School Theory at the Regional Level*, eds. Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez, 226–250. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Buzan, Barry, and Ole Wæver. 2003. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buzan, Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Campbell, David. 1992. *Writing Security*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Clark, Ian. 2013. *The Vulnerable in International Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Costa-Buranelli, Filippo. 2015. 'Do You Know What I Mean?' 'Not Exactly': English School, Global International Society and the Polysemy of Institutions. *Global Discourse* 5(3): 499–514.

Diez, Thomas, Ian Manners, and Richard G. Whitman. 2011. The Changing Nature of International Institutions in Europe: The Challenge of the European Union. *Journal of European Integration* 33(2): 117–138.

Diez, Thomas, and Richard G. Whitman. 2002. Analysing European Integration: Reflecting on the English School: Scenarios for an Encounter. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 40(1): 43–67.

Etzold, Tobias, and Stefan Steinicke. 2015. Regionale Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in der Arktis- und der Ostseeregion: Destabilisierung als Folge der Ukraine Krise. *SWP Aktuell*, No. 74.

Ferguson, Ian. 2016. Spheres of Influence. In *New and Old Vocabularies of International Relations after the Ukraine Crisis*, eds. Andrey Makarychev and Alexandra Yatsyk. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing (forthcoming).

Gänzle, Stefan. 2011. Introduction: Transnational Governance and Policy-Making in the Baltic Sea Region. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 42(1): 1–7.

Hast, Susanna. 2014. *Spheres of Influence in International Relations: History, Theory, and Politics*. Surrey: Ashgate.

Hill, Fiona. 2015. How Vladimir Putin's Worldview Shapes Russian Foreign Policy. In *Russia's Foreign Policy: Ideas, Domestic Politics, and External Relations*, eds. David Cadier and Margot Light, 42–63. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kaczmarska, Katarzyna. 2015. Russia's Droit de Regard: Pluralist Norms and the Sphere of Influence. *Global Discourse* 5(3): 434–448.

Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. 1985. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London and New York: Verso.

Linsenmaier, Thomas. 2015. The Interplay between Regional International Societies. *Global Discourse* 5(3): 452–466.

Makarychev, Andrey, and Alexander Sergunin. 2013. *The Russian Presidency of the Council of Baltic Sea States: Thin Socialization, Deficient Soft Power?* CEURUS EU-Russia Papers, No.10.

Makarychev, Andrey, and Alexandra Yatsyk. 2014. (Un)locking Political Borders. *Problems of Post-Communism* 61(6): 34–45.

Mälksoo, Lauri. 2015. *Russian Approaches to International Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mearsheimer, John J. 1990. *Back to the Future*: Instability in Europe after the Cold War. *International Security* 15(1): 5–56.

Mölder, Holger. 2011. The Cooperative Security Dilemma in the Baltic Sea Region. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 42(2): 143–168.

Morozov, Viatcheslav. 2004. Russia in the Baltic Sea Region: Desecuritization or Deregionalization? *Cooperation and Conflict* 39(3): 317–331.
———. 2013. Subaltern Empire? Towards a Postcolonial Approach to Russian Foreign Policy. *Problems of Post-Communism* 60(6): 16–28.
———. 2015a. Aimed for the Better, Ended Up with the Worst: Russia and International Order. *Journal of Baltic Security* 1(1): 26–36.
———. 2015b. *Russia's Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Morozov, Viatcheslav, and Bahar Rumelili. 2012. The External Constitution of European Identity: Russia and Turkey as Europe-Makers. *Cooperation and Conflict* 47(1): 28–48.
Neumann, Iver B. 1996. *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*. London: Routledge.
——— 1999. *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
——— 2011. Entry into International Society Reconceptualised: The Case of Russia. *Review of International Studies* 37(2): 463–484.
Pejcinovic, Lacy. 2013. *War in International Society*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Prozorov, Sergei. 2007. The Narratives of Exclusion and Self-Exclusion in the Russian Conflict Discourse on EU–Russian Relations. *Political Geography* 26(3): 309–329.
Ringmar, Erik. 2002. The Recognition Game: Soviet Russia against the West. *Cooperation and Conflict* 37(2): 115–136.
———. 2014. Recognition and the Origins of International Society. *Global Discourse* 4(4): 446–458.
Roshchin, Evgeny. 2013. (Un)Natural and Contractual International Society: A Conceptual Inquiry. *European Journal of International Relations* 19(2): 257–279.
Ruggie, John G. 1993. Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations. *International Organization* 47(1): 139–174.
Rynning, Sten. 2015. The False Promise of Continental Concert: Russia, the West and the Necessary Balance of Power. *International Affairs* 91(3): 539–552.
Sakwa, Richard. 2011. Russia and Europe: Whose Society? *Journal of European Integration* 33(2): 197–214.
Schouenborg, Laust. 2012. Exploring Westphalia's Blind Spots: Exceptionalism Meets the English School. *Geopolitics* 17(1): 130–152.
———. 2013. *The Scandinavian International Society: Primary Institutions and Binding Forces, 1815–2010*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Spandler, Kilian. 2015. The Political International Society: Change in Primary and Secondary Institutions. *Review of International Studies* 41(3): 601–622.
Tassinari, Fabrizio. 2005. The European Sea: Lessons from the Baltic Sea Region for Security and Cooperation in the European Neighborhood. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 36(4): 387–407.

Tsygankov, Andrei P. 2006. If Not by Tanks, Then by Banks? The Role of Soft Power in Putin's Foreign Policy. *Europe-Asia Studies* 58(7): 1079–1099.

Wæver, Ole. 1996. Europe's Three Empires: A Watsonian Interpretation of Post-Wall European Security. In *International Society after the Cold War: Anarchy and Order Reconsidered*, eds. Rick Fawn and Jeremy Larkins, 220–260. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

———. 1998. Insecurity, Security, and Asecurity in the West European Non-War Community. In *Security Communities*, eds. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, 69–118. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Walker, Rob B.J. 1993. *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Waltz, Kenneth. 1959. *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Watson, Adam. 1984. Russia and the European States System. In *The Expansion of International Society*, eds. H. Bull and A. Watson, 61–74. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Webber, Mark. 2011. NATO: Within and Between European International Society. *Journal of European Integration* 33(2): 139–158.

Wirminghaus, Niklas. 2012. Ephermal Regionalism: The Proliferation of (Failed) Regional Integration in Post-Soviet Eurasia. In *Roads to Regionalism: Genesis, Design, and Effects of Regional Organizations*, eds. Tanja A. Börzel, Lukas Golterman, Mathis Lohaus, and Kai Stribinger, 25–44. Burlington: Ashgate.

Zarakol, Ayse. 2011. *After Defeat: How the East Has Learned to Live with the West*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CHAPTER 3

The Baltic Sea Region: From a Hinge Between Russia and the West to a Rhizomatic Information Channel

Aki-Mauri Huhtinen

Russia's Information Sun Rises in the West

This chapter discusses the transition of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) from a hinge between Russia and the West to a rhizome—from a fixed and linear point of connection between two geopolitical areas to a polydimensional network of nodal interactivity. To this end, the chapter takes as its primary focal points the rhizomatic[1] information channels and mechanisms that currently exist for both communication and conflict in the region, as well as the way in which the East–West dialogue can be fostered in the Baltic context, and the importance of rhizomatic technologies for future interactions in the BSR. In tracing this development, the chapter posits that (1) an ideological misunderstanding has emerged between the West and Russia, inflamed by the Ukraine war and exacerbated by the wave of refugees into Europe; (2) the media, especially social media in the information domain, play a significant role in compounding this misunderstanding, but also play a key role in keeping the information channels open, especially in the security domain; (3) the BSR countries may still

A.-M. Huhtinen (✉)
Department of Leadership and Military Pedagogy, Finnish National Defence University, Helsinki, Finland

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_3

have a role in resolving the misunderstanding thanks to their traditional hinge-like connection to Russia, ranging from geopolitics to information politics; and (4) the misunderstanding that exists not only poses a risk to the rhizomatic information networks but may also point the way to a new kind of mobile virtual neighbouring. Indeed, rhizomatic information hybridity and mobile virtual perspectives offer the possibility for more diffused and heterogeneous understandings than those that are confined within state boundaries (Browning and Joenniemi 2007, 17).

The two key metaphors informing this chapter are those of the hinge and the rhizome. The hinge[2]—a mechanism that allows a door or gate to swing open or to close—is a metaphor for the historical binary cooperation and cultural dialogue between the West and Russia that existed in the past. The rhizome, on the other hand, is analogous with non-linear, nomadic approaches, as exemplified in the multiplicitous channels of communication and information exchange that are facilitated in cyberspace and on the Internet.[3]

Historically, there has been a long tradition of movement between the BSR and Russia, with citizens traversing the border, be it for tourism, employment or familial reasons. This brings to mind the notion of "mobile neighbouring" as expounded by Veijola and Falin (2014), a term originally coined to describe the social coexistence experienced by tourists as they move from place to place, but whose meaning could be extended to using the Internet to "travel" across borders in a rhizomatic world. The virtual freedom of movement and sense of proximity or "dwelling-nearby" provided by the Internet and social media, albeit transient, transcends barriers and facilitates global communication. At the same time, the Net is living a life of its own and is becoming uncontrollably rhizomatic in nature, growing, proliferating and serving as a means of propagating information, misinformation and disinformation alike (see Chia 1999). Further, the BSR and Russia are themselves more rhizome than hinge, a network of relations within and between states, cultures, politics, the economy and security. For the rhizome concept can also be applied to the connections that occur between the most disparate and the most similar of objects, places and people: the strange chain of events that link people, states and societies (Guha 2011, 137).

Traditionally, the BSR has also cooperated with Russia and the Soviet Union within political, economic, security and cultural realms and has served as a gateway between East and West. As the Russian government has once again become increasingly centralized, however, difficulties have

arisen in involving local partners in cross-border cooperation projects. Further, the more the Kremlin tries to centralize and control its domestic civil society, the more unstable and unpredictable it becomes in its actions at the level of international politics. But at the same time, the Kremlin has become effective at influencing European politics through a host of far-right parties. The parties, located in the UK, France, Germany, Greece, Bulgaria and Hungary, are becoming increasingly popular—and are staunchly against giving more power to the EU. Each of the parties has also fostered a closer relationship with Russia and has protested against the sanctions imposed upon Moscow following its annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Bender 2014). The Kremlin would like to see the EU become more deunified because the EU's common policy has become more challenging for Moscow in the face of its refugee policy and sanctions against Russia. The Kremlin disseminates the notion that decisions are made in Washington and that Berlin is merely following orders—orders which are then executed in all other EU states. That is why the Kremlin would prefer to negotiate directly and separately with individual nation states in the EU (Russia Insider 2015). For these reasons among others, information exchange has become fraught and communication strained.[4]

I argue that the BSR has a crucial role to play in mitigating the communication chasm that has opened up between the West and Russia, while acknowledging that the context of the communication has changed as the Internet has brought about complex twists and turns in the geopolitical configuration. For the purposes of this article, I refer only to the general information readiness of the Baltic states, Finland and Sweden when I speak about the BSR, and I see the West as a synthesis of European Union (EU) and NATO values. The crisis in Ukraine–Russia relations makes NATO's presence in the BSR a key aspect when it comes to arriving at any mutual understanding between the West and Russia, keeping in mind that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are members of both the EU and NATO, while Finland and Sweden are members of the EU only (cf. Lucas 2015; McNamara et al. 2015).

The Changing Societal Landscape

The BSR is based on a multilevel informational, political, military, economic and cultural rhizome. In their discussion of "mobile neighbouring", Veijola and Falin (2014) argue that "accommodations", borders, boxes and limits are not a good fit for the social and material daily life in

the information age. Of course, there is still a valid statement to be made about geopolitics, especially in international relations, but at the same time the global world is increasingly gravitating towards a more mobile lifestyle. This is also the case in the BSR. BSR policy domains deeply integrated within the EU can become rhizomatic in the sense of diminishing possibilities for centralized control and management. At the same time, the Kremlin is intent upon preserving the hinge model in its domestic and international relationships. The main challenge lies in finding a way to organize and reconcile the cultural, material and social mobility between people and states in the EU and Russia through these two operational modes. For example, at the time of this writing we are witnessing an exodus of refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan to Central Europe and the Nordic countries, and a strong military operation waged by Russia against Syria. Both events will have repercussions and ramifications at all levels mentioned above.

Indeed, in the security sphere we are witnessing the end of the era of modern warfare and the coming of a new era of "hybrid wars", where a whole gamut of tools—political, economic, military, informational, and perhaps even criminal—can be deployed. This "hybrid" environment generates a rhizomatic connection at different levels between Russia, the US and the EU, as demonstrated in the rather classical diplomatic-political Ukraine conflict, but also the mutual resolve of the different sides to fight against the so-called Islamic State, or ISIL.

As far as Russia is concerned, BSR culture, economics and information are again being weaponized by the West, and the BSR countries are forming a rhizome of different interests that are becoming increasingly difficult to conceptualize in the Kremlin. The rhizome as a concept is fast becoming a key instrument in describing the information networking process of globalization, and in this sense can be regarded not as a technical term but as a sociological one.

In regionalism, the idea of the rhizome can be seen in the crisis of "old" (state-based) regionalism and the gradual appearance of "new regionalism" with multiple actorship, overlapping agenda and concomitant resources. I try to articulate the "new" character of the BSR as a networked information space with no unitary or binary hinge, but with multiple institutional arrangements and a new security agenda that has emerged as a result of the Ukraine crisis. To this end, Russia must also react to the changing fabric of the international society, and adjust to movable borders and neighbourhoods.

Rhizomatic Neighbouring

Good neighbourly relations are a key aspect of safety and security in international politics. Mutual visits, dialogue and cultural exchanges further common understanding. Ever since its advent, social media has been premised on the notion of cultivating virtual neighbourhoods of thought- and idea-sharing. During the summer of 2015, the deepening economic crisis in Europe, the war in Ukraine, and the influx of Syrian refugees into Europe were causes of controversy and contention in the social media discussion. Yet social media can galvanize public opinion just as easily as it can divide it, and the refugee crisis, while causing havoc at Europe's borders also had the potential to foster international dialogue. A unified EU migration policy may well be crucial in paving the way for successful dialogue with Russia. On the other hand, the disparity between the economic and immigration policies in different states played into the Kremlin's preferred rhizomatic way of dealing with states separately, with the aim of deunifying the EU's monolithic and administrative policy against Russia (cf. Popescu 2015; Richards 2011).

According to Veijola and Falin (2014, 2), "Our being in this world happens through dwelling—even when travelling." What this means is that living in the information age implies more than just "being accommodated". People not only travel abroad and stay in different localities, they are also constantly dwelling in the global information village. The challenge lies in developing this instant information dwelling within the geopolitics of the information age. We take a hypothetical example: By the end of 2016 there will be approximately 100,000 refugees in Finland. As a result, there will doubtless be some riots and violent skirmishes between the "old" citizens and the "new" ones. When the new citizens try to settle in the unfamiliar environment far away from their own culture, Finnish habits and customs will be alien to them. But over time, the hidden depths of the Finnish "cultural iceberg" will become visible, giving rise to the possibility for new, positive dialogue between both parties as the refugees start integrating more deeply into Finnish society. At the same time, this will force Finnish citizens to revisit and re-evaluate their own internal beliefs, values and cultural assumptions and the way they are perceived by others.

Hence, what is needed is an analysis of the ethics of mobilized hospitalities (Veijola and Falin 2014, 3). For example, the BSR has a long multicultural tradition spanning East and West. The physical border between Russia and the Baltic states has shifted many times during the countries'

long histories. The so-called "mobilized dwelling" has constituted a natural and practical way to handle the changing economic and political situation all over Europe. The main challenge in this respect is posed by the Schengen borderline separating Russia from the European Union in the political-economic axis. Although the Kremlin sees this as a means of preserving its distinct national identity, at the same time Russia would like to enjoy greater economic and political freedom of movement across EU territory. Talks on a visa-free regime between the EU and Russia were suspended on account of the Crimean crisis, which was a major setback for the Kremlin.[5]

Social media can also enable mobile neighbouring through the constant threads and streams of information that are disseminated and exchanged by the "virtual strangers" that populate the likes of Facebook, Instagram, Periscope and Twitter. Facebook alone has approximately 10 million users in Russia at the moment, and VKontakte five or six times that number (Lubov 2015). Yet social prejudices tend to stem from our physical and material reality and are sometimes manifested in the dissemination of hate and hostility on the Net. Many users are vehemently opposed to any kind of solidarity in the virtual world because of the threat of Otherness, not only in the sense of being unfamiliar with the technology but also because of various misconceptions and suspicions related to its use. In order to facilitate dialogue, we have to reappraise our understanding of the meaning of privacy in the virtual domain and the way it is regulated, as well as the need for flexibility and personalization of space (Veijola and Falin 2014, 5).

For example, the Latvian Institute of International Affairs in cooperation with Riga Stradins University and the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of the Institute of Mathematics and Informatics (University of Latvia) analyzed how the Internet was used to support political aims by state and non-state actors in the Ukraine conflict. The study focused on the identification of organized trolling in web-based media and measuring its influence on public discourse in Latvia. The research provides the possibility to evaluate the risk potential of trolling, and it gives the Latvian authorities a tool to categorize different trolling methods utilized in hybrid warfare (see StratComCoe 2015).

The views of ordinary citizens in social media discussions can quickly polarize public opinion and result in conflict due to the rhizomatic Internet model (cf. Mangold and Faulds 2009; Robertson et al. 2013). Negativity often breeds negativity. The freedom of speech inherent in social media

also allows people to express inflammatory and sensitive points of view without any censorship. In other words, there are no gatekeepers (in the hinge sense) to decide which material can be published and which cannot. The lack of gatekeeping also enables stakeholders who have extreme opinions and/or dubious aims to join social media discussions and intentionally provoke others (Paavola and Jalonen 2015).[6]

The following section deals with aspects of mobile neighbouring that could either serve to resolve or reignite tensions in the rhizomatic dialogue in relation to each of the BSR countries covered by this analysis. Each country sees the geopolitical situation in a different way, and each country has a different kind of information environment at a different stage of development. Each country must also be contextualized against the Russian backdrop, both historically and from the perspective of ongoing events, as outlined below.

The Creaky Russian Hinge

The Kremlin's political goal is not expansion as such, but the preservation of sovereign autonomy in the face of the expansionist West (Morozov 2015, 27). Four out of every five Russian citizens are ethnic Russians, and this very ethnicity constitutes a massive political force. The remaining one-fifth comprises over 150 different ethnic groups. Everyone in Russia has relatives or friends within their rhizomatic connections who are non-Russians, which poses a problem for the Kremlin: How can it tap into the power of Russianness without damaging relations with non-Russian minorities at the same time? One option is for Russia to paint itself as a victim of the Western arborescent model and Western policy by claiming that the West underestimates Russian culture and discriminates against Russian people. A second option is to emphasize cross-border solidarity and "fellow countryman politics", or Pan-Slavism as it used to be known. A third possibility is for the Kremlin to emphasize the historical mission of Russians as the chosen people, thereby putting an end to Pan-Slavism. All of this raises the question of whether Russia is going to create a hinge structure of its own or wrap its rhizomatic tentacles around the Western trunk. Russia's isolationist policies and the increasing alienation of civil society against the Kremlin are also reflected in Russian interactions on the Internet, and there is a clear difference between the way citizens comport themselves in public and in private. The Internet, and particularly VKontakte (Russia's Facebook), have become key channels for self-

expression in Russia. In 2014, in an attempt to tighten the government's already strong hold over the Internet, President Putin officially passed the so-called "Bloggers Law", requiring any blogger with more than 3000 readers to register with *Roskomnadzor*, Russia's media oversight agency.[7]

Yet past examples also exist of the way in which the BSR and Russia were able to achieve a mutual understanding in developing the information space and the political, economic and security borders inside and outside of Europe. A case in point was Kaliningrad's status just after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 when it was mooted that the exclave might become an economic pioneer, a "New Hansa" or "test case" for the future of European governance and a "cradle for Russia's internationalisation" (Browning and Joenniemi 2007, 11–13).

Interestingly, so-called "paradiplomacy" plays an important role in Russian international relations today, especially in the Arctic area. Paradiplomacy refers to the way in which international relations are conducted by subnational or regional actors on their own initiative with a view to promoting their own interests (Joenniemi and Sergunin 2016, 56). The concept of paradiplomacy can be seen as analogous to rhizomatic communication. Normally, subnational actors are expected to confine their activities to the local level, but regional actors are now cooperating across borders in an effort to tackle their daily challenges and problems. This paradiplomatic shift has become a less chaotic and more prioritized way of resolving issues, far away from central administrations and institutions.

Reverting to contemporary conflict issues, the Ukraine crisis can be seen as highly symbolic of rhizomatic connections at work. Sakwa (2015) argues that two kinds of processes underlie the crisis and the current mutual Western and Russian propaganda campaigns. The first pertains to the asymmetrical conclusion of the Cold War in that the West did not regard Russia as an equal partner, but subconsciously relegated the country to the level of a poor and underdeveloped state. NATO's stealthy expansion into Eastern Europe was another manifestation of this asymmetrical international political dialogue. The NATO notion of eliminating geopolitical borders in the globalized world was not practicable. The second process relates to the status of Ukraine as a nation state, and the difficulty in governing the multicultural dialogue within Ukraine and defusing the tension between different kinds of ethnic groups.

Overall, the Russian rhizomatic development can be seen as a reaction to several internal and external setbacks. The growing rhizome has resulted in the creation of enemy images, assertive patriotism, growing isolation-

ism, tighter control and more aggressive use of information resources. This can be seen as rhizomatic because the more tightly controlled measures exerted by the Kremlin may become counterproductive in that civil society unrest and resistance may increase as a result. The rhizome is, by nature, multiplicitous and non-hierarchical, which means that two different aims, one desirable and the other undesirable, may interact to form a hybrid synthesis. In the Kremlin's notion of national unity, only the dominant version of patriotism is accepted while others are easily branded as "fifth column" or as being of "foreign agents". This has effectively served to paralyze the political opposition and any form of cooperative social discussion, but at the same time this trend can also increase the latent mistrust of the Kremlin's policy in the long term. Instead of developing formal political institutions, the Kremlin relies on unofficial networks of power that sustain and support the unclear rhizome networks but simultaneously limit its powers and restrict its capability to reform and develop new ideas (Laine et al. 2015).

Next, I move on to describe the contemporary information environment in the BSR with respect to each of the countries under discussion and their relations to Russia past and present. I identify three main phenomena in each country, namely, information policy status or readiness in general, security trends, and historical relations with Russia. I attempt to view this "information ethnology" in each BSR country through a rhizomatic lens reflective of my theme.

Estonia: Brave New Epioneer[8]

Estonia as a part of the BSR is no longer in the shadow of the Soviet Union, but the past occasionally rears its head, as it did during the Bronze Soldier conflict, which concerned a disagreement between ethnic Estonians and Russians living in Estonia over the relocation of the Bronze Soldier of Tallinn, and what the statue symbolized for Estonia's Russian-speaking minority. The Estonian government decided to relocate the statue in the spring of 2007, after which the controversy escalated into a full-blown issue between Estonia and Russia. Russia purposefully dashed Estonia's hopes for a societal infrastructure underpinned by the Internet by hitting back through government, media and banking websites. The Internet had just become a symbol of Estonian democracy and freedom of information, yet Russia was intent upon exploiting it as a channel to challenge and threaten the Baltic state. The Cyber Security Strategy 2014–2017 is

currently the basic document for planning Estonia's cyber security and a part of the country's broader security strategy. It highlights important recent developments, assesses threats to Estonia's cyber security and presents measures to manage those threats.

There is a lot of discussion in the BSR these days about the effects of Russian propaganda (such as seen in the Kremlin-backed Sputnik news agency) and countermeasures through which countries in the region could launch their own Russian-speaking media channels for their citizens. In addition, during the spring of 2015 there was an increase in the US military presence in Estonia and Latvia, coupled with two unsettling underwater incidents in the Gulf of Finland that found their way into the international press. Added to this, the Finnish defence forces saw fit to send letters to the country's 900,000 reservists, informing them of the role they would play in the event of war.

Estonia has clearly turned its gaze towards the Nordic countries, Europeanism and the military security provided by NATO. The dissociation from the Soviet era is also characterized by Estonia's remarkable digitalization process, as exemplified for instance in 2014 by the country's introduction of e-citizenship, which demonstrates the government's understanding of the importance of strategic communication in fostering international relations. Information in general and the Internet in particular symbolize a new kind of independent identity for Estonia. As a small and peripheral country, access to and integration into the global community via the Internet have reinforced Estonia's sense of sovereign nation statehood and ties to the West.

Unlike the other Baltic states, Estonia is self-sufficient in terms of electricity. Economic resources have been targeted more intensively at the development of the defence forces. As a result, in 2009 Estonia was able to fulfil NATO's requirement for 2 % of GDP to be allocated to the defence budget. After the economic stagnation in 2010, Estonia was the only Baltic country to fulfil NATO's defence budget requirements in 2014. The will to defend one's homeland and the support of voluntary organizations in this endeavour is very high in Estonia and furthers the long-term development of the defence forces.

Understandably, Russia is sometimes baffled by the way a small country like Estonia can even survive, let alone thrive. Its supercilious superpower attitude obviously irritates a small independent country like Estonia, which wants to be seen as an advanced information technology pioneer, whereas Russia is of the opinion that geopolitical facts and figures are the only things that matter in international politics. Significantly, Tallinn was

chosen as the location of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, a fact which certainly didn't escape the Kremlin's attention.

During the past five years, Estonia has not been a primary target of Russian interest and propaganda. However, Estonia's assumption of the presidency of the Council of the EU in 2018 will be a key event in Estonia–Russia relations. It will likely cause controversy as was the case during the Latvian presidency.

In autumn of 2015, in response to Russian propaganda, Estonia opened a new Russian-speaking TV channel (ETV+). The channel is a "long-term project" aimed at bringing Estonians and ethnic Russians closer together, but it is too soon to say whether the project will have the desired effect. In actual fact, the question of Estonia's lukewarm attitude towards refugees entering the EU also mirrors the historical distrust towards Russia. This was exemplified in ex-Foreign Minister of Estonia and ex-member of the European Parliament Kristiina Ojuland's comments on her official Facebook page, where she criticized the European Commission's migrant quota plan and spoke out against admitting any refugees into the EU.

Further, in 2014, for the first time since Estonian independence, a minister with a Russian background, Jevgeni Ossinovski, became a member of the Estonian cabinet. According to him, statements issued by the Kremlin generally come as no surprise to Estonians and are simply seen as meddling in Estonia's internal affairs and, as such, do little to advance the Russian-speaking minority's case (there are almost 90,000 people without any nationality in Estonia). In effect, the Crimean annexation has raised the question of where the loyalty of Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia actually resides (Laats 2015).

Arguably, the concept of loyalty is relative in Estonia. In view of the increasingly rhizomatic world and the interconnectedness offered by social media, individual citizens can be simultaneously connected to several different kinds of value systems. They can feel an affinity with foreigners just as easily as they can turn suspicious and be alienated against them. One way out of this ambivalence is for politicians to show strong solidarity towards the refugee question, thereby alleviating the legacy of suspicion that has existed between Estonia and Russia for years.

Latvia: Between NATO and Russia[9]

In Latvia, the last few years have primarily been marred by the economic crisis, with the result that political and societal attention has been focused on solving the economic problems. This led to drastic defence budget cuts

amounting to almost 50 %. Latvian politicians are much less engaged in defence issues compared to the Estonian government. The reserve officers' corps and Defence League (*Kaitseliit*) play a very important role in Estonia, and being a reserve officer commands high prestige among Estonian opinion leaders. Nothing of the sort is in evidence in Latvia and Lithuania. This may be the reason why 2 % of GDP was allocated to defence in Estonia, whereas about half that amount was allocated in both Latvia and Lithuania.

Latvians are becoming more polarized in their opinions due to the more pronounced rift between them and the Russian-speaking minority. Many Latvians spend time countering Russian propaganda in the social media networks. If the Latvian audience becomes more resistant to Russian propaganda, the large Russian minority in Latvia may turn more pro-Russian in their thinking. A concrete indicator of the widening national rift is the high increase in the number of volunteers joining the Latvian National Guard (*Zemessardze*). The upshot of all this may be a rise in political tension in the near future. The main challenge for Latvian domestic politics is therefore the integration of the Russian-speaking minority with the ethnic Latvians. At the civil society level there are strong ties between families in Latvia where both groups are represented.

Latvia is also seeking deeper cooperation with NATO, the Nordic countries and Germany. An important political security step was the establishment of NATO's Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Riga (see NSCO 2016). This sent a very clear signal to the Kremlin that Latvia, as a focus of NATO expansion, is also prepared to expand its own informational influence in order to support its national interests. This is not only the truth of the matter but also an official policy in Latvia.

Like Finland, Latvia has been a major casualty of the EU's economic sanctions against Russia. Farming has been particularly badly hit, and the number of Russian tourists travelling to Latvia has decreased due to the falling value of the rouble. The Russian minority may well sympathize with Russia, but they still don't want to move there. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the port of Riga is of great economic importance for Latvia and Russia alike, and the continuing sanctions may change the harbour's role in the region.

All in all, Latvia's influence in the EU is minimal. Latvia is still suffering from the effects of having absorbed a large number of migrants from the Soviet times, which has coloured its attitude towards receiving refugees. Two of the three government coalition partners are concerned that

refusing to admit refugees could have negative implications for Latvia's economy and security in the future (Muravska 2015).

Lithuania: Searching for Its Place[10]

Lithuania is the most geopolitically vulnerable country in the BSR, not least because Belarus and Kaliningrad are militarily supported by Russia. For this reason, Lithuania has the most robust defence resources among the Baltic states. Lithuania also enjoys strong historical ties to Poland and has benefitted from the economic growth in the country. Ties to Germany are also historically strong.[11]

An interesting detail regarding Lithuania is the strong national defence impetus among its citizens (the country has less than half the number of Russian speakers compared to Estonia and Latvia). Hence, NATO arguably has no reason to establish a Centre of Excellence in Vilnius the way it has done in Tallinn and Riga. In 2015, Lithuania took a decisive political step, seriously aggravating tensions with Russia in the process, by publishing and distributing a manual preparing citizens in the event of an invasion by Moscow (Tanquintic-Misa 2015). Lithuania sees its position as more national identity-related than the other Baltic states. As in Finland, security policy poses something of an "existential" question. In the event of attack, a non-violent civilian defence could turn the whole nation into a resistant society as it would serve to strengthen its cohesion, solidarity and self-organization—essential ingredients in the struggle against a polarizing hybrid war. As explained by Maciej Bartkowski, "Nationwide, nonviolent civilian defence turns the whole nation into a fighting society that is disciplined to wage a long-term, all-encompassing and targeted noncooperation effort with the aggressor, including its allies at home and abroad to disrupt their control and undermine their legitimacy in each area of social, political, economic and cultural life." (Bartkowski 2015).

The administrative and technocratic policy of the EU is pushing both Lithuania and Finland to the margins of global politics. Both states no longer constitute a "special case" between the West and Russia, and the swinging door policy has been replaced by an unknown rhizome. Lithuania's first and foremost narrative is to integrate itself as a part of EU policy. According to Lithuanian philosopher and politician Nerija Putinaitė (Bogdanas 2014), the Lithuanian–European identity is of paramount importance given the country's position in relation to Russia. She highlights that Lithuania has been intent on helping countries that seek

to free themselves from Russian oppression, and Lithuanians are poised to play a leading role in bringing these countries together.

As in the case of Finland, Lithuania's historical geopolitical position between the West and Russia is no longer such an issue because of the administrative information channel between the EU and Russia. There is no further need for a traditional diplomatic hinge. This can also be seen in the fact that Lithuania has not yet formulated a strategic vision of its presence in the European Union. Meanwhile, the country's strategic capabilities are constantly on the wane, as they are in Finland. But at the same time, positive freedom in the EU would enable Lithuania or Finland to maintain their political and cultural identity, and would grant them a weighty role in the region, especially in balancing the relationship between the West and Russia. But before that, both countries have to find their "dwelling" in the international political rhizome (Paviolinis 2014).

Lithuania could become a node or bubble of regional rhizomatic networks in the future, but this would call for taking a leaf out of Estonia's book and increasing investment in the information society infrastructure. When it joined the EU, Lithuania did not have enough experience to awaken the EU's interest in the region. Furthermore, the EU itself seemed to be unsure about its policies towards the East. This led to misunderstandings. For instance, Lithuania expressed its support for the Orange Revolution in Ukraine before the EU announced its official position (Kojala and Ivanauskas 2014). In order to survive in the rhizome, Lithuania has to convince both sides, the West and Russia, of its utility and importance (cf. Maliukevičius 2015).

Sweden: The Open Door[12]

Economically speaking, Sweden is the strongest player in the BSR, and it also engages in deep cooperation with the US despite only having a partnership relationship with NATO. The country is also unburdened by the fragile euro. Sweden's strong economic position has also enabled a successful refugee policy. Indeed, both Sweden and Finland have adopted a quite different refugee policy compared to the Baltic states. Paradoxically, the public discussion around the issue emphasizes both the economic benefits of admitting refugees as well as the new threats they pose to the welfare state. Multiculturalism is a key value of Swedish society but there is also increasing talk about the social problems and the rise in the crime rate that go hand in hand with a generous asylum policy. Problems stem

from, among other things, the challenges posed to those with an Islamic background when it comes to accepting both Swedish and Finnish cultural differences, such as sexual equality and the strong position of women in public life and society.

Moreover, in recent years, Sweden has taken steps to increase its defence resources. As a result, the Kremlin has cautioned Sweden about applying for full membership of NATO and the insecurity consequences that might arise in the Baltic Sea area as a result (Winnerstig 2014).

Sweden has not been involved in a war since Napoleonic times. During the Cold War, the country took a strong stance as a "neutral" country in defence of Western values and this attitude provided it with an opportunity to develop its military industry and national defence force. When the Soviet Union collapsed, this spirit started to fade. But the war in Ukraine changed Sweden's attitude towards national defence, and the Russian threat perspective resurfaced in the Swedish media (cf. Bertelman et al. 2015).

Indeed, both Swedish public opinion and the media strongly and openly underlined the new threat posed by Russia. The threat perception resonated with Swedish civil society no doubt because of the long Russo–Swedish war narrative, which has prompted Sweden and Russia to eye each other with deep mistrust for centuries. As opposed to the other BSR states, however, Sweden also has long rhizomatic connections to the West, and it has a hereditary monarchy. The Swedish superordinate national identity provides immigrants with the most favourable opportunities to integrate into a democratic and multicultural society. Among the criteria for inclusion within Swedish society are a command of the Swedish language and demonstration of respect for the country's political institutions and of a feeling of belonging to the country. Added to this, Sweden is able to facilitate smooth integration procedures for immigrants thanks to highly developed policies coupled with the latest information technologies (Lödén 2008). What is more, Sweden has the longest identity of the BSR countries when we think about the sovereignty of the nation state, and it is used to participating in the rhizomatic world by exploiting its historical-political neutralities in international politics. Hence, the country is not only well placed to provide prime opportunities for cultural integration, it also possesses the best know-how among the BSR countries when it comes to achieving balance in the global information world.

Finland: From Finlandization to Mediation[13]

Traditionally, Finland has been seen as a country that serves as a model of compromise and political consensus. But unlike Sweden, Finland has always harboured some doubts about its identity, and the legacy of the Winter War (1939–1940) against the Soviet Union has given rise to a strong existential narrative in the Finnish culture. Recent years, however, have witnessed increasingly diverse opinions over both domestic and foreign policy issues, and Finns have become less like-minded concerning relations with Russia.

Finland also has strong economic ties to Russia. For instance, after the Second World War Finnish industry was largely geared towards the repayment of war reparations to Russia. Since the collapse of the Nokia mobile phone industry, Finland has not managed to break back into the global market to the same extent, and the economic sanctions against Russia hit the Finnish economy particularly hard. Finland, like Sweden and Norway, also has an ageing population, which increases the burden on the social security and pension system. When it comes to defence, universal male conscription remains the cornerstone of Finland's defence capability, a requirement made all the more relevant considering the 1300-km border between Finland and Russia. The debate about full NATO membership is ongoing and was reinvigorated during the Ukraine crisis, although the majority of Finns are still in favour of continuing the traditional defence system.

Finland has traditionally endeavoured to maintain good relations with all countries. However, during the Cold War the Nordic country had a special relationship with the Soviet Union based on an Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. The neutrality status was slightly relaxed in the case of Moscow because Finland was in the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. For its part, Finland's position was significantly mitigated as far as Western capitals were concerned because in their eyes Finland constituted a "special case" in the conflict between East and West. The Baltic countries and Finland started to diverge on security policy issues at the start of the 2000s, however. Unlike its Baltic neighbours, Finland stayed out of NATO in 2002. Indeed, the Finnish leadership criticized the Baltic states and emphasized that there were no grounds for seeking membership. Further, the Nord Stream gas pipeline project, partly owned by Russian Gazprom, was opposed in the Baltic countries but praised in Finland as "a hinge between the EU and Russia".

Moreover, in 2008 the war in Georgia was interpreted in Helsinki as an "isolated incident", whereas in the Baltic states the war was seen as a threat. However, from the autumn of 2013 onwards the Ukrainian crisis reverberated throughout the whole BSR because even Finland and Sweden duly shared the threat perceptions of the Baltic countries.

The Ukraine conflict also served to reignite the classic "Finlandization" issue. Finland under President Kekkonen was similar to Russia under Putin in that there was considered to be "one truth", with domestic policy being driven by foreign policy. During the Cold War, Finland nurtured a special relationship with the Soviet Union even while harbouring a deep mistrust of the superpower on its doorstep. The situation is very different today with Finland no longer serving as a hinge between East and West, and the rhizomatic nature of its relations to other countries becoming increasingly apparent. The notion of one coherent narrative about Finland has started to unravel and several questions with rhizomatic offshoots remain open with regard to Finland's future. The first concerns the political-economic trend of utilizing the North Sea resources and the way in which the Finnish government will create relationships with Norway and Russia over the issue. The second relates to the security policy, namely the integration between Swedish and Finnish defence policy, the possibility of full NATO membership for both countries and the reactions on the part of the Kremlin. The third is connected with Finnish companies and how they will create new markets for products in the EU in the event that the Russian economy does not pick up and economic sanctions prevail. These northern dimensions, especially in the case of Finland, reinforce the argument for rhizomatic interconnections and implications.

Conclusions

The shift towards a predominantly middle class society, economic well-being and increased dependency on information technology that has taken place during the past twenty-five years has allowed the younger generations in the West and northern Europe to focus upon self-actualization as opposed to striving to fulfil basic needs. This is particularly evident in Sweden and Finland but also among the 20–40-year age group in the Baltic states. The middle class in St. Petersburg and Moscow are also loath to see a return to former times. At the same time, refugees from poorer countries are seeking to satisfy their basic physiological needs by fleeing to Europe, adding to the economic burden of an already financially strapped

Europe, while the ensuing multiculturalism threatens the support for the welfare state and diminishes the self-actualization opportunities of the middle classes. As Borg and Dietz (2016) argue, the EU's threat perceptions and fears of Otherness are not the only enemy, but so are its own past and the legacy of the Cold War-era security culture. This is precisely the same issue confronting the BSR, namely how to ensure security in society while balancing sovereign nation statehood with interconnectedness to the networked global information world.

A new kind of phenomenon whereby the global and ongoing migration of people is intermingling with portrayals of and reactions to their plight in the mass and social media can be seen as symbolic of the rhizomatic nature of reality. Sweden and Finland have played an active role in trying to alleviate the crisis with substantial intakes of refugees, whereas the Baltic states have understandably been more reserved, as they simply lack the resources to absorb tens of thousands of people and also have a different cultural composition compared to Sweden and Finland. A pivotal question is how the BSR can safeguard its solidarity and unity amid internal and external pressures while engaging in and preserving positive dialogue with Russia at the same time. The middle classes and the information-hungry public throughout the BSR and Russia will play a key role in fostering this dialogue by cooperating, communicating and avoiding adherence to monoculturalism and a single set of values. Historical geopolitical understanding, local values and new information networks can, and should, co-exist in harmony. Mobile and virtual neighbouring will be a key instrument in supporting positive dialogue and security in the increasingly rhizomatic informational world.

Yet the rhizomatic world will not function and there will be no real possibility for constructive dialogue if the BSR continues to suspect that there is always some hidden agenda in the political rhetoric and discourse that are also an inevitable part of the rhizomatic world order. Rhizomatic networks can easily give rise to conspiracy theories that have no basis in fact, and which can become fertile ground for ethnic xenophobia and anti-immigrant campaigns. The rationally linear and politically, managerially and economically controlled environment will not function in the rhizome networks. Ambiguity cannot be reduced by force and centralized decision-making, and authoritarianism is incompatible with the rhizomatic environment. Authoritarian regimes cannot exert control over the rhizomatic reality but they can choose how they react to it, either by empowering the nation state and furthering civil society's interests or by provoking

resistance and engendering crises. The only way to foster a safe and secure environment in the BSR is by accepting rhizome-based social cohesion. This calls for a new breed of shared leadership, open and public discussion, strong democratic administrative systems and institutions, as well as a more educated and mobile population throughout the BSR. When combined, the best practices and specific know-how embedded in each country form a unique rhizome.

NATO and the EU remain the two chief organizations for cooperation in the BSR region. They both have quite clearly delineated official policies and tasks, but they can still operate in a rhizomatic way to support and empower the BSR countries. This calls for specific political, economic and security plans for each BSR country, as well as common, shared plans. At the same time—in the rhizomatic sense—all BSR states will have to take care of their particular relationships with Russia. A practical example of the development of a new kind of instrument is the so-called "Nordic-Baltic–Poland" cooperation forum (NBP9), established to reflect on and discuss the new security situation in relation to Russia (Eizenšmits 2015).

Cooperative endeavours notwithstanding, the BSR is a geopolitical, cultural and economic entity with long historical and rhizomatic roots that are extending into an unknown future. Estonia has charted its course by linking its national strategy to the cyber society and also by strengthening its ties to NATO. Latvia has focused on strategic communication and the question of establishing dialogue between the Russian minority and ethnic Latvians. In a similar vein, Estonia has focused on cyber security and the question of fostering dialogue between the Russian minority and ethnic Estonians. Lithuania, for its part, has chosen a more existential path due to its unique history. Historically, Lithuanians are the most distinct culture compared to Estonians or Latvians. Like Latvians, they speak an Indo-European language, but the historical links between Lithuania and Latvia are not as strong as those between Latvia and Estonia. But the rhizomatic information age can serve to harmonize these differences over time. All three Baltic states have not been very open to receiving refugees, their resistance stemming to a large extent from the argument advanced by Estonia and Latvia in particular that they already have a large number of "immigrants" in their midst who have remained since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Sweden and Finland, in turn, are able to lean on their strong Nordic and welfare society heritage. Sweden has a fairly long tradition of assimilating refugees into society, while the war history of both countries has pro-

duced a rhizome within which they may have to remain outside of NATO's defence umbrella. Needless to say, Russia is loath to condone either country joining NATO. Finland, for its part, may consider it more prudent to stay out of the Western military alliance, not least due to its unique historical relationship to Russia (cf. Geopolitical Diary 2015). For almost 100 years Finland was a semi-autonomous part of the Russian empire, and the mobile economic, social and cultural neighbouring between the Finnish region and the Russian Karelian region was mutually fruitful. This historical period has much to offer in terms of providing solutions to contemporary misunderstandings.

Russia, on the other hand, has difficulties in accommodating mobile neighbouring because it has not broken away from its Soviet past. The Kremlin is wary of adapting to Western democratic ideals and the market economy. The Kremlin misunderstands the West's interpretation of globalization and is seeking to isolate itself through conservatism, patriotism and militarism. These isolationist tendencies are also rhizomatic in nature, characterized by the Kremlin's will to spread its influence both domestically and internationally, while trying at the same time to deny the hegemony of the EU, the US and NATO. Authoritarian regimes cannot control rhizomatic networks, but they can exploit them to further their own aims. Anarchistic groups can also utilize rhizomatic connections for their own benefit, but revolution in the classical sense, and the straightforward replacement of one government with another, may not function because the connections extend in so many different directions and dimensions.

The EU has failed to see that Russia is not only interested in global economic dialogue but also in the new rhizomatic geopolitical dialogue. Indeed, the rhizomatic-geopolitical nexus is an intriguing one, and it calls for more diverse communication techniques than those employed by normative and "hinge" diplomacy. Multiple actors at different levels are likely to be involved in negotiations. Not only one clear agreement or goal will be achieved but different aims at different levels will be in progress at the same time. Adaptation, continuous learning, self-trust and trust in others will be key. Arriving at a mutual understanding of the role of information will be crucial in modernizing the geopolitical environment.

So, how can we ensure that life within and outside these rhizomatic communities becomes more harmonious, and how can real dialogue be fostered? The solution lies in our analysing and understanding the problems past, present and future, in the building of networks and the breaking

away from the top-down tradition by manoeuvring to the centre of the network, thereby allowing it to act as the central hub (see Fussell 2015). It is impossible to control everything through the rigid hinge model of reality. Instead, an environment should be created where cross-border rhizomatic relationships can flourish and those closest to the problem are empowered to move with speed and precision in an increasingly mobile and dynamic neighbourhood.

Notes

1. Developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1983), the term "rhizomatic" is used throughout this chapter to refer to the multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points that are characteristic of the way in which information is represented and interpreted today. The rhizomatic phenomenon can also be compared to hybridization, as well as to the biological concept of mutualism, in which two different species or issues interact together to form a multiplicity.
2. I see the term "hinge" as being analogous with the concept of the suture (following the Lacanian and post-structuralist intellectual pedigree), in that it can be used as an academic metaphor to describe the intricacies of inside/outside interrelations and dynamics.
3. Big Data has three dimensions: volume, velocity and variety. As all three dimensions grow exponentially, the process is most aptly visualized or described in terms of a rhizome.
4. According to Stratfor's Decade Forecast: 2015–2025, "Nationalism has already risen significantly in Europe. Compounding this is the Ukrainian crisis and Eastern European countries' focus on the perceived threat from Russia. Eastern Europe's concern about Russia creates yet another Europe—four in total, if we separate the United Kingdom and Scandinavia from the rest of Europe. Considered with the rise of Euroskeptic parties on the right and left, the growing delegitimation of mainstream parties and the surging popularity of separatist parties within European countries, the fragmentation and nationalism that we forecast in 2005, and before, is clearly evident."
5. In 2010, the EU and the Russian Federation started negotiations on a visa-free regime between their territories, although the EU is dubious about opening up the borders due to the high risk of an increase in human trafficking and drug imports into Europe.

6. According to Luoma-aho (2015), stakeholder engagement has risen on the agenda of public relations recently mostly due to the introduction of real-time media and new hybrid and rhizomatic forms of marketing, advertising and public relations. Engaging stakeholders is no mean feat in the information-rich environment, comparable to a pinball match; organizational messages can now be transmitted and received directly, such as those deliberately disseminated by the state to online communities, but often bounce around randomly in the online environment. To this end, Luoma-aho distinguishes between three different types of stakeholder relationships: the positively engaged *faithholders*, the negatively engaged *hateholders*, and the *fakeholders*, namely the inauthentic personas created by astroturfing and algorithms. Positive dialogue needs to support the faitholders, engage the hateholders and expose the fakeholders.
7. The following example is illustrative of the Kremlin's trolling activities: "Since spring 2014, thousands of fake LiveJournal blogs have been mass-posting content promoting a pro-Kremlin stance on world events, attacking Western leaders and praising Russian President Vladimir Putin. Using custom Python code, Lawrence Alexander was able to isolate and analyze these accounts. Delving deeper into the metadata of the supporting Twitter bot network could provide further clues as to their origin." (Alexander 2015) An example of rhizomatic networks is Kaspersky Lab, a Moscow-based company currently ranking fifth in revenue among security software makers worldwide. Founder and Chief Executive Officer Eugene Kaspersky was educated at a KGB-sponsored cryptography institute and went on to work for Russian military intelligence. The company now publishes reports on electronic espionage by the US, Israel, the UK and Russia (Matlack et al. 2015).
8. The following excerpt encapsulates the current information environment in Estonia: "In DESI 2015, Estonia has an overall score (https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/scoreboard/estonia - _ftn1) of 0.55 and ranks 7th out of the 28 EU Member States. Estonia is at the forefront in the supply and use of Digital Public Services, which are the second best in Europe. Estonia remains the leader in the availability of pre-filled online forms, and in the use of ePrescriptions by General Practitioners (100 %). Estonians are well-skilled in the use of digital technologies (their digital skills levels are above those of the average EU user) and keen users of a variety of

internet activities. 22 % of Estonians shop cross border, a higher rate than the European average." (Digital Agenda for Europe 2015; see also Tambur 2014) The Digital Economy and Society Index. http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/desi.

9. The following excerpt encapsulates the current information environment in Latvia: "In DESI 2015, Latvia has an overall score of 0.44 and ranks 18th out of the 28 EU Member States. High speed broadband connections are available to 90 % of homes and Latvia has seen increases in the take-up of fixed broadband (63 % of households). More Latvians are going online (72 %) and 25 % of Internet users are using eGovernment actively, but both remain below the EU average (75 % and 33 %, respectively). Although Latvians do shop online, not many SMEs sell online. Integration of digital technology by Latvian businesses is the lowest in the EU." (Digital Agenda for Europe 2015)
10. The following extract sums up the current information environment in Lithuania: "In DESI 2015, Lithuania has an overall score (https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/scoreboard/lithuania -_ftn1) of 0.52 and ranks 11th out of the 28 EU Member States. Relative to last year, Lithuania has not succeeded in taking advantage of the extensive availability of fast and affordable broadband networks. Fast broadband (>30 MBps) is available to 97 % of homes. While only 58 % of households take a broadband subscription, i.e. significantly less than the 70 % EU average, as many as half of those (52 %) choose a fast broadband connection. 25 % of Lithuanians have never used the Internet, however the vast majority of those who do use the Internet do so for online banking (74 %) and video calls (79 %). 18 % of SMEs in Lithuania sell online and 11 % sell online cross-border." (Digital Agenda for Europe 2015)
11. According to Stratfor's Decade Forecast: 2015–2025, "Poland will diversify its own trade relationships to emerge as the dominant power on the strategic Northern European Plain. Moreover, we expect Poland to be the leader of an anti-Russia coalition that would, significantly, include Romania during the first half of this decade. In the second half of the decade, this alliance will play a major role in reshaping the Russian borderlands and retrieving lost territories through informal and formal means. Eventually, as Moscow weakens, this alliance will become the dominant influence not only in

Belarus and Ukraine, but also farther east. This will further enhance Poland's and its allies' economic and political position."

12. The following extract encapsulates the current information environment in Sweden: "In DESI 2015, Sweden has an overall score (https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/scoreboard/sweden - _ftn1) of 0.66 and ranks 2nd out of the 28 EU Member States. Sweden scores among the top five in all DESI dimensions. Fixed broadband is available to 99 % of homes. This is remarkable given Sweden's geographical configuration. High speed broadband networks are available to 76 % of homes and 99 % of homes are covered by mobile 4G/LTE technology. 91 % of Swedes use the Internet. 4.8 % of the workforce represents ICT specialists, almost twice as much as the EU average, but demand for ICT professionals in Sweden outstrips supply. Although 80 % of Internet users shop online, and 30 % of them buy online from other countries, only 7.7 % of Sweden's SMEs sell online across borders." (Digital Agenda for Europe 2015)
13. The following extract encapsulates the current information environment in Finland: "In DESI 2015, Finland has an overall score (https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/scoreboard/finland - _ftn1) of 0.64 and ranks 3rd out of the 28 EU Member States. Finland is among the EU leaders in digital "human capital". 90 % of the population are regular internet users and the Finnish workforce has one of the highest proportions of ICT specialists (https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/scoreboard/finland - _ftn2) in the EU (4.7 %). Relative to last year, more and more businesses are integrating digital technologies in their processes. However, only 14 % of SMEs in Finland sell online, in line with the EU average, despite their citizens' propensity for eCommerce." (Digital Agenda for Europe 2015)

References

Alexander, Lawrence. 2015. Massive LiveJournal Troll Network Pushes Pro-Kremlin Narratives. *Global Voices*, December 22. https://globalvoices.org/2015/12/22/massive-livejournal-troll-network-pushes-pro-kremlin-narratives/print/.

Bartkowski, Maciej. 2015. Countering Hybrid War: Civil Resistance as a National Defence Strategy. *Open Democracy*, May 12. https://www.opendemocracy.

net/civilresistance/maciej-bartkowski/countering-hybrid-war-civil-resistance-as-national-defence-strateg.

Bender, Jeremy. 2014. Putin Is Infiltrating European Politics with Shocking Effectiveness. *Business Insider*, December 9. http://uk.businessinsider.com/putin-is-infiltrating-europe-2014-12.

Bertelman, Tomas, Johan Molander, and Sven-Olof Peterson. 2015. Myths about Russia and Swedish Non-Alliance. *The American Interest*, August 18. http://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/08/18/myths-about-russia-and-swedish-non-alliance/.

Bogdanas, Ramunas. 2014. Philosopher Nerija Putinaitė on Three Lithuanian Europes. *Delfi*, October 27. http://en.delfi.lt/lithuania/society/philosopher-nerija-putinaite-on-three-lithuanian-europes.d?id=66212578.

Borg, Stefan, and Thomas Dietz. 2016. Postmodern EU? Integration between Alternative Horizons and Territorial Angst. *JCMS* 2016 54(1): 136–151. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcms.12327/epdf.

Browning, Christopher S., and Pertti Joenniemi. 2007. Gibraltar, Jerusalem, Kaliningrad: Peripherality, Marginality, Hybridity. *Report from the Åland Islands Peace Institute*, No. 1-2007. http://www.peace.ax/images/stories/pdf/Report1-2007.pdf.

Chia, Robert. 1999. A 'Rhizomic' Model of Organizational Change and Transformation: Perspective from a Metaphysics of Change. *British Journal of Management* 10: 209–227.

Decade Forecast. 2015–2025. The Fifth Decade Forecast Published by Stratfor. *Stratfor Global Intelligence*. http://www.stratfor.com.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. 1983. *On the Line*. Trans. John Johnston. New York: Semiotext(s).

Digital Agenda for Europe. 2015. 2016. A Europe 2020 Initiative. *European Commission*. https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/progress-country.

Eizenšmits, Arnolds. 2015. The 'Why?' for Renewed Defence Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. *Latvian Institute for International Affairs*. http://liia.lv/en/blogs/nbp9-time-for-a-leap-forward/.

Fussell, Chris. 2015. Why Special Ops Stopped Relying So Much on Top-Down Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, May 27. https://hbr.org/2015/05/why-special-ops-stopped-relying-so-much-on-top-down-leadership.

Geopolitical Diary. 2015. Sweden and Finland Consider NATO Membership. *Stratfor*. https://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary.

Guha, Manabrata. 2011. *Reimagining War in the 21st Century*. New York: Routledge.

Joenniemi, Pertti, and Alexander Sergunin. 2016. Russian Subnational Actors: Paradiplomacies in the European and Russian Arctic. In *Future Security of the Global Arctic: State Policy, Economic Security and Climate*, ed. Lassi Heininen, 55–76. London: Palgrave.

Kojala, Linas, and Vilius Ivanauskas. 2014. Lithuanian Eastern Policy 2004–2014: The Role Theory Approach, 49–71. http://www.academia.edu/10651860/Lithuanian_Eastern_Policy_2004-2014_the_Role_Theory_Approach.

Laats, J.M. 2015. Ossinovski Causes Trouble for Coalition on Day 1. *News.err*,September4.http://news.err.ee/v/politics/521b38a3-acfd-484d-bfa6-9270ce560fc9.

Laine, Veera, et al. 2015. Zugzwang in Slow Motion? The Implications of Russia's System-Level Crisis. *The Finnish Institute of International Affairs*. FIIA Analysis 6, December 2015, Helsinki, Finland.

Lödén, H. 2008. Swedish: Being or Becoming? Immigration, National Identity and the Democratic State. *International Journal of Social Sciences* 3: 4 .http://www.kau.se/sites/default/files/Dokument/subpage/2009/12/v3_4_33_pdf_17281.pdf

Lubov. 2015. Top Social Networks in Russia: Latest Numbers and Trends. *Russian Search Tips*, January 20. http://www.russiansearchtips.com/2015/01/top-social-networks-russia-latest-numbers-trends/.

Lucas, Edward. 2015. "The Coming Storm." Baltic Sea Security Report. *The Center for European Policy Analysis* (CEPA). http://www.cepa.org/content/new-cepa-report-baltic-sea-security-coming-storm.

Luoma-aho, Vilma. 2015. Understanding Stakeholder Engagement: Faith-holders, Hateholders & Fakeholders. *Research Journal of the Institute for Public Relations* 2(1). http://www.instituteforpr.org/understanding-stakeholder-engagement-faith-holders-hateholders-fakeholders/.

Maliukevičius, Nerijus. 2015. 'Tools of Destabilization': Kremlin's Media Offensive in Lithuania. *Journal on Baltic Security* 1(1): 117–126.

Mangold, W. Glynn, and David J. Faulds. 2009. Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion mix. *Business Horizon* 52: 357–365 .http://www.researchgate.net/profile/David_Faulds/publication/222415599_Social_media_The_new_hybrid_element_of_the_promotion_mix/links/00463532845a0100af000000.pdf

Matlack, Carol, Michael Riley, and Jordan Robertson. 2015. Kaspersky Lab Has Published Reports on Alleged Electronic Espionage by the U.S., Israel, and the U.K.—But Hasn't Looked as Aggressively at Russia. *Bloomberg*, March 21. http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-19/cybersecurity-kaspersky-has-close-ties-to-russian-spies.

McNamara, Eoin Micheál, Magnus Nordenman, and Charly Salonius-Pasternak. 2015. Nordic-Baltic Security and US Foreign Policy: A Durable Transatlantic Link? *Finnish Institute of International Affairs*. http://www.fiia.fi/fi/publication/515/nordic-baltic_security_and_us_foreign_policy/?utm_source=julkaisutiedote_fin&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=nordic-baltic%20security.

Morozov, Viatcheslav. 2015. Aimed for the Better, Ended Up with the Worst: Russia and International Order. *Journal on Baltic Security* 1(1): 26–36.

Muravska, Tatjana. 2015. Divided Latvia Goes with the Flow on Refugee Policies. *Europe's World*, October 26. http://europesworld.org/2015/10/26/divided-latvia-goes-with-the-flow-on-refugee-policies/#.VnUUaL_D-K8.

NSCO. 2016. *NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence*. web site. http://www.stratcomcoe.org.

Paavola, Jarkko, and Harri Jalonen. 2015. *An Approach to Detect and Analyze the Impact of Biased Information Sources in the Social Media*. Proceedings of the 14th European Conference on Cyber Warfare & Security, University of Hertfordshire Hatfield, UK 2–3 July 2015, ed. Dr. Nasser Abouzakhar, a conference managed by ACPI, UK, 213–220.

Paviolinis, Žygimantas. 2014. The First Decade of Lithuania in the European Union: between Meta-Political Values and 'Pragmatic' Politics. *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 12(1): 55–74.

Popescu, Nicu. 2015. Hybrid Tactics: Neither New Nor Only Russian. *European Union Institute for Security Studies*. http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Alert_4_hybrid_warfare.pdf.

Richards, Susan. 2011. *Lost and Found in Russia*. In *Encounters in a Deep Heartland*. London: I. B. Tauris.

Robertson, Scott P., et al. 2013. Political Discourse on Social Networking Sites: Sentiment, In-Group/Out-Group Orientation and Rationality. Information Polity: *The International Journal of Government & Democracy in the Information Age* 18(2): 107–126.

Russia Insider. 2015. New Sanctions against Russia—Merkel on Collision Course with Europe. December 7. http://russia-insider.com/en/new-sanctions-against-russia-merkel-collision-course-europe/ri11697.

Sakwa, Richard. 2015. *Frontline Ukraine*. In *Crisis in the Borderlands*. UK: I. B. Tauris.

StratComCoe. 2015. Internet Trolling as a Hybrid Warfare Tool: The Case of Latvia. Executive Summary. http://www.stratcomcoe.org (Board of Authors: Prof. Andris Spruds, Assoc. Prof. Anda Rožukalne, Dr. Klavs Sedlenieks, Mr. Martins Daugulis, Ms. Diana Potjomkina, Ms. Beatrix Tölgyesi (UK), Ms. Ilvija Bruge).

Tambur, Silver. 2014. Estonia Second in the World by Internet Freedom. *Estonia World*, December 5. http://estonianworld.com/technology/estonia-second-world-internet-freedom/.

Tanquintic-Misa, Esther. 2015. NATO Member Lithuania Publishes War Survival Manual to Prepare Citizens vs Russia. *International Business Time*, January 17. http://www.ibtimes.com.au/nato-member-lithuania-publishes-war-survival-manual-prepare-citizens-vs-russia-1412117.

Veijola, Soile, and Petra Falin. 2014. “Mobile Neighbouring”. *Mobilities*. London and New York: Routledge.
Winnerstig, Mike. 2014. Security Policy at Road’s End? The Roles of Sweden and Finland in the Nordic-Baltic Defence Cooperation Process. *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 12(1): 151–172.

CHAPTER 4

Security Dynamics in the Baltic Sea Region Before and After the Ukraine Crisis

Elena Kropatcheva

Introduction

The Ukraine crisis—the internal destabilization and political crisis in Ukraine in 2013, followed by Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the ongoing "hybrid war" (Racz 2015) in the East of Ukraine since then (more details on developments in Sakwa 2015; Kropatcheva 2016)—has been the most dramatic recent crisis in Russian–Western relations. Its impact is especially strong in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), which includes Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden.[1]

There are many definitions of "region" (Breslin and Croft 2012; Moller 2012, 56–86). In this chapter, the word implies geographical, geopolitical, economic and cultural closeness, but also a process of binding and, by forming a common identity, becoming a region (Moller 2012, 56–86).

The main characteristic of the BSR is its complexity. It is difficult to define its borders and different regional institutions, through their mem-

E. Kropatcheva (✉)
Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy, University of Hamburg (IFSH), Hamburg, Germany

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_4

berships, define what "Baltic" is differently. Diverse regions—for example Nordic, Baltic, Nordic–Baltic, Euro–Arctic, post-Soviet, Western and Russian—transcend the BSR and interact within it.

The complexity of the BSR can be also understood using the term "suture" (Zizek 2001, 58), meaning that inside/outside borders merge and it is not clear who is inside and who outside. The "suture" of the region lies in Russia's being both a BSR insider—belonging to it geographically, historically, culturally, economically and from the security perspective—but also an outsider, as the "Other" in terms of identity and even as a (potential) threat (more on Russia's role in Makarychev and Sergunin 2013; Kramer 2013; Trenin 2011; Šleivyte 2010). In many ways, Russia has not fit in because of its gradual domestic democratic regression and problematic foreign policy, and security apprehensions about it among its post-Soviet Baltic neighbours, as well as Russia's own choice to stay apart as a regional great power.

Russia's complex role in the BSR is also reflected in its different attitudes towards the Baltic states and vice versa. Russia has had problematic relations with the post-Soviet Baltic countries as well as with Sweden and Denmark but constructive relations with Finland and Germany (Trenin 2011). As a result, Russia—intentionally or unintentionally—has divided the region. Because of the ambivalent roles that Russia has played—insider/outsider, integration/fragmentation—there have been both cooperation and conflict in the BSR.

This chapter analyzes security dynamics—cooperation and conflict—within the BSR, by focusing on multilateral security-related institutions. It shows that, despite various attempts over more than twenty years to develop cooperative security and bind Russia, these attempts have largely failed. The chapter starts with an explanation of key terms. After this, an overview of cooperative and conflicting security dynamics is presented as is the development of regional institutions, describing Russia as an outsider. The concluding section discusses the impact of the Ukraine crisis on the security dynamics in the BSR in more general terms.

Multilateral Security-Related Institutions

As Thomas Risse (2002, 605) observed, "[T]here are at least as many definitions of (international) institutions as there are theoretical perspectives." In this chapter, a broader understanding of institutions is adopted, such

as of formal governmental security-related frameworks. It deals with both regional institutions, which "emerged from the internal dynamics of the region" to solve common regional problems through collective actions and reflect the strategies of the regional actors (Farrell 2005, 2), but also those institutions with a wider regional and global reach, which involve regional actors and which meet in the BSR. This is important as "the regional dimension of security cannot be separated from the global order" (Farrell 2005, 15).

The BSR is exemplary for "overlap" of institutions (Flynn and Farrell 1999). A great number of institutions have been active here and their memberships and tasks partly overlap. These were to contribute to cooperative security in the BSR, especially ensuring that regional institutions involving neighbors could be more effective (Tavares 2010). The concept of cooperative security implies increasing mutual security and predictability through reciprocity, inclusiveness, dialogue, transparency, and trust-/confidence-building (Nolan 1994; Kühn 2015). Its aim is to generate interstate relations "in which disputes are expected to occur, but … within the limits of agreed-upon norms and established procedures" (Nolan 1994, 5).

According to the constructivist/normative view, actors cooperate within institutions, because they are "socialized": common norms constrain their behavior and, thereby, institutions contribute to cooperative security (Peters 2005, 55). Most studies on Russia's participation in security-related institutions have shown that there has been only an insignificant "socialization" effect on it, if there was one at all (Gheciu 2005; Schimmelfennig et al. 2006). Realists view institutions as instruments of states' policies with a predominance of balance-of-power policies. This is why they cannot alter states' behavior (Simmons and Martin 2002, 194).Within the BSR there have been both institutions that tried to bind/"socialize" Russia so that it would become a responsible cooperative actor as well as those institutions which replicated a realist balance-of-power logic and contributed to regional fragmentation.[2] In other words, "different and even competing sets of security practices" have co-existed within the BSR (Adler and Greve 2009, 63). These institutions are studied in the following sections.

Cooperative Security Dynamics in the BSR

This section considers institutions in which Russia participated or with which it engaged and which offered opportunities for its inclusion and binding in the BSR. It starts with an overview of specific regional

institutions and then discusses institutions with a broader European and global outreach, which have influenced BSR security dynamics.

Regional Institutions

Russia has been interested in specific regional institutions in the BSR since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. According to Šleivyte (2010, 129), in the 1990s Russia made proposals to create a regional model of interaction on security with the participation of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden. However, these proposals did not receive international support because Russia also tried, thereby, to block NATO enlargement in 2004.

Instead, regional institutions emerged dealing with a broad range of issues, including culture, history, human rights, economy and the environment, with security just one of the agenda topics. The main institution covering the entire BSR is the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS). It is a political forum, founded in 1992, which includes Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden as well as the European Commission (EC). One of the long-term priorities of the CBSS is to develop "the concept of BSR identity and a sense of belonging" to the BSR (see CBSS 2016). Some of the security-related topics dealt with in the CBSS are border control (Task Force on Organized Crime with cooperation with EUROPOL and INTERPOL), action against trafficking and organized crime (Task Force Against Trafficking), civil protection (coordination of rescue and emergency services), nuclear and radiation safety (in the past, projects on modernization of Soviet-built reactors in Russia and Lithuania, agreement on early warning of nuclear accidents, monitoring and training in this field) and maritime safety (surveillance of air and sea traffic) (CBSS 2015; Oldberg 2012). All these areas also involve some cooperation between military authorities (Oldberg 2012, 51).

Because of the dominant role of the EU, which has been criticized by Russia (Makarychev and Sergunin 2013, 2; Oldberg 2012, 15), some projects are financed by the EU and are run in close cooperation with the relevant EU institutions. Nonetheless, Russia has placed EU–Russia topics such as economic cooperation, visa facilitation and modernization, especially of the Kaliningrad area, on the CBSS agenda. In 2001–2002 and 2012–2013, Russia assumed the presidency of the CBSS. It tried thereby—vainly—"to present itself as … a responsible and attractive

regional actor", which no longer posed any military security threat to its neighbors (Makarychev and Sergunin 2013, 2). Over the years, Russia showed interest in cooperation on military issues, without success, however, because of the broad agenda of the CBSS and the EU's interest in human security aspects (Oldberg 2012, 2). In general, most of the time Russia acted constructively within the CBSS, contributing to joint decisions and seeking consensus (Oldberg 2012, 2).

Because of the Ukraine crisis and at the initiative of the EU as a protest against Russia's policy, there have been no CBSS summits since 2014. Nonetheless, many activities of the CBSS have taken place as usual, with Russia's participation. These include conferences on transnational security topics, meetings of experts, respective bodies/agencies and operational exercises (CBSS 2015).

One smaller and more specific example of regional institutions is the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM), established in 1980 as the governing body of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (1974) and known as the Helsinki Convention (participants are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, Russia and the EU). It addresses maritime safety and security, the safety of navigation, and oil spill response preparedness in the BSR. Russia considers it the main institution for cooperation on environmental security in the BSR (Oldberg 2012, 57). This cooperation has continued even after the Ukraine crisis.

In a nutshell, the examples of the CBSS and HELCOM show that Russia, despite "its claims to great power status", was "able to cooperate on an equal basis with several small neighbours" and has been interested in developing these institutions "in their own right" and "as a link to Western Europe" (Oldberg 2012, 3). Regional institutions with Russia's participation are "de-politicized", have loose structures and are "intentionally kept free" of hard security issues (Norkus 1998, 157).[3] Their focus is on "soft" security, that is "upon common challenges calling for cooperation rather than dealing with security problems where cooperation seems difficult, irrelevant, or hampering" (Norkus 1998, 157). "Soft" security implies that threats are coming from non-state actors (e.g., organized crime) and from non-military, transnational challenges (e.g., human, environmental and economic), while "hard" security has a realist underpinning of threats coming from the states and thus the focus is on traditional military aspects. Because of the dominant role of the EU in these regional fora, the EU states were more interested in these new—soft—aspects of security,

while Russia was more interested in hard security issues (Oldberg 2012). Thus, security is also a kind of "suture" that unites and divides the BSR.

Because of their focus on soft security, cooperation within the CBSS and HELCOM, though more limited and less high-level, continued after the Ukraine crisis, but this is also why these institutions are unable to impact Russian–Western relations in a more decisive and positive way. They do not address serious state-to-state problems and, because of their loose character, their "binding" power is weak.

Institutions of a Broader European and Global Outreach

The second group of security-related institutions with a broader European and global outreach are the OSCE, EU–Russia and NATO–Russia cooperation formats. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (formerly the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe [CSCE]) is the most inclusive institution, in which Russia and the Baltic countries are participating states. They have signed on to a set of OSCE normative democratic commitments, which should have made their cooperation easier. However, in practice, these commitments have often been violated by Russia (Kropatcheva 2015). As in the CBSS, Russia is interested primarily in the political-military dimension of the OSCE.

The auspices of the OSCE have offered many opportunities for Russia and the Baltic states to cooperate within, for example, the framework of the Vienna Document and in different OSCE confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). In the early 1990s, the CSCE facilitated the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Šleivyte 2010, 125). The CSCE also helped in the conflicts between Russia and Latvia and Estonia over the rights of the Russian minorities by establishing field presences in these two countries from 1993 to 2001, with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities monitoring the situation (intensively until 2004).

Cooperation within the OSCE between Russia and other Baltic states has a broader OSCE regional outreach, with soft security issues being least problematic, and not confined to specific BSR matters. In the past, there were calls to create a Baltic security round table or specific Baltic CSBMs. However, these were not realized because Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania considered Russia a risk and so they sought greater European and US involvement (Norkus 1998, 158). Nonetheless, smaller regional OSCE activities with a focus on the BSR, such as training or seminars,

occasionally take place. The OSCE came to the foreground in conflict mediation efforts in Ukraine. However, the disagreements within the OSCE on the situation in Ukraine have been too strong to enable a constructive dialogue among its participating states. In 2015, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly appointed the first Special Representative for the Baltic Sea area, and Germany—the OSCE Chairmanship in 2016—has implemented various activities to improve cooperation within the BSR, including in the area of soft security.

Because the borders of Russia and the EU meet in the BSR, this region is important in the context of EU–Russia cooperation. The EU–Russia security dialogue began in 2000 with the signing of the Joint Declaration on Strengthening Dialogue and Cooperation on Political and Security Matters in Europe (EC 2000). In 2002 the EU and Russia agreed to enhance cooperation on political and security matters (EC 2002) and in 2003, on deepening cooperation in four "common spaces", two of which are security-related: a space for freedom, safety and justice and an external security space (EC 2003).

Ideas about deepening cooperation on hard security issues between Russia and the EU have largely failed. As Golunov (2013) notes, cooperation on soft security matters is taking place actively, but is often overlooked. Among these are activities between Russia and EUROPOL (since 2003), a partnership between the common EU border agency, FRONTEX, and the Russian Border Guard Service (since 2006) with joint operations (e.g., "Good Will 2009" and "Baltics 2011"), a memorandum of understanding to facilitate information exchange and joint investigations between the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction and Russian *Gosnarkokontrol* and the EU–Russian Working Group on Customs Border issues (since 2007) (Golunov 2013, 127).

Besides these broader EU–Russia cooperation formats, since 2009 the EU has dealt specifically with the BSR through its European Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR 2016). Realizing that many issues in the BSR can be solved only with the participation of external partners, the Northern Dimension (ND 2016) initiative was launched in 1999 and was renewed in 2006. It is a common policy of the EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland intended to promote security and stability in the region. In the area of security, there are projects on disaster management and civil protection, the fight against illegal migration and transnational crime, facilitation of people-to-people contacts and border management. In summary, the EU and Russia cooperate on soft security in the BSR within various

specific regional Baltic and broader European formats. Thereby, the EU is trying to protect itself from security threats coming from Russia, but also to bind Russia as a constructive actor in the region. For Russia this cooperation is important to show its declared multilateralism and also to achieve specific objectives, such as visa facilitation or modernization. Both partners need each other to fight common transnational challenges.

Since the Ukraine crisis, the EU and Russia have been imposing sanctions and counter-sanctions on each other, and many BSR states have suffered the most from them due to close ties (Hyndle-Hussein 2015, 7). However, there has been no unity in the position of EU BSR states towards sanctions, with Poland and Finland, for example, taking a softer and more pragmatic stance (Dolidze 2015). Despite this aggravation, some cooperation formats between Russia and the EU in the BSR still function, such as, for example, activities on trans-border issues (Lavrov 2014a).

Other important borders in the BSR are those between Russia and NATO. Dialogue and cooperation between them happened mainly within the NATO–Russia Council (NRC). There are only very few examples of joint NATO–Russia BSR-related projects: joint counterterrorism exercises "Vigilant Skies", which have taken place in Russian, Turkish and Polish airspaces since 2011 with the participation of these three countries (NATO 2013a); and cooperation between scientists from NRC countries, such as in 2013, in detecting Baltic oil spills (NATO 2013b). Practical cooperation between Russia and NATO states in the BSR is difficult, partly because of the wider scope of this relationship and partly because of problems between Russia and the post-Soviet Baltic states.

Since the Ukraine crisis, one no longer speaks about cooperation between Russia and NATO, but about communication. Since 1 April 2014, NATO has suspended military cooperation with Russia within the framework of the NRC.[4] What has remained are meetings between the NATO Secretary General and the Russian Permanent Representative to NATO and the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs as well as communication links between NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, the Head of the NATO Military Committee and the Head of the Russian General Staff, which are active and available 24/7. These are necessary to avoid serious military incidents (Task Force on Cooperation in Greater Europe 2015, 3).

Summing up, there have been diverse multilateral cooperation formats in the BSR, which have offered opportunities to bind the states of the

region together, especially involving Russia. Because of these cooperative practices, Sergey Lavrov (2012) called the BSR "one of the most prospering … regions of the world", where cooperation opportunities, which emerged with the geopolitical changes, were used by the states of the region effectively. In 2013, he also declared: "We are consistently reducing the amount of armaments and ammunition deployed in the Kaliningrad Region." (Lavrov 2013) Although official statements have to be treated with caution, Russia has not adopted any special security strategies for the BSR (by contrast to some other regions) (Oldberg 2012, 6), which reflects the fact that Russia has considered the BSR as safe and secure. Those cooperation or communication formats that remained within the BSR after the Ukraine crisis are those that are mostly needed by both the West and Russia—either to continue necessary cooperation on soft security or to prevent accidental military conflicts.

Worsening Conflicting Security Dynamics in the BSR

Relations in the BSR have been highly vulnerable, and mistrust quickly overshadowed slow positive dynamics. Due to the Ukraine crisis, negative dynamics have replaced any previous positive dynamics. This section looks at the development of conflicting security dynamics in the BSR.

Conflicting security dynamics partly developed from internal regional sources. Security problems in the BSR frequently arose from historical legacies, interwoven into contemporary problems. Such was the case of the Bronze Soldier situation in Estonia in 2007, an internal situation that quickly turned into a security problem. When Estonia sought to move the Soviet monument from central Tallinn to a military cemetery, an action that was strongly opposed by Moscow, pro-Moscow riots broke out in Tallinn and a cyberattack on Estonia followed, although it was not proven that Russia was behind the attack (Hyndle-Hussein 2015, 1). As a result, the post-Soviet Baltic states have become increasingly fearful that Russia might use cyberattacks; instrumentalize Russian-speaking minorities, raising the issue of the use of the Russian language; or even stage a military occupation. The 2008 Russo–Georgian War and Russia's annexation of the Crimea have only intensified these fears (Winnerstig 2014).

Further conflicting security dynamics were partly brought into the region from outside, at the level of Russian–Western relations. For example,

the BSR was one of the first regions to feel this tension in 1999 during the Kosovo crisis, when Russia opposed the NATO military operation or during disagreements over the "color revolutions" in 2003–2004 in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) space, which Russia saw as illegitimate and instigated by the West (for details see: Šleivyte 2010, 98, 147).

Because of their strong security apprehensions, from the early 1990s the post-Soviet Baltic states have aspired to receive Western security guarantees and protection from potential Russian threats, and in doing so competing with one another (Kramer 2013, 5). NATO has been gradually strengthening its presence in the region. The NATO air policing mission, which started in 2004 with four F-16 NATO fighters being deployed in Lithuania to patrol Baltic airspace, was largely a symbolic NATO response to the requests by post-Soviet Baltic states. Nonetheless, even this small deployment irritated Russian policymakers (Šleivyte 2010, 146). The US presence in the BSR, through its programs of support to the Baltic States and its plans (for example, to deploy an anti-ballistic missile system, *inter alia* in Poland), irritated Russia as well. After the Russo–Georgian War, NATO agreed (with the Eagle Guardian Plan) to reinforce the defense of Poland in the event of an unspecified adversary threatening its security, In 2010 the plan was extended to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which generated Russian criticism (Kramer 2013, 1, 6).

However, the greatest increase of NATO military presence in the BSR since the 1990s took place as a consequence of the Ukraine crisis: stationing special units in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, deploying additional fighter aircraft (from 4 to 16 fighters) to the Baltic States Policing Mission and Poland, increasing AWACS reconnaissance flights, establishing a stronger naval presence in the Baltic Sea and conducting larger and more frequent military exercises (Frear et al. 2014, 9). Individual NATO states, especially the US and the UK, have also increased their presence in the BSR (McNamara et al. 2015; Barnes 2016; Boyer 2016).

Post-Soviet Baltic states continue to ask for permanent NATO bases. In an interview on November 2015, NATO Secretary General Jen Stoltenberg averred that he no longer ruled this out (RFE/RL 2015a). Poland has been calling for the annulment of the NATO–Russia act (Zalan 2015), in which NATO promised to refrain from "permanent stationing of substantial combat forces" (NATO 1997). In February 2016, NATO decided to deploy a small number of forces to Eastern Europe, with numbers remaining at an overall constant level while having a structure of rotating units; it would be able to deter a potential Russian aggression

but refrain from violation of the NATO-Russia act (Barnes 2016). More details were decided at the NATO Summit in July 2016: beginning in early 2017 NATO will deploy four combat battalions of about 1,000 troops each to Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on a rotational basis. Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States will be the lead nations for the battalions (NATO 2016).

In addition, in neutral Sweden and Finland debates about the prospect for NATO membership have begun, with the supporters of membership growing. Both Sweden and Finland have begun to engage in NATO activities more enthusiastically (Nilsson 2015). Many of the Baltic states have increased military and defense spending and stationed military forces in the region (for example, by Sweden in Gotland [Musch-Borowsk 2015]). More Baltic states want to join NATO's missile defense shield and, in March 2015, Russia's ambassador to Denmark even threatened to outfit Russian warships with nuclear weapons if Denmark joined this program (Withnall 2015). Western policymakers have been discussing how to counteract a potential Russian "hybrid war" in the BSR (Racz 2015; Barnes 2016).

Russia perceived this gradual activation of NATO engagement in the BSR and its intensification after the Ukraine crisis as proof that any alliance created during the epoch of the Cold War is unable to change its genetic code (Lavrov 2014b). Russia's Ambassador to NATO, Alexander Grushko, criticized the "practically constant military naval presence of NATO" in the Baltic Sea (RFE/RL 2015b). Even though Russian forces in Central Eastern Europe (CEE) already outnumbered NATO's military units there, and in the BSR "it has a 10:1 edge in troops and maintains air dominance" (Wess 2016), in response to NATO's policy Russia has also been increasing its military presence there, which is seen in more frequent and significantly larger air and naval maneuvers, increased intelligence activities, militarization of the Kaliningrad area by deploying Iskander missiles (DW.com 2013) and strengthening the Baltic Sea Fleet (BSF) with a counter-NATO component (Jane's Intelligence Review 2015). The Russian BSF, with its main base in Kaliningrad, had conventional superiority in the BSR with 60 warships, 35,000 soldiers and sailors and 13,000 coastal defense troops (Reboka and Ozolina 2015). Until the Ukraine crisis, the significance of the BSF was rather symbolic as the fleet was not very active and its strategic ships were deployed more outside the region, according to Mikhail Barabanov (see DefenseNews.com 2015). After the Ukraine crisis, the role of the BSF grew. As Gorenburg (2015) argues, since precision-guided missiles may be launched from relatively small ships,

the Russian BSF "may pose a serious threat to regional security even if it does not succeed in building a wide array of large combat ships". There are also plans to strengthen the Russian military presence in the BSR by placing new army divisions there (see Rubaltic.ru 2016). Russia may also use government-organized cyber warfare in the region, as this is one of its strategic strengths in facing the NATO states (Gorenburg 2015).

Because of these opposing military activities by NATO and Russia, there have been many minor incidents and narrowly avoided serious collisions between their military forces, many of which happened in the BSR (Kearns et al. 2015; Frear et al. 2014).

In summary, the BSR is being re-militarized, and in the future it could even be re-nuclearized, since Iskander missiles can carry nuclear warheads. Then, NATO will face the question of the role nuclear weapons might play in protecting the Baltic allies against Russia (Glatz and Zapfe 2015). Thus, security dilemmas, mistrust and balance-of-power games have become predominant in the BSR.

BSR Institutions with Russia Being an Outsider

Gradually a multitude of security-related institutions have emerged in the BSR without Russia's participation or involvement. Most of them are also loosely structured discussion fora with few operational exercises and with the focus on soft security, some emerged "from internal dynamics", while others did so with the support of the US.

For example, the US was involved in consultations with Nordic and Baltic States on matters of security within the framework of the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (e-PINE) initiative (U.S. Department of State 2016) and provided assistance to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania through the US Northern European Initiative (NEI) (U.S. Department of State 2009). There were also specific initiatives to help develop operability among the forces of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, such as the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT), Baltic Naval Squadron (BALTRON) and Baltic Air Surveillance Network (BALTNET) (Jaervenpaa 2014). These were intended to support the three Baltic states and to send a political message to Russia.

Among the broader regional initiatives there is, for example, the Nordic–Baltic Eight (NB8)—a regional Nordic–Baltic consultation forum that includes Finland, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden (see NB8 Wise Men Report 2010). One of the NB8 cooperation formats is the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe, initiated

by the US in 2003 with the aim of supporting the BSR and EU's Eastern Partnership countries (see NB8 2016).

Since 2009, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway and Iceland have held consultations with the aim of consolidating security strategies and conducting joint military exercises within NORDEFCO (Nordic Defence Cooperation) (Jaervenpaa 2014; Opitz 2015). As a consequence of the Ukraine crisis, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were allowed to participate in NORDEFCO's activities, especially in those that focus on Russia in terms of a military threat (training and exercises) and as a latent uncertainty factor (prevention of Russian cyber attacks and the co-option of minorities) (Opitz 2015, 3). NORDEFCO has been discussing the creation of a joint missile defense system for the wider BSR against the Russian threat (Harress 2015).

NORDEFCO exemplifies the strengthening of multilateral ties among the Western states within the BSR region after the Ukraine crisis, which also happened within the EU/NATO formats and bilaterally (e.g., a deal on military cooperation between Poland and Sweden) (Nilsson 2015). It also shows the intensification of practical activities in the BSR with Russia being an outsider.

Conclusions

The BSR was and is an important region from a security perspective because it is marked by integration and fragmentation, and inclusive and exclusive security institutions. Due to historic legacies and the current politics, the presence of Russia and the West, this is a sensitive region: Russian–Western disagreements have had their impact on the BSR. Today, the Baltic states are involved in the Ukraine conflict, though in different roles: Russia is a direct participant, Germany is one of the most active mediators, and other Baltic EU states are involved through sanctions and anti-sanctions as well as through their Ukraine policies.

The specific cooperation initiatives and positive dynamics that existed in the BSR before the Ukraine crisis were important in the process of region-making and inclusion of Russia. Despite many problems, the states of the BSR were exemplary for their lively mutual exchange. Inclusive cooperation frameworks have helped to create a more positive climate in the BSR and to step away from Cold War legacies. Nonetheless, with their loose structures and focus on less problematic "soft" security, they were too weak to help prevent the gradual strengthening of conflicting dynamics in the

region. These dynamics were strongly characterized by "harder" security issues of the broader and more conflictive EU–Russia and NATO–Russia relations, which were given priority by all actors. Cooperation took place on smaller, practical issues, but this small-steps or step-by-step approach did not bring about the desired result of coming closer to solutions on bigger, more difficult issues.

BSR cooperation formats needed to be developed more actively and proactively to bind Russia as a positive security actor and bring it closer from a normative perspective. If more ties had existed between Russia and the BSR—including through special NATO–Russia initiatives on BSR, special CSBMs or OSCE working groups on BSR—Russia would have been more integrated into the region, becoming less an outsider and more an insider. However, many opportunities were missed. Furthermore, the existing institutions involving Russia were used only marginally. Despite Russia's presence in the BSR and despite an overlap of institutions, it has clearly maintained its ambivalent role.

The BSR also showcases how slowly cooperation formats and practices developed and how quickly it was possible to undo the achievements resulting from cooperation and to spread security dilemmas and conflicts. Although before the Ukraine crisis, Russia and the West designed joint projects in the BSR through various joint institutions on, for example, ways to modernize the Kaliningrad area, today it is remilitarized by Russia in its deterrence strategies, directed at the West.

Furthermore, the BSR shows that multilateralism is under challenge (Newman et al. 2006) and that most institutions under "the rubric of cooperative security" find themselves in a state of decay (Kühn 2015, 6). The logic of balance of power was stronger than the normative logic of building a region (Adler and Greve 2009). Institutions had only "minimal influence on state behaviour" (Mearsheimer 1995).

Both Russia and the West see the increase of conflicting military activities as "necessary corrections of their previous military posture" and each side justifies its actions "by the negative changes in their security environment", leading to the "action-reaction cycle … that will be difficult to stop" (Task Force on Cooperation in Greater Europe 2015, 2). Today, policymakers and experts think not about how to make things better in Western–Russian relations but how to "avoid war in Europe" (Task Force on Cooperation in Greater Europe 2015). As a consequence, the BSR moved from being one of the most promising regions for Western–Russian cooperation to one of the most dangerous areas, where there is a great risk of a NATO–Russia confrontation (even if it is accidental). Disputes are

no longer settled within the limits of agreed-upon norms and established procedures. The military importance of the BSR is growing in Russian and Western defense strategies and military planning.

Russia's role in the BSR has changed: from one of confrontation during the Cold War and in the early 1990s to positive engagement with some intermittent conflicts to being a major threat. The Baltic states still disagree on the question of what to do with Russia: should they try to engage with it through dialogue (as with Germany and Finland) or treat it as a latent threat, taking a more hawkish approach (as post-Soviet Baltic states, Denmark and Sweden have done) (Raik et al. 2015, 5). Nonetheless, the BSR region is in the process of being formed as a more cohesive entity—largely because of externalizing Russia as a threat to regional security. If in the past Russia was both "the uniting and separating force in the construction of a security framework" for the BSR (Norkus 1998, 158), today it has become more the "uniting force", playing a less ambivalent role.

While cooperation on transnational security challenges in the BSR has remained and Russia and the West need each other to combat these problems, transnational challenges have a less important soft security touch. The negative fractures within the BSR go too deep, involving not only current security problems but also history and identity. Even if, hypothetically, Russia and the West come closer owing to more global and more high-level problems, such as combating the Islamic State or searching for conflict resolution in Syria, and if the situation in Ukraine stabilizes (even though Russia will not be giving the Crimea back), Baltic neighborly relations have been seriously damaged, so much so that it will take serious efforts to mend fences in the BSR.

Notes

1. The author would like to thank Lisa Pregitzer for research support as well as Andrey Makarychev and colleagues from the Centre for OSCE Research for their helpful comments on an earlier draft. Special thanks go to Elizabeth Hormann for making the language more eloquent.
2. Not all existing security-related institutions can be discussed owing to the limits of the study. Energy security is not dealt with here, either.
3. Ambassador Renatas Norkus is a Lithuanian diplomat.
4. In December 2015, foreign ministers of NATO states asked Jens Stoltenberg to assess the opportunities for the restart of regular consultations within the NRC in order to re-establish predictability in NATO–Russia relations (see Die Welt 2015). In 2016, the first meetings of the NRC took place.

References

Adler, Emanuel, and Patricia Greve. 2009. When Security Community Meets Balance of Power: Overlapping Regional Mechanisms of Security Governance. *Review of International Studies* 35: 59–84.

Barnes, Julian E. 2016. NATO Moving towards New Deterrence Model. *Wall Street Journal*, February 10.

Boyer, Dave. 2016. Obama Wants to Quadruple Military Spending in Europe to Counter Russian Aggression. *Washington Times*, February 2.

Breslin, Shaun, and Stuart Croft. 2012. Researching Regional Security Governance. Dimensions, Debates and Discourses. In *Comparative Regional Security Governance*, eds. Shaun Breslin and Stuart Croft, 1–22. London: Routledge.

CBSS. 2015. *Annual Report for the Estonian Presidency 2014–2015.* Stockholm.

———. 2016. Official Webpage. http://www.cbss.org/safe-secure-region.

DefenseNews.com. 2015. Nations Respond to Russian Buildup in Baltics. http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/show-daily/sea-air-space/2015/04/12/russia-baltic-sweden-poland-submarine-high-north-crimea/25368547/ (accessed January 10, 2016).

Die Welt. 2015. Steinmeier landet einen Coup bei NATO-Treffen. December 2.

Dolidze, Tatia. 2015. EU Sanctions Policy towards Russia: The Sanctioner-Sanctionee's Game of Thrones. *CEPS Working Document* 402.

DW.com. 2013. Russland Stationiert Iskander-Raketen in Kaliningrad. December 16. http://www.dw.com/de/russland-stationiert-iskander-raketen-in-kaliningrad/a-17300869 (accessed January 10, 2016).

EC. 2000. EU/Russia Summit Joint Declaration on Strengthening Dialogue and Cooperation on Political and Security Matters in Europe. Document IP/00/1239.

———. 2002. Russia-EU Summit. Joint Declaration on Further Practical Steps in Developing Political Dialogue and Cooperation on Crisis Management and Security Matters. DOC/02/12.

———. 2003. Roadmaps for Four Common Spaces. http://www.enpi-info.eu/library/content/eu-russia-road-map-common-spaces.

EUSBSR. 2016. Official Webpage. http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/.

Farrell, Mary. 2005. The Global Politics of Regionalism: An Introduction. In *Global Politics of Regionalism. Theory and Practice*, eds. Mary Farrell, Bjorn Hettne, and Luk van Langenhove, 1–17. London: Pluto Press.

Flynn, Gregory, and Henry Farrell. 1999. Piecing together the Democratic Peace: The CSCE, Norms, and the 'Construction' of Security in Post-Cold War Europe. *International Organization* 53(3): 505–535.

Frear, Thomas, Lukasz Kulesa, and Ian Kearns. 2014. Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Encounters between Russia and the West in 2014. *European Leadership Network Policy Brief*, November.

Gheciu, Alexandra. 2005. Security Institutions as Agents of Socialization? NATO and the 'New Europe'. *International Organization* 59(Fall): 973–1020.

Golunov, Serghei. 2013. *EU-Russian Border Security. Challenges, (Mis)Perceptions, and Responses*. London/New York: Routledge.

Gorenburg, Dmitry. 2015. This Is How the Russian Military Pans to Fight Future Wars. *The National Interest*, August 20.

Harress, Chistopher. 2015. Amid Russian Hostility, Baltic State Leaders Discuss Joint Defense Buys and Begin Nordic Military Cooperation. *International Business Times*, August 10. http://www.ibtimes.com/amid-russian-hostility-baltic-state-leaders-discuss-joint-defense-buys-begin-nordic-2046201.

Hyndle-Hussein, Joanna. 2015. The Baltic States on the Conflict in Ukraine. *OSW Commentary* 158.

Jaervenpaa, Pauli. 2014. Nordic Defense Cooperation. NORDEFCO and Beyond. In *Northern Security and Global Politics. Nordic-Baltic Strategic Infuence in a Post-Unipolar World*, eds. Ann-Sofie Dahl and Pauli Jaervenpaa, 137–154. London: Routledge.

Janes's Intelligence Review. 2015. Standing Together. Baltic States Join Forces to Resist Russia. February, 28–33.

Kearns, Ian, Lukasz Kulesa, and Thomas Frear. 2015. Russia-West Dangerous Brinkmanship Continues. *European Leadership Network Policy Brief*, March 12. http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/russia--west-dangerous-brinkmanship-continues_2529.html.

Kramer, Mark. 2013. Russia, the Baltic Region, and the Challenge for NATO. *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo* 267.

Kropatcheva, Elena. 2015. The Evolution of Russia's OSCE Policy: From the Promises of the Helsinki Final Act to the Ukrainian Crisis. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23(1): 6–24.

———. 2016. The EU's Policy of Democracy Promotion and Ukraine's Bumpy Path to the Association Agreement—Amidst a Major Crisis In Europe. In *European Engagement under Review. Exporting Values, Rules and Practices to the Post-Soviet Space*, ed. Vera Axyonova, 11–40. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag.

Kühn, Ulrich. 2015. *Cooperative Arms Control in Europe (1973–2014). A Case of Regime Decay?* PhD Thesis, University of Hamburg. (unpublished manuscript).

Lavrov, Sergey. 2012. Interview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, S.V. Lavrov to the Amber Bridge magazine, No. 3(7), 2012, Doc. 1679-12-09-2011.

———. 2013. Speech of and Answers to Questions of Mass Media by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during Joint Press conference Summarizing the Results of the Trilateral meeting with Poland's Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski and German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, Warsaw, May 10, Doc. 927-11-05-2013.

———. 2014a. Address by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to the 69th session of the UN General Assembly, New York, September 27, Doc. 2290-27-09-2014.

———. 2014b. Speech by the Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, at the XXIII session of the Council of the Heads of Constituent Entities of the Russian Federation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. June 10. http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/activity/coordinating_and_advisory_body/meetings/-/asset_publisher/o0D4RcICOGw8/content/id/55134.

Makarychev, Andrey, and Alexander Sergunin. 2013. The Russian Presidency in the Council of the Baltic Sea States: Thin Socialization, Deficient Soft Power? *CEURUS EU-Russia Paper*, October.

McNamara, Eoin Micheal, Magnus Nordenman, and Charly Salonius-Pasternak. 2015. Nordic-Baltic Security and US Foreign Policy. A Durable Transatlantic Link? *FIIA Working Paper*, June.

Mearsheimer, John J. 1995. The False Promise of International Institutions. *International Security* 19(3): 5–49.

Moller, Bjorn. 2012. *European Security. The Roles of Regional Organisations.* Furham: Ashgate.

Musch-Borowsk, Bernd. 2015. Aufrüsten in der Ostsee. *Deutschlandradio Kultur*, April 15. http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/militaermanoever-auf-gotland-aufruesten-in-der-ostsee.979.de.html?dram:article_id=317128.

NATO. 2013a. NATO and Russia Hold Joint Counter-Terror Exercise "Vigilant Skies". September 26. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_103663.htm?selectedLocale=en.

NATO. 2016. Warsaw Summit Communiqué Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8–9 July 2016. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm

———. 2013b. NRC Scientists Cooperating to Detect Baltic Oil Spills. February 4. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_94466.htm?selectedLocale=en.

———. 1997. Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation. http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/fndact-a.htm (accessed September 2, 2008).

NB8 Wise Men Report. 2010. August. http://www.utanrikisraduneyti.is/media/Skyrslur/NB8-Wise-Men-Report.pdf.

NB8. 2016. Nordic-Baltic Cooperation History. http://bsy.vm.ee/en/nordic-baltic-cooperation/nordic-baltic-co-operation-history/.

ND. 2016. Official Webpage. http://www.northerndimension.info/.

Newman, Edward, Ramesh Thakur, and John Tirman, eds. 2006. *Multilateralism under Challenge? Power, International Order, and Structural Change.* New York: UN University Press.

Nilsson, Carl Hvenmark. 2015. *Sweden's Evolving Relationship with NATO and Its Consequences for the Baltic Sea Region*. Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, October 7.

Nolan, Janne E. 1994. The Concept of Cooperative Security. In *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century*, ed. Janne E. Nolan, 3–18. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Norkus, Renatas. 1998. Regional Cooperation and Security in the Baltic Sea Rim. In *Small States Inside and Outside the European Union: Interests and Policies*, ed. Laurent Goetschel, 139–160. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Oldberg, Ingmar. 2012. Soft Security in the Baltic Sea Region. *Occasional Ulpapers* 12.

Opitz, Christian. 2015. Potential for Nordic-Baltic Security Cooperation. *SWP Comments* 40.

Peters, Guy B., ed. 2005. *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The 'New Institutionalism'*. 2nd ed. New York: Continuum.

Racz, Andras. 2015. Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine: Breaking the Enemy's Ability to Resist. *FIIA Report* 43.

Raik, Kristi, Mika Aaltola, Katri Pynnoniemi, and Charly Salonius-Pasternak. 2015. Pushed together by External Forces? The Foreign and Security Policies of Estonia and Finland in the Context of the Ukraine Crisis. *FIIA Briefing Paper* 167.

Reboka, Grundega, and Zaneta Ozolina. 2015. Security Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region under the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO): A Way Forward? In *Riga Conference 2015 Paper "Towards the European Global Security Strategy: Challenges and Opportunities"*, eds. Andris Spruds and Karlis Bukovskis, 167–174. Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs.

RFE/RL. 2015a. NATO Chief Says West Must Counter Russian Military Buildup. February 15. http://www.rferl.org/content/nato-chief-says-west-must-counter-russian-military-buildup/27348218.html.

——— 2015b. Russia Warns against Attempts to Alter Europe's Balance of Power. October 9. http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-nato-warns-against-altering-europe-balance/27297213.html.

Risse, Thomas. 2002. Constructivism and International Institutions: Toward Conversations Across Paradigms. In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, eds. Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner, 597–629. New-York: Norton.

Rubaltic.ru. 2016. Ekspert: dve iz triokh novykh divizii VS RF budut u beregov Baltiiskogo moria (Interview with Victor Litovkin). January 13. http://www.rubaltic.ru/news/13012016-expert-sozdanie-diviziy/#t20c (accessed January 15, 2016).

Sakwa, Richard. 2015. *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands*. London: I. B. Tauris.

Schimmelfennig, Frank, Stefan Engert, and Heiko Knobel. 2006. *International Socialization in Europe: European Organizations, Political Conditionality and Democratic Change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Simmons, Beth A., and Lisa L. Martin. 2002. International Organizations and Institutions. In *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, 192–211. London: Sage.

Šleivyte, Janina. 2010. *Russia's European Agenda and the Baltic States*. London: Routledge.

Task Force on Cooperation in Greater Europe. 2015. Avoiding War in Europe: How to Reduce the Risk of a Military Encounter between Russia and NATO. *Position Paper* III.

Tavares, Rodrigo. 2010. *Regional Security. The Capacity of International Organizations*. London/New York: Routledge.

Trenin, Dmitri. 2011. Russian Policies toward the Nordic-Baltic Region. In *Nordic-Baltic Security in the 21st Century: The Regional Agenda and the Global Role*, eds. Robert Nurick and Magnus Nordenman, 47–51. Washington, DC: Atlantic Council.

U.S. Department of State. 2009. Archive. The Northern Europe Initiative (NEI). http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/29548.htm.

———. 2016. Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (e-PINE). http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rt/epine/.

Wess, Mitchell A. 2016. A Bold New Baltic Strategy for NATO. *National Interest*, January 6.

Winnerstig, Mike, ed. 2014. *Tools of Destabilization, Russian Soft Power and Non-Military Influence in the Baltic States*. Stockholm, FOI-R-3990-SE.

Withnall, Adam. 2015. Russia Threatens Denmark with Nuclear Weapons If It Tries to Join NATO Defence Shield. *Independent*, March 22.

Zalan, Eszter. 2015. Poland's Ruling Party Shows True Colours. *EU Observer*, November 27.

Zizek, Slavoi. 2001. *The Fright for Real Tears. Krzysztof Kieslowski between Theory and Post-Theory*. London: BFI Publishing.

PART II

Retying the Region, Unlocking the Borders: Institutions and Governance

CHAPTER 5

Baltic Sea Region-Building: An Impossibility, or an Inability to Finish?

Dovilė Jakniūnaitė and Živilė Marija Vaicekauskaitė

The end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union was followed by the re-establishment of each Baltic states' independence, and so the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) entered a new stage of development marked by efforts to replace dividing lines with a new pattern of cooperation.[1] Thus, the BSR is a recent project in region-building among several that mushroomed in the area—such as the Barents Euro–Arctic Region (BEAR) and the Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI)—that aimed to erase distinctions made during the Cold War era.

Europe's security environment has changed considerably over the past twenty-five years. Likewise, cooperation in the BSR experienced complex economic and political transitions as it underwent several stages of development. The BSR did not become the new region its creators envisioned: a region where common problems are solved together by the parties and bottom-up transnationalism flourishes. Instead, the BSR states are divided by differing security perceptions and foreign policy goals. Yet, the original hopes for the BSR linger, despite a lack of leadership. Without clear direction, the region's development may need to wait for better times.

In 2014 and 2015, discrepancies among security perceptions of the BSR shore states intensified. Because of Russia's adverse actions in the

D. Jakniūnaitė (✉) • Ž. M. Vaicekauskaitė
Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_5

neighbourhood, it became obvious that any cooperative endeavours with Russia were inconceivable for the majority of the region's actors. Yet, Russia is difficult for actors in the region to ignore, both because Russia constitutes part of the BSR's official borders and because Russia is an important player in the region.

Therefore, we ask: How is further development of the BSR possible when one of its significant players is both troublesome and perceived as not worth cooperating with? What kind of regional initiatives are plausible when substantial power asymmetries exist? In this chapter, we explore the conditions stalling the Baltic Sea regionalization process—both theoretically and empirically—and discover useful analytical tools for conceptualizing this process. This chapter aims to demonstrate that though a region-building perspective explains the failure of regionalism, it still limits an understanding of developments in the BSR at the end of 2015, when the region was consumed with the lack of trust among several of its members. Also, this chapter will present the suture concept as a useful tool for reconceptualizing the BSR.

Our arguments regarding region-building difficulties in the BSR are presented in five steps. First, we analyze how ideas about regional security cooperation have evolved in the BSR since the early 1990s, both theoretically (in the first section) and empirically (in the second section). Next, we reveal two tensions impacting the BSR's regionalization process: Russia's attitude towards the BSR (the third section) and Lithuania's security discourse in 2014 and 2015, which was focused on Russia and Russia's role in the region (the fourth section). Finally, in the concluding section we demonstrate problems that arise when a region-building approach is applied to the BSR and explain how the idea of a "region with sutures" could be developed.

Thinking Theoretically About the BSR

The BSR was the poster child for the so-called new regionalism—the regionalization processes (both interstate and intrastate) in global politics that intensified after the Cold War ended. It was believed that the collapse of the Cold War era's East–West divisions would bring new regional forms of cooperation, that could cooperate to better solve a variety of common (and transnational) challenges and that these increases in cooperation would emerge when some states socialized into one way of life or another. This process went hand in hand with renewed academic debates over the

best way to conceptualize and analyze the region. These debates also contributed to discussions of a *new regionalism*. This literature defined a region, as well as a successful region, examined regions' developments and challenges, paid attention to new patterns in regionalization processes and looked for new ways to analyze this phenomenon.

Almost all the literature defines "regionalism" as a collection of policies and projects designed to form regions, which may lead to institution-building (De Lombaerde and Söderbaum 2013, xxix). Hameiri (2013, 318) also emphasized the formal and state-led nature of region-making as states pursue shared goals together. Regionalization is "the (empirical) process that leads to patterns of cooperation, integration, complementarity and convergence within a particular cross-national geographical space" (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000). Often, "new" regions were praised for their bottom-up approaches, which usually meant that cooperative initiatives were coming transnationally from non-state actors, or—and this happens more often—non-state actors were included in regional projects.

While discussing the origins and development of the region, a new approach was designed: the region-building approach. It competed with and even overshadowed the traditional continuum of regional analysis that, at one point, spanned from an "inside-out" to an "outside-in" perspective (Neumann 1994, 53–57). One question was at the crux of this discussion: Do internal or do external factors have greater influence on regionalization processes. The constructivist-rooted region-building approach regards regions as socially constructed phenomena, the existences of which are based on shared meanings and practices.

Such a region-building approach is not only related to the contingencies of the regions but also to the need to emphasize regions' changing natures due to shared ideas, similar identities and common practices that could promote new forms of cooperation. A region is never a finished entity but rather consists of a variety of institutions and processes and is perpetually "becoming" (Paasi 2009, 133). Paasi, concerned mostly with substate regions, described a consistent pattern of region-building processes: "At first a set of (at times contested) political, economic, or cultural discourses are created concerning the possibility of a region. Such ideas are then introduced into plans and maps and ultimately regions may become materialised so that they have an effect on the actions of citizens and on broader social practices." (Paasi 2009, 134) Even though regions start from ideas and discourse, when one thinks about the region-making process, the materiality of a region should never be overlooked: "We nor-

mally see regions only on maps but know their existence via the territorial practices of governance and media." (Paasi 2009, 134)

New regionalism most often implies collective identity construction projects, conceived to establish some commonly perceived territorial space; it must encompass some kind of *we* thinking, some kind of imaginary community. Additionally, though a large part of regionalization takes place in the economic realm as part of an economic integration process, the new interstate regionalism is also related to security—not in the traditional, alliance-building sense, but in terms of increasing and strengthening common security. Hence, we can talk of the *securitization of regionalism* (Buzan et al. 1997) in the early 1990s because of the political agendas that emphasized soft security cooperation.

The region-building approach also implies that regions are politically contested. According to Neumann, much of the earlier thinking about regions has neglected this "politics of defining and redefining the region" (Neumann 1994). The creation of a region "is an inherently political act, and it must therefore be reflectively acknowledged and undertaken as such" (Neumann 1994, 58). Often there are several competing interpretations, which clash, coexist side by side or replace each other. The political nature of region building enhances the more usual approach and treats regions as social entities and puts more emphasis on the agency of the decision makers (political elites, in Neumann's terms).

Thus, while analyzing regions as social and political phenomena, researchers must consider the agency of decision, the limits and capabilities of structural and relational factors, and—even more important—they must never take power out of analyses of regional dynamics. Though the creation of a region is sometimes implicitly defined as a process happening among equal actors, this is rarely the case; analysts should always keep power disparities, and therefore power analyses, in mind.

From this perspective, the Baltic Sea Region is more than a reflection of geographic, economic or cultural conditions. It was formed by particular historic processes and by decisions that affected the balance of regional powers and created new security-cooperation patterns. The BSR was a typical example of region-building with institutions' (such as the most central, the Council of the Baltic Sea States [CBSS]) own cooperation projects and security discourses.

Which propositions made it possible for the Baltic Sea area to be defined as a security region, and what do these propositions imply? Our next task

is to analyze this region-building process in the security-cooperation realm and demonstrate its uneventful and troublesome development.

A Bumpy Development Process

In the early 1990s, region-building in Europe, like many other processes at that time, was part of a larger transition: it was one way of adapting to the radically changed international security environment. The regional thinking of the time was based on the idea that cooperation should not be aimed at fighting the outside threat, but at coping with common internal and transnational threats, which could be better addressed through cooperative action.

The thinking about new regions was developing parallel to new approaches to security. An understanding of security had expanded beyond the military dimension, the core of pre-1990 security agendas. This new concept of security encompassed social, economic and environmental issues, and it was seen as a reflection of post-Cold War realities (see Buzan et al. 1997). In the policy environment of the time, this wider security scope was defined in terms of *soft security* (social, economic and environmental) and *hard security* (that is, military). The new terminology emerged with a new emphasis on risks related to economic growth, energy and civil security, and environmental issues (Knudsen 1999, 178).

This new understanding of security concerns was based on the assumption that soft security threats were regionally or globally transnational and that a single state could not deal with them alone. Therefore, interstate cooperation was attractive and even more necessary than it had previously been; and cooperation between non-governmental or non-state actors was desirable as well. Having a soft security agenda was seen as an effective way to overcoming state-centred thinking in order to promote security by establishing a collective, regional identity based on common conceptions of threats.

This phenomenon could also be seen in the BSR, where it was believed that a focus on soft security matters would provide an impetus for involving all the BSR countries in regional cooperation. Dealing with hard security threats by further fostering regional cooperation was not a primary objective. Hard security issues were left to international organizations such as NATO and OSCE (Etzold 2012, 3).

The BSR is not based solely on security cooperation. In 2016, for example, the CBSS works on a variety of projects, including civil protec-

tion, supporting at-risk children and tax cooperation among other issues (see Council of the Baltic Sea States 2016a). In this chapter, however, we focus specifically on cooperation related to security, which we regard as the primary stimulant of regionalism in the BSR. Yet, different approaches to security within the region, as it will be demonstrated, underpin the BSR's shaky future. Any region-building project is usually based either on an agreed upon security agenda, or on the (implicit) agreement that the region's actors do not need a common security agenda (as when region-building is based on economic integration). This section demonstrates why neither of these preconditions exists in the BSR.

Since the beginning of 1990s, four major events changed the European security architecture: the end of the Cold War, the dual enlargement of NATO and the EU in 2004, the 2008 Russo–Georgian War and the Ukraine crisis of 2014 and 2015. These four events are also key factors that influenced security cooperation in the BSR and shaped the formation of the BSR as a regional entity.[2] Just after the end of the Cold War, the first regionalizing impetus to institutionalize cooperation occurred in 1992 with the establishment of the CBSS to boost regional intergovernmental cooperation between the shore states of the Baltic Sea (Council of the Baltic Sea States 2016b). This group of BSR countries was comprised of allied and neutral Nordic countries and Germany, the newly independent EU- and NATO-keen Baltic states and Poland, and Russia—"the great unknown" (Tassirani and Williams 2003, 29) at that time. The establishment of the CBSS gave rise to and provided the first ideas for the BSR's regionalization process.

One of the goals of the CBSS was to bring NATO and the EU countries together with the "outsiders" of that time—Poland, the Baltic states and Russia—in order to erase dividing lines drawn during the Cold War era (Browning 2005, 91). The alliance-based thinking of the Cold War was giving way to new regional identities, multilateral cooperation and efforts to build "a forum for the exchange of ideas concerning regional issues of common interest" (Council of the Baltic Sea States 2016b). The CBSS was a type of a socialization process in that it gathered the Baltic shore countries to discuss regional issues and build commonalities. Forming a regional identity was also part of this region-building project.

Another important part of the BSR's regionalization, supported especially by the Western and Nordic partners, was the wish to engage Russia in a regional cooperation framework based on soft security and so-called low political issues (Browning and Joenniemi 2004). Behind Russia's

inclusion in the BSR was the idea that as the region moved away from hard security issues, it also moved from traditional territorial nation-state concerns towards common projects, like nuclear safety, transborder crime, democracy and human rights, trade barriers and environmental protection (Council of the Baltic Sea States 2016a). Russia's inclusion in the BSR was a conscious gesture, intended to limit the thinking about Russia as *the other* (see Neumann 1999, Chap. 3) and to bring Russia closer to *the West* in order to make it more similar to the other BSR states, to make it more predictable and more civilized.

Efforts to promote cooperation on environmental issues are a good example of how the region's security agenda was pushed to emphasize soft security cooperation (Beazley 2007, 136) and of the region's inclusion of Russia. Nordic countries, especially Sweden and Finland, emphasized their goal of creating an environmentally sustainable region by explicitly prioritizing environmental concerns (Lehti 2009, 23). Environmental concerns were among the main objectives of the regional cooperation agenda among the Baltic Sea shore countries and were also mentioned in the EU's strategy for the BSR and in the Northern Dimension Initiative ("What Is the EUSBSR" 2016). The Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership ("Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership" 2016), which formed in 2001 with the aim of tackling environmental issues in Russia, is a good illustration of attempts to develop inclusive regional cooperation. The initial aim of this initiative was to promote dialogue and concrete cooperation with Russia by building new institutional ties with Russia's regional partners. In addition, the NDI and the CBSS—both of which were based on "cooperation by inclusion"—were treating Russia as an equal partner.

Looking from the other side of the sea, the Baltic states did not dismiss hard security issues; the presence of Russian military forces on their ground made them much more cautious than their counterparts in the North about Russia's active involvement in regional activities. Following the EU's enlargement in 2004, the Baltic Sea Region was transformed into a European inland sea and regional cooperation shifted towards the European level (Lehti 2009, 23). This brought some uncertainty into the region's dialogues because the future relevancy of the old regional institution framework, as was the case when the CBSS formally involved all the BSR shore states, was unclear. As Lethi indicated, after the dual enlargement in 2004, cooperation in the BSR experienced a crisis of

purpose and motivation because the CBSS was no longer seen to be an important instrument for pursuing common interests (Lehti 2009, 23).

Russia has also been concerned about the future role of the CBSS, which served as Russia's legal framework for cooperation with Western countries and treated Russia as an equal and full-fledged member. Indeed, as it was outlined, Russia worried about the CBSS becoming an instrument of the EU, which could dilute the BSR's existing all-inclusive cooperation format (Oldberg 2012, 14). The EU's strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, adopted just after the Russo–Georgian War in 2008, did not include Russia as a partner on equal terms (European Commission 2009). Although the strategy outlined the necessity of close cooperation with Russia in tackling joint regional challenges (mainly through the NDI and the CBSS), it was essentially an internal strategy, targeted primarily at promoting cooperation and coordination among the BSR's EU member states.

When Poland and the three Baltic countries joined the NATO alliance in 1999 and 2004, respectively, the question of redefining relations with Russia was raised. Russia was not affiliated with any union or alliance and reluctantly accepted the NATO enlargement with cautious concerns about the possibility of even further NATO expansion. This reluctance soon transformed into open hostility when Russia officially identified NATO as a national security threat (Tassinari 2005, 392). After NATO's two enlargements, Russia's involvement in regional cooperation became more problematic and questions about dividing lines started to resurface. NATO and EU expansions to the Baltic Sea Region drew a dividing line between the BSR's NATO and EU members and Russia, whose status as both an official insider and a constant outsider has not disappeared since.

In the conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008—which some authors have named "a post-Soviet litmus test" of further cooperation with Russia–Russia's actions demonstrated that it regarded the former Soviet territory as a space still within its sphere of influence (Gotkowska 2014; Kunz 2015, 8). This state of affairs constituted another profound phase in the BSR's security cooperation. The war between Georgia and Russia rekindled traditional security concerns, which threatened the BSR's stability and integrity. Russia's demonstrated readiness to invade foreign territories also diminished the Baltic Sea states' confidence in the BSR. For example, in Lithuania's mainstream security discourse, agitations over Russia's potential actions with its neighbours resurfaced (Jakniūnaitė 2015). As a consequence, the rest of the Baltic Sea states intensified their bilateral and multilateral cooperation on hard security

issues. Nordic defence cooperation was reinvigorated after 2009 with the launch of Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO), which more actively involved its Baltic counterparts in initiating a new Nordic–Baltic military cooperation dimension (Kaljurand et al. 2012, 61). Although Nordic–Baltic defence cooperation was not dedicated to building institutional affiliations in terms of alliances, it constituted a clear and hard division between the Nordic–Baltic countries and Russia.

Even more significant changes in thinking about security cooperation have taken place since the crisis in Ukraine that started in early 2014 and was followed by the Russian annexation of Crimea. Russia's behaviour towards Ukraine revived debates about traditional security challenges and cast doubts about Russia's participation in regional Baltic Sea initiatives. Many BSR countries have officially condemned Russia's actions in Ukraine by declaring Russia a threat to their own national and regional security (State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania 2015; Blair 2015). A shared perception of a Russian threat further strengthened Nordic–Baltic defence cooperation, and after 2014 the Baltic countries were invited to participate in almost all of NORDEFCO's projects (Kaljurand et al. 2012, 62).

The recent upheavals in Ukraine have not only challenged the region's security environment, but they have also impacted the normative and institutional practices that BSR countries had been developing since the early 1990s. Russia's actions in Ukraine and in the BSR neighbourhood are politically and normatively dividing the region. Now the key question driving the debate on regional security cooperation is: To what extent can the BSR's existing cooperative efforts be further developed when a regional power threatens the BSR's stability and sustainability?

A quick analysis of the BSR's security cooperation over a quarter of a century demonstrates that a deeper level of regionalization has not been achieved in the Baltic Sea territory. The efforts of the last twenty-five years did not lead to "cooperation, integration, complementarity, and convergence" (Hettne and Söderbaum 2000). The regionalization process in the BSR stalled and observers noted policy complacency, a lack of leadership and a lack of a vision regarding the next phase of the regionalism and what the project in this phase should entail.

The inception of the region was grounded in the different ideas about the goals of regionalism and already contradictory approaches to cooperation. It can be assumed—as some integrationist theorists note, and as constructivists paying closer attention to the socialization process empha-

size—that common projects and activities could erase contradictions or help a region redefine its initial goals as those that help states meet common objectives, which would also move a region towards a more coherent regional identity. In the case of the BSR, however, this did not occur.

The problem with the BSR's cooperation was not only that its common projects and activities stalled. The bigger problem was that different BSR states held different understandings of their regions, varying conceptions of the levels and types of security cooperation they were to engage in together, and incompatible perceptions of each other. And, due to its specific position and attitude towards the BSR, the crucial player here, as the previous analysis demonstrates, is Russia.

Russia: Unwilling and Detached

As the analysis of the security cooperation in the BSR—or more exactly, of hindrances to security cooperation—demonstrates, Russia is a significant player in the BSR's region-building process; however, Russia does not contribute to developing a common BSR-building process. Four crucial aspects should be taken into consideration in order to understand Russia's role in the BSR.

First, the BSR since its inception, and throughout its twenty years of existence, is unimaginable without Russia. It was conceived mainly as a way to include Russia in a European project that sought partly to "tame" Russia, partly to "civilize" Russia and partly to "befriend" Russia. These goals for Russia's inclusion rest on beliefs in the power of socialization and in the positive effects of "doing the things together". Without Russia, the BSR becomes just a Nordic–Baltic cooperation in the broader European cooperation framework, mostly in the EU context.[3] With Russia, though, the BSR is something different: a region with slightly different borders, where an outsider can also be an insider and where tangible cooperation with Russia takes place. Eliminating Russia from the BSR would entail an overhaul of the core idea behind the BSR's formation, which would probably change regional cooperation to that of any other subregion of the EU with particular interests and specific projects.

The second aspect of thinking about Russia involves Russia's great power ambitions and the resulting impact on regional cooperation projects. Russia's foreign policymakers perceive Russia as an important global player, with significant influence on world politics, especially where its interests are concerned. For example, in one of the Vladimir Putin's inter-

views readers find the remark that "Russia does not ask for great power status. It is a great power" (Interv'yu Prezidenta Rossii 2000), a sentiment that also appears in other statements (Lavrov 2007). This thinking presumes that Russia should talk to and negotiate primarily with other great powers. Therefore, Russian foreign policy reveals a preference for bilateral cooperation with other great powers. Russia uses multilateral frameworks symbolically (in BRICS, for example), when Russia plays a dominant role—as it does in the Collective Security Treaty Organization and in the Commonwealth of Independent States—when it can use an institutional setting for its own goals (as Russia often does with the OSCE), and when it is working within a framework of Russia's own rules (such as the Eurasian Union). The BSR's framework, with its focus on cooperative consensus-building strategies, is not a framework that Russia can easily abuse or use to achieve its own goals. Besides, Russia's great power identity implies that its attention is spread globally, a perspective that reduces the BSR to a "local" issue rather than an arena for the power games Russia openly prefers.

Third, in its domestic sphere, Russia constructs its identity as a state in opposition to the West. And, domestically, the West is construed as a threat to Russia's very survival, to Russia's values and to Russian traditions. This clear *us vs. them* mentality based on bordering practices has been produced and supported in Russia's mainstream mass media for more than ten years (see, for example, Hanson et al. 2012). In this context, it is hard to develop any overlapping projects that would involve cooperative Russian and Western political practices.

Finally, we have the issue of the Baltic States and Poland, the most anti-Russian states in the EU and NATO. These states distrust Russia. Moreover, their integrationist projects were based on and justified through a consensus over the necessity to move as far as possible from Russia's influence. Currently, there is no meaningful communication between Russia and these states, and any projects implemented in the Baltic Sea area are undertaken with a great deal of suspicion (the critical reactions of Poland and the Baltic states to the development of NordStream is a good example; see Ziegler 2013, 13). Russia did not conceal its attempt to influence the southern part of the BSR, for example, when it proposed its security guarantees—proposals that other states either did not support or dismissed entirely. When the Baltic states got closer to NATO membership, Russia increased its pressure and voiced even more discontent about the NATO enlargement. This also had a negative effect on BSR coopera-

tion. Together, these aspects explain why regional cooperative projects are not an active part of Russia's security and foreign policy thinking and why Russia's level of involvement in BSR matters was consistently passive and usually reactive. NordStream, the biggest project implemented by Russia in the Baltic Sea Region, was developed bilaterally with Germany.

From the beginning, Russia was a reluctant actor in the Baltic Sea region-alization process. The BSR was perceived by Russia as a European project, which was sometimes even perceived as Western "neo-imperialism" aimed at Russia, especially in the early years when Russia was intent on regaining a stronger position in global politics (see also Browning and Joenniemi 2004, 238). Knudsen notices that "on the diplomatic level, Russian policy towards the Baltic Sea region became gradually more explicit [only] after February 1997" when Russia started formulating its official position on relations with the Baltic states and began to talk about economic cooperation and confidence-building (Knudsen 1998, 13).

Russia supposedly accepted the EU and NATO enlargements of 2004. Some were even bold enough to state, "security no longer informs Russia's image of the region", adding that "there is nothing to replace security as the basis for region-building" (Morozov 2004, 326), as fighting environmental threats was not reason enough. It must be admitted that many were lured into thinking about a more open and European Russia during Putin's first term, and they did so with the help of Putin himself (for a review of Putin's early years of foreign policy, see Lo 2003). Indeed, the first statement—that security no longer preoccupied region-building—did not prove to be true; but the second statement—that there was no basis for security, or for any cooperation—persisted and still seemed valid at the end of 2015.

Even though Russian presidency in the CBSS in 2013 did not provide sufficient momentum to force Russia to think more consistently about the BSR, it obliged Russia to produce official goals and plans for the Council. However, as Sergunin and Makarychev observed, Russia did not seem to be willing to develop any new concepts, and its program consisted of a "paradoxical mixture" of general declarations and technocratic approaches (Makarychev and Sergunin 2013, 5). The agenda seemed to be more of a rip-off of the EU–Russia cooperation agenda; most of the agenda items were not clearly connected to BSR matters. "Diffuse incompletion" (Knudsen 1998, 37) still appropriately describes Russia's attitude towards the BSR's activities.

Thus, Russia's foreign and security policies towards the BSR were based more on confrontation than on cooperation. In addition to Russia's gen-

eral attitude towards Baltic Sea regionalism, the attitudes and actions of the three Baltic states also matter: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are often perceived as the periphery of Russia that harbours harsh attitudes towards it. Although they do not play a decisive role in Russia's global foreign policy, some still feel the Baltic states are firmly in Russia's backyard and should stay under Russia's control (Jakniūnaitė 2009). Thus, we can state that Russia clearly does not need the BSR project to further its foreign and security policies. When Russia has an "important" issue to solve, Russia prefers bilateral contacts and communication, which are both the most effective options and the default options for Russia.

Due to Russia's policy indifference and because of its scepticism towards multilateral projects that are not its own creation, Russia is not only the largest state in the BSR, but the highest hurdle to jump in order to advance regionalization. Region-building, which often assumes that regionalism is driven by common bottom-up social and political practices, rarely directly accounts for power dynamics among the region's states; region-building also tends to disregard the need to ground a regional identity in friendships and partnerships. The importance of the last point is demonstrated in the next section.

Lithuania and the External–Internal Threat in the BSR

For the Baltic states—and one can assume, for Poland, too—Russia's distance from and indifference towards the BSR is not a loss. In fact, the Baltic states and Poland would find the opposite scenario—enthusiastic cooperation of Russia in the BSR—much more threatening. This Polish and Baltic wariness of Russia's BSR participation can be explained through an analysis of Lithuania's official security discourses in 2014 and 2015, which reveal that although (theoretically) the BSR cannot exist without Russia, it is impossible for some states to live in the BSR with Russia.

Becoming an active and integral part of the BSR meant two things to the Baltic states.[4] First, the BSR hastened the Baltic states' integration into two key Western structures: the EU and NATO. The BSR was "a training ground of the transition process, via which they could prove their 'acceptableness' and 'Europeanness' to the rest of the Western Europe and NATO" (Browning and Joenniemi 2004, 237). However, the Baltic states were initially cautious about their participation in the Baltic Sea area, as

they perceived these projects would be diversions from their main goal or even worse, an excuse to leave them "in the grey zone between East and West" (Browning and Joenniemi 2004, 237). Therefore, the Baltic states and Poland were less proactive in building regional security cooperation. Hans Mouritzen noted that the Baltic states and Poland de-emphasized the importance of cooperation in the security field because they feared that closer cooperation could diminish efforts to integrate them into Western security frameworks (Mouritzen 2009, 4). But this perception soon changed and the building of the Baltic Sea Region provided not only a testing ground but also offered the possibility of "practicing" sovereignty and the opportunity to receive practical recognition.

Second, the Baltic states saw the BSR as an opportunity to distance themselves from Russia. Many authors discussed the attitudes of the Baltic states towards Russia and wondered how these attitudes motivated the Baltic states' foreign policies and national identity politics (Berg and Ehin 2009; Miniotaitė 2003). The Baltic countries' engagement and cooperation with their Western and Nordic partners was mainly aimed at avoiding Russia's influence and at enhancing security by gaining protection guarantees (Browning 2005, 90). Consequently, the extension of Euro–Atlantic structures to the Baltic Sea area led the BSR's security cooperation to a new phase of development. However, the BSR was a strange space, where in order to secure distance from Russia (through support and guarantees), states had to get closer to Russia. Participation in the BSR required states to demonstrate their preparedness to play by Western and Nordic rules, which involved adopting a cooperative, consensus-building attitude and putting aside the fears and mistrust engendered in the past. Of course, this implied maintaining polite and understanding behaviour towards Russia, a fellow BSR member.

However, the Ukrainian events unequivocally demonstrated, again, the impossibility of imagining cooperative projects with Russia anywhere. Lithuania's vision of Russia and of Russia's role in the Baltic Sea Region is strongly linked with its own historical experiences, particularly with the periods of Russian occupation, and with regional security dynamics. Sharing an immediate neighbourhood with Russia has consistently and strongly affected Lithuania's security discourses. Since Lithuania re-established its independence, the country's security discourses have been dominated by its reliance on Western countries as a security guarantee and by its separation from the East—with a focus on Lithuania's separation from Russia. Miniotaitė noticed that "the Baltic countries were creating the narrative

of belonging to the West, where the East had to play the role of threatening 'others'" (Miniotaitė 2003, 214). In Lithuania, positive identifications with Europe were related to the country's separation from Russia. Thus, though Lithuania has always dealt cautiously with Russia, its careful attitude is even more wary given the 2014 resurgence of tensions between Russia and Ukraine, especially after the annexation of Crimea (for a general overview of the relations during the last decade see Jakniūnaitė 2015).

Since 2014, Lithuania's security discourse has been dominated by the need for a clearer division between Lithuania and Russia that emphasizes the adverse nature of the latter and the regional security threat Russia poses in both the Baltic Sea and Eastern Europe. In the 2014 annual threat assessment published by Lithuania's State Security Department, Russia was named as the primary threat to the security of Lithuania and the other Baltic states. The report defined Russia as a provocative and unreliable neighbour that threatened the political stability and territorial integrity of its neighbouring countries (State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania 2015).

In terms of the BSR's cooperation, Russia was excluded as an equal partner because of Russia's dominating hegemonic ambitions (BNS 2015). Lithuanian officials stated that dialogue with Russia was not possible due to Russia's "unpredictability" and "demonstrated aggression" (BNS 2015) against other sovereign countries. Lithuania's permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Raimonda Murmokaitė, opened a 2014 speech to the UN Security Council meeting with the following: "An undeclared war is being waged by Russia against Ukraine. By now, barely making the world's headlines, because it is slow and creeping—a few more meters of captured land, a few more explosions, a few more Russian tanks, a few more dead at a time" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania 2014). Lithuania's president has even called Russia "a terrorist state", thus underlining Russia's non-compliance with Western norms and values, constitutive elements of the current international order (Weymouth 2014). In Lithuania's official rhetoric, Russia is mainly treated with fear and distrust—"We cannot trust Russia" (Podpruginas 2014)—not only in military terms, but also in relation to energy security and regional economic development. Lithuania does not see Russia as a reliable partner for hard or soft security-related matters—"No mutual cooperation with Russia is possible in the short term" (Gudavičius 2015).

Thus, in Lithuania, regional thinking and region-building do not involve mutually cooperative engagement with Russia. While discussing

BSR cooperation in terms of either hard or soft security issues, the Lithuanian political elite refer mostly to Nordic–Baltic (NB) cooperation. In Lithuanian discourse, the NB8 (a format which includes three Baltic states and five Nordic states) is often seen as a successful regional cooperation platform (for example, "Baltic Sea Region—Example of Successful Cooperation in the EU" 2013). Germany and Poland are mentioned more as bilateral partners, whereas Russia is perceived as uncooperative.

The BSR in Lithuanian security discourse is more often perceived as a political rather than as a geographical entity. This can be demonstrated by the fact that particular attention is given to the role of the US in security discussions. The US is considered to be of a great importance in preserving stability and security both in the BSR and in Central and Eastern European countries. The US features dominantly in Lithuanian discourse as a primary security provider. As a strategic partner, Lithuanian discourse defines the US leadership as "vital" to the BSR's security, "such transatlantic unity is the only response to the increasingly growing aggression" (East 2015). Security in the BSR is described as a common interest shared by NB countries and the US. In other words, with respect to hard security issues, the BSR is seen not only as a platform bound by its shore states, but also as an essential element of the entire transatlantic security system, which points to the broader context of the BSR project.

To sum up, Lithuanian security discourse reflects the radical tensions in the BSR in general and in the BSR's southern flank in particular. Lithuania's goal is to create a limited space of security that promotes friendships and alliances among insiders, but also contains and deters the *other*, the outsiders. Lithuanian discourse indicates that Lithuania does not anticipate Russia will commence to think differently than it currently does, and thus, Lithuania has no expectations for Russia to change. Given this logic, the BSR is defined without Russia and placed in a European and Euro–Atlantic context to protect the Baltic states from threats coming from Russia. Thus, the BSR is implicitly understood in Lithuania as a bounded space without Russia.

A Region with Sutures?

This chapter explored the possibilities and challenges of the Baltic Sea state's regionalism when the BSR's largest and most powerful member, Russia, failed to exhibit cooperative or even friendly behaviour—some BSR states feel insecure because of their perceptions of Russia. In 1998,

Knudsen asked, "How does one create a new regional security-community where none existed before?" (Knudsen 1998, 7) In the early 1990s, radical constructivist ideas about the power of shared meanings were supplemented by practical efforts to realize new projects. Then, it was audacious, but not outrageous, to ask: "Is it possible to construct a region as it were *ex nihilo*?" and to answer affirmatively with "It is always possible to find some link, some pre-history, which can be used to justify the inclusion of a certain actor in a certain region" (Neumann 1994, 73). It certainly seemed so, and probably still is assumed that the main actors agree on these reasons and justification, at least to a certain extent. Yet even given the optimism of the new regionalism, no one was naive enough to deem it an easy endeavour.

During the last twenty-five years, the BSR's security cooperation has undergone several changes, driven by both hard and soft security issues. An emphasis on soft security was more visible in cooperation within regional institutional frameworks, such as the CBSS or ND. Cooperation on soft security issues kept Russia partially engaged in regional affairs. The BSR's most challenging issue, however, has been that of facilitating Russia's relations with its regional partners to develop an inclusive cooperation framework despite Russia's contradictory foreign policy, a factor that divided the region.

Even if the BSR had a specific goal, responsible and active leadership, and the enthusiasm of the majority of its members, it would still be difficult to perceive the BSR as a successful regional project. Regionalization is challenged by sizeable power and status disparities among states, and regionalization is further hindered when the political reality is incapable of overcoming significant differences in security perceptions. The BSR is made up of countries possessing not only different identities but also different foreign and security policies—and these differences are often emphasized more than is the need to overcome existing divisions of interest facing the region.

As we demonstrated in this chapter, while Russia does not visibly disapprove of the BSR, for Russia the BSR hardly exists. Russia seems to regard the BSR as just another European institutional framework that may eventually serve Russia, but certainly is not useful to Russia now. As a result, the BSR is increasingly virtual to all of its members. Togetherness requires action and similar thinking. With neither action nor similar thinking unit-

ing the region's states, the BSR's future will become even less plausible and less believable.

The suture metaphor works perfectly in this case. Russia in the BSR was an insider yet also a constant outsider—both by its own volition and by the perceptions and projections of other insiders. Russia's ambiguous status leaves the BSR open and incomplete. Furthermore, Russia's dual insider/outsider positioning offers the BSR neither creative outcomes nor a means of overcoming modernist, enclosing bordering practices. Instead, Russia's participation in the situation, through this suturing effect, threatens to either erase the subject itself, the Baltic Sea region, or force the BSR to become ghostlike as it simply pretends to be alive.

From the other side, the concept of suturing allows distance from the region-building paradigm that implies region-building as based on a definite blueprint. Instead we might think of the BSR as a sutured region, as a space that is impossible to close (or *fore*close), despite the prospect of focusing regional cooperation on hard security. The BSR was built on a post-Cold War paradigm—one that still serves as the basis for its existence, at least on the CBSS level. Treating Russia as a part of the BSR's founding infrastructure, even if the current context changes, leaves the BSR with only a few chances to implement the original Baltic regionalism design.

Notes

1. The research for the article was conducted during the Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme Fellowship within the 7th European Community Framework Programme.
2. We do not imply that these events where the only events that challenged European security, but only that these were the most important events to developments in the BSR.
3. In this chapter we do not analyze the role and activities of Poland and Germany. For our purposes, it is enough to analyze the opposing positions of two players in order to demonstrate the problems of the region-building approach in the BSR.
4. Though only the Lithuanian example is analyzed in this chapter, these conclusions can be generalized to all three Baltic states. There are some subtle differences in their approaches towards Russia's role in general, however, here these differences do not play a significant analytical role. A similar position is taken by Berg and Ehin (2009).

References

Baltic Sea Region—Example of Successful Cooperation in the EU. 2013. Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2013. November 11. http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/baltic-sea-regionexample-of-successful-cooperation-in-the-eu.

Beazley, Christopher. 2007. A EU-Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: Making a Success of the 2004 Enlargement. *Baltic Rim Economies* 6: 14.

Berg, Eiki, and Piret Ehin, eds. 2009. *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Blair, David. 2015. Sitting Near a Nuclear Tripwire, Estonia's President Urges Nato to Send Troops to Defend His Country. *Telegraph*, April 11. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/estonia/11530064/Sitting-near-a-nuclear-tripwire-Estonias-president-urges-Nato-to-send-troops-to-defend-his-country.html.

BNS. 2015. President Grybauskaitė's Annual Press Conference: No Dialogue with Russia Backing 'Terrorists' in Ukraine. *Delfi*, January 7. http://en.delfi.lt/lithuania/politics/president-grybauskaites-annual-press-conference-no-dialogue-with-russia-backing-terrorists-in-ukraine.d?id=66837710.

Browning, Christopher S. 2005. Exporting Idealism? The Prospects of Baltic Sea Region Cooperation after Enlargement. *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 2004: 85–97.

Browning, Christopher S., and Pertti Joenniemi. 2004. Regionality Beyond Security?: The Baltic Sea Region after Enlargement. *Cooperation and Conflict* 39(3): 233–253.

Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. 1997. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Council of the Baltic Sea States. 2016a. Empowering Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. *Cbss.org*. http://www.cbss.org/council/.

———. 2016b. History. *Cbss.org*. http://www.cbss.org/council/history/.

De Lombaerde, Philippe, and Fredrik Söderbaum. 2013. Editors' Introduction: Reading the Intellectual History of Regionalism. In *Regionalism. Vol. 1. Classical Regional Integration (1945–1970)*, ed. Philippe de Lombaerde, and Frederik Söderbaum, xvii–xlvii. London: Sage.

East, George. 2015. Grybauskaite: Security of Baltic Region Common Interest to Lithuania and the U.S. *The Baltic Times*, June 29. http://www.baltictimes.com/grybauskate__security_of_baltic_region_common_interest_to_lithuania_and_the_u_s_/.

Etzold, Tobias. 2012. *Security In and Through Security Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region*. Paper presented at the German-Nordic-Baltic Forum, Helsinki, September 27. http://www.fiia.fi/assets/events/Etzold__SECURITY_IN_AND_THROUGH_REGIONAL_COOPERATION.pdf.

European Commission. 2009. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Brussels, June 9. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52009DC0248.

Gotkowska, Justyna. 2014. Russia's Game in the Baltic Sea Region: A Polish Perspective. *European Council on Foreign Relations*, December 16. http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_russias_game_in_the_baltic_sea_region_a_polish_perspective381.

Gudavičius, Stasys. 2015. Linkevičius: Rusija pati sunaikino bendravimo su ja galimybes. *Verslo žinios*, September 7. http://vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/politika/2015/09/07/linkevicius-rusija-pati-sunaikino-bendravimo-su-ja-galimybes.

Hameiri, Shahar. 2013. Theorizing Regions through Changes in Statehood: Rethinking the Theory and Method of Comparative Regionalism. *Review of International Studies* 39(2): 313–335.

Hanson, Philip, James Nixey, Lilia Shevtsova, and Andrew Wood. 2012. *Putin Again. Implications for Russia and the West*. London: Chatham House. http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Russia and Eurasia/r0212_putin.pdf.

Hettne, Björn, and Fredrik Söderbaum. 2000. Theorising the Rise of Regionness. *New Political Economy* 5(3): 457–472.

Interv'yu Prezidenta Rossii V.V.Putina gazete 'Welt am Sonntag'. 2000. Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Rossiyskoy federatsii. June 14. http://archive.mid.ru//bdomp/ns-reuro.nsf/348bd0da1d5a7185432569e700419c7a/432569d80022027e4325699c003b5ec7!OpenDocument.

Jakniūnaitė, Dovilė. 2009. Neighbourhood Politics of Baltic States: Between the EU and Russia. In *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration*, ed. Eiki Berg, and Piret Ehin, 117–132. Ashgate.

Jakniūnaitė, Dovilė. 2015. A Small State in the Asymmetrical Bilateral Relations: Lithuania in Lithuanian-Russian Relations since 2004. *Baltic Journal of Political Science* 4: 70–93.

Kaljurand, Riina, Karlis Neretnieks, Bo Ljung, and Julian Tupay. 2012. *Developments in the Security Environment in the Baltic Sea up to 2020*. Tallinn: International Centre for Defense Studies http://www.icds.ee/fileadmin/media/icds.ee/failid/Developments%20in%20the%20Security%20Environment%20of%20the%20Baltic%20Sea%20Region%20up%20to%202020.pdf.

Knudsen, Olav F. 1998. Cooperative Security in the Baltic Sea Region. *Chaillot Papers* 33. Paris: Institute for Security Studies. http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp033e.pdf.

——— 1999. A General Perspective on the Security of the Baltic Sea Region. In *Stability and Security in the Baltic Sea Region*, ed. Olav F. Knudsen, 7–17. London: Routledge.

Kunz, Barbara. 2015. Sweden's Nato Workaround: Swedish Security and Defense Policy against the Backdrop of Russian Revisionism. *Enote. Focus Strateguque*. Paris: Institut francais de relations internationales (IRFI). https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/enotes/focus-strategique/swedens-nato-workaround-swedish-security-and-defense-policy.

Lavrov, Sergey. 2007. Vneshnepoliticheskaya samostoyatel'nost' Rossii—Bezuslovnyy imperativ. Moskovskie novosti, January 19. http://www.ryzkov.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=29121&catid=11:2011-12-26-10-30-14&Itemid=6.

Lehti, Marko. 2009. Baltic Region in Becoming: From the Council of the Baltic Sea States to the EU's Strategy for the Baltic Sea Area. *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 22: 9–27.

Lo, Bobo. 2003. *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*. Blackwell.

Makarychev, Andrey, and Alexander Sergunin. 2013. The Russian Presidency in the Council of the Baltic Sea States: Thin Socialization, Deficient Soft Power? *EU-Russia Paper*. Tartu: University of Tartu, Centre for EU-Russia Studies. http://ceurus.ut.ee/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/EU-Russia-Papers-11_MakarychevSergunin.pdf.

Miniotaitė, Gražina. 2003. Convergent Geography and Divergent Identities: A Decade of Transformation in the Baltic States. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 16(2): 209–224.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. 2014. Lithuania's Statement at the UN Security Council Briefing on Ukraine. November 13. http://mission-un-ny.mfa.lt/missionny/en/news/-lithuanias-statement-at-the-un-security-council-briefing-on-ukraine.

Morozov, Viatcheslav. 2004. Russia in the Baltic Sea Region: Desecuritization or Deregionalization? *Cooperation and Conflict* 39(3): 317–331.

Mouritzen, Hans. 2009. Russia as the Key to the Baltic Sea Region. *DIIS Brief*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies. http://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/49661/DIIS_Brief_Russia_as_key_to_the_Baltic_Sea_region.pdf.

Neumann, Iver B. 1994. A Region-Building Approach to Northern Europe. *Review of International Studies* 20(1): 53–74.

——— 1999. *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership. 2016. Home page. January 22. http://ndep.org/.

Oldberg, Ingmar. 2012. Soft Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Russian Interests in the Council of Baltic Sea States. *UI Occasional Papers* 12. Stockholm: The Swedish Institute of International Affairs. http://www.ui.se/upl/files/78994.pdf.

Paasi, Anssi. 2009. The Resurgence of the 'Region' and 'Regional Identity': Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Observations on Regional Dynamics in Europe. *Review of International Studies* 35: 121–146.

Podpruginas, Aleksejus. 2014. 'West Cannot Trust Russia', Claims Lithuania's Foreign Affairs Minister. *The Baltic Review*, August 14. http://baltic-review.com/west-cannot-trust-russia-claims-lithuanias-foreign-affairs-minister/.

State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania. 2015. Annual Threat Assessment 2014. *Vilnius*. http://www.vsd.lt/Files/Documents/\635664369272603750.pdf.

Tassinari, Fabrizio. 2005. The European Sea: Lessons from the Baltic Sea Region for Security and Cooperation in the European Neighborhood. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 36(4): 387–407.

Tassirani, Fabrizio, and Leena-Kaarina Williams. 2003. Soft Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Environmental Cooperation as Pilot Project for Regional Integration in the Baltic Sea Area. In *The Baltic Sea Region in the European Union: Reflections on Identity, Soft-Security and Marginality*, ed. Fabrizion Tassarini, 27–53. Berlin: Nordeuropa-Institut der Humboldt – Universitat zu Berlin.

Weymouth, Lally. 2014. Lithuania's President: 'Russia Is Terrorizing Its Neighbors and Using Terrorist Methods'. *The Washington Post*, September 24. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/lithuanias-president-russia-is-terrorizing-its-neighbors-and-using-terrorist-methods/2014/09/24/eb32b9fc-4410-11e4-b47c-f5889e061e5f_story.html.

What Is the EUSBSR. 2016. *Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region*. January 22. http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/about.

Ziegler, Charles E. 2013. Energy Pipeline Networks and Trust: The European Union and Russia in Comparative Perspective. *International Relations* 27(1): 3–29.

CHAPTER 6

When Left and Right Is a Matter of Identity: Overlapping Political Dimensions in Estonia and Latvia

Kjetil Duvold

Introduction

"Socialism" became largely discredited all over Central and Eastern Europe with the collapse of communism, but perhaps more so in the Baltic countries. The three Baltic countries have in common a half-century long history as Soviet republics, but they differ from the rest of the Soviet Union in important respects. Not only because they experienced independence and democratic institutions in the Interwar period but also because they have somehow managed to cut themselves loose from the post-Soviet region, largely dominated by Russia, and aligned themselves with Europe and the West. However, their common Soviet legacy also sets them apart from what we usually call "Central and Eastern Europe". In particular, they were not in charge of state borders and, thus, could not control the patterns of migration within the USSR. As a result, Estonia and Latvia experienced dramatic population changes over the decades. By 1989, one in three Estonians were from a non-Estonian Soviet republic, usually Russia, without much knowledge about Estonia and the Estonian language. In

K. Duvold (✉)
Dalarna University College, Dalarna, Sweden

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_6

Latvia, almost half the population was of non-Latvian background at the onset of independence. As the two Soviet republics were loosening the ties with Moscow towards the end of the *perestroika* period, they were obliged to navigate a very delicate demographic situation. In the spirit of the time, many Russian speakers were positive about independence, or at least greater autonomy within the USSR, while others fiercely opposed the idea. The majority remained, however, rather passive. The popular fronts—the Estonian *Rahvarinne* and the Latvian *Tautas fronte*—kept an inclusive approach towards the minorities, notably in terms of citizenship, but were challenged by more radical nationalists who started a process of registering all pre-Soviet citizens and their descendants and wanted to restrict the body of citizens to these groups. Meanwhile, the former communist parties all but vanished.[1] When the two countries eventually introduced their citizenship laws, the Soviet threat was gone, Russia weakened and the radicals had won the argument: practically all Soviet-era immigrants were automatically excluded and it would take many years before the bulk of them became citizens. Many Balts feared that a forceful Russian population, vested with strong political representation, could disassemble the newly independent states and unravel several key priorities (such as security and defence arrangements and European alignments). The overriding notion was that the minority population would have to be co-opted into the citizenry on a gradual basis (Pettai and Hallik 2002). But even with a weak minority presence within the party systems, the ethno-linguistic cleavage was in fact firmly established from the outset and became more dominant as the minority electorate grew stronger and more vocal. This process is still taking place.

The Russian speakers[2] have clearly been underrepresented in Estonian and Latvian politics since the early 1990s. One obvious reason for this state of affairs lies in the fact that most of them were not citizens of the respective countries and, hence, were barred from participating in national elections and, in the case of Latvia, also local elections. The shares of non-citizens are much smaller today, but still significant. There are, however, additional reasons why the minorities are politically underrepresented. In the case of Estonia, hardly any specific minority parties have managed to establish themselves within the political mainstream. In early elections, the Russian speaking electorate was very small and, consequently, had little impact. It has grown considerably since the early 1990s, of course, but in subsequent elections, Russian speaking voters

have actually tended to opt for a party that is not exclusively vying for minority interests. The Latvian party system, on the other hand, offers alternatives that are more explicitly focused on Russian speaking interests, but strictly speaking do not fall within standard definitions of ethnic, ethno-lingual or regionalist parties.[3] The claim that Estonian politics does not have significant minority parties while Latvian politics does is not entirely self-evident. Although some scholars (Nakai 2014; Lauristin and Vihalemm 2009) have argued that the two countries differ in this respect, due to a stronger focus on minority politics and higher degree of "ethnic outbidding" in Latvia than in Estonia, one could nevertheless argue that the difference is merely a matter of degree, not kind. Rather strikingly, however, the parties of choice for Russian speaking voters in both countries are located on the left of the political spectrum, while most ethnic Estonians and Latvians opt for parties on the right. This particular pattern is the chief focus of attention in this chapter. Hence, I will try to detangle the meaning of "left" and "right" in Estonian and Latvian politics in relation to the ethnic divide. The two countries stand out in a regional context in the sense that hardly any left-of-centre parties have managed to establish themselves as parties of government. Moreover, it appears that left/right is effectively fused with ethnic divisions; the majority populations tend to vote for parties on the right and the minority populations opt for leftist parties. I will first examine whether this division overlaps with self-placement on the left/right scale; second, to what extent this division can be extended to differences in policy preferences; and, third, whether left/right and ethnicity ultimately are reflected in attitudes towards liberal democracy, the Soviet past and the European Union.

The chapter breaks down in the following sections: first, a brief review of the literature on social cleavages and the importance of the left/right division for structuring the party political landscape will be made, followed by a discussion on its relevance in post-communist states; a short introduction to the party systems of Estonia and Latvia follows, before left/right self-placement and policy preferences are discussed; finally, the importance of the Soviet legacy will be taken up and put in the context of politics of interests versus identities. Descriptive data taken from the *Baltic Barometer*, a recent survey of the Baltic states, which includes face-to-face interviews with 1500 respondents in each country, will provide the empirical backdrop of the investigation.[4]

The Left/Right Division

The political competition in virtually every European democracy is structured around a semantic left/right division (Bobbio 1996; Dalton et al. 2011; Jahn 2011). It ultimately provides a mental and ideological map for the voters and parties alike in order to locate themselves and others. To put it differently, it is an informational shortcut for the voters to orientate themselves among party alternatives as well as a source of political identification. Likewise, political actors use the division to consolidate their positions, to offer more or less coherent policy "packages" and to create distance from their political opponents. At times, the left/right division is heavily emphasized in order to delegitimize and demonize political opponents. Conversely, it might on other occasions be downplayed: either the left or the right might be discredited and in sudden need of bouncing back and renewing itself by appealing to the "centre", "the third way" and so on.

Although, the notion of left/right differs in substance and intensity across space and time and, accordingly, is structured differently, there is also a common ground, which to a certain degree unifies the left and the right, respectively. For instance, "equality" seems to sum up the left in ideological terms. An overriding focus on equality will involve a number of policy preferences, such as an active role of the state and the public sector, progressive taxation, market regulations and so on. But while the moderate left will have rather modest aims in terms of redistribution and the role of the state, the far- left will take a far more hostile attitude towards market solutions. The right is harder to pin down, as it may include both free-marketeers and traditionalists. In other words, it includes both liberals and conservatives—historical adversaries in several countries that are marked by strong conflicts between secularism and religion and indeed the main opponents in some countries even today. While liberals are preoccupied with individualism and personal freedom, conservatives have taken a much more holistic approach to society, emphasizing hierarchy, social order, tradition, patriotism, discipline, religion, morality and so on. However, contemporary conservatives tend to side with liberals in favouring a small state, market solutions and individual responsibility.

Left and Right after Communism

Left/right is the most frequently cited dimension of conflict in Western Europe. It has its structural roots in tensions between the working class and the middle and upper classes in newly industrialized Western Europe

in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Class conflict was translated into an attitudinal divide generating a deep societal rift and corresponding voting patterns. The result was arguably a fully-fledged cleavage; involving social, attitudinal as well as behavioural differences. The class structure in contemporary Western Europe is too blurred to sustain a fully -fledged class-based cleavage, but left/right nevertheless lives on in the minds of most Western Europeans as a structural and/or issue divide revolving around attitudes to government interventionism, taxation and the welfare state. The class structure is no less blurred in Eastern Europe; and in the final analysis left and right often boils down to a cultural divide, linked to the former communist regimes.

Most post-communist democracies are modelled on the same template as European first-wave democracies, but there is good empirical evidence for claiming that the political competition is structured around different issues in countries that have experienced decades of communist rule. Even after a quarter-century, the legacy of communism has survived as an enduring political divide in Central and Eastern Europe (Berglund et al. 2013). Largely corresponding with a self-proclaimed left and right division, attitudes towards the communist past do not necessarily translate into a classic socio-economic divide—with a state-centred, redistributive left and a libertarian, market-oriented right. In fact, the economic priorities of the left and right have, in much of the post-communist world, seemed confusing—or confused. For instance, national-minded conservatives have sometimes appeared to be more protectionist and egalitarian than former communists. Conversely, former *apparatchiki*, who currently might call themselves social democrats, have sometimes followed tougher privatization packages or been fiscally more disciplined. What appears to be the most correct observation, however, is that practically all government in the "successful" parts of post-communist Europe have, at least until the accession to the European Union, digested most of the advice from the IMF and the World Bank—warts and all: after all, economic self-discipline was mandatory for a state to become "EU compatible" (cf. Dimitrova and Pridham 2004).

A relevant question is, perhaps, whether the post-communist left and right actually represent distinct socio-economic interests. Zielinski (2002, 185) has pointed out that labour/capital divisions are likely to emerge well after party system consolidation in post-communist societies. It means that parties might identify themselves with the "left" or—even more likely—the "right" without having a sociological basis for it. The argument rests

on the fact that (1) the former communist regimes put an end to private property, and that (2) free elections and new parties emerged prior to the development of new social inequalities and socio-economic divisions. Compared with party development in Western Europe there is, hence, an almost inverse relationship between party development and socio-economic divisions (Duvold and Jurkynas 2004).

What does "left" means in post-communist countries? Considering the rapidly progressing inequalities that have been in the making since the early 1990s, there are good reasons to expect socio-economic divisions to be pivotal in post-communist party systems. The last two decades have entailed enormous societal changes, not least brought about by market reforms. Income differences have increased dramatically—to a level where some countries in the region have reached some of the highest levels of inequality in the EU; this represents quite a bit of change for societies that used to have comparatively little differentiation. Even after joining the EU and experiencing relatively fast economic development, social disparities have retained their salience. Some of the economies reached double-digit growth in the 2000s before they were severely hit by the global recession in late 2008, which exacerbated social divisions even further.

The "left" has a particular resonance in the context of post-communism, if only because the communist regimes for decades "monopolized" socialism and deprived citizens of choosing between reformist and "revolutionary" socialism. Whereas socialism and social democracy in long-standing democracies are associated with social change and demand for greater economic equality, socialism was inevitably identified with the *status quo* under communism. After the collapse of the communist regimes, socialism has been identified with *reactionism* (Markowski 1997; Lewis 2000). Moreover, former communist parties have been associated with members of the old *nomenklatura*; often among the main beneficiaries of the large-scale privatisation of public assets in the 1990s. It is therefore relevant to ask to what extent the left has actually represented the interests of the unprivileged and worse-off segments of society (which obviously is not to suggest that their interests have been taken care of by any other parties either).

A similar conceptual confusion has been apparent when it comes to the meaning of the "right". "Conservatism" undoubtedly has a slightly different ring in post-communist societies: to what extent can declared conservatives in post-communist countries be traditional when they so urgently want to steer society away from the legacy of communism? Family val-

ues, Christian ethics, modesty might be associated with conservative values. But in societies that have undergone radical transformation over the recent decades, the meaning of "traditional" or "customary" can be rather perplexing. Certainly, there are those who might be called "communist traditionalists", who struggle to accept that the communist economic system was unsustainable and, accordingly, regret its passing. Available survey data overwhelmingly indicate that significant shares of East Europeans believe that Soviet-style communism was a superior political and economic system to the political and economic system that succeeded it (see for instance Okulicz-Kozaryn 2014) Arguably, these people represent the true conservative political forces in these societies. But there are other types of traditionalists—sometimes, but not necessarily, antithetical to the Soviet nostalgists: those who take a moralist approach to personal lifestyle and family values. Many of them are represented by the Church and smaller religious groups, as well as hardcore nationalists. Some of them seem almost hostile to modernity and liberal democracy, yearning for a "pure" nation as of three generations ago. Some mainstream conservative parties may take a more pragmatic view on the contemporary world, but the former brand of conservatism seems to have grown stronger in recent years—with a heavy emphasis on issues like family, abortion and gay rights. In the long run, it may open for a clearer division between liberals and authoritarians, a process that seems well under way in some countries in the region, notably Poland and Hungary. In these two cases, the post-communist left has virtually imploded, which has tilted party competition significantly: currently, the main adversaries are, on the one hand, parties representing a nationalist and socially conservative ideology and, on the other, parties representing liberalist values.

The Left/Right Divide in Estonia and Latvia

In Estonia and Latvia, there was never a clear left/right division in the first place. Virtually[5] all the parties that emerged in the early 1990s had their roots either in the popular fronts, the nationalist Congress movements or the pro-Moscow Interfronts. Unlike in Lithuania, the old communist parties produced no direct successor parties. Moreover, while the popular front of Lithuania (*Sąjūdis*) gave birth to the standard-bearer of the right (*Tėvynės sąjunga*), the popular fronts of Estonia and Latvia produced centrist and even left-wing alternatives. Instead, it was the more radical Congress movements that initially gave rise to parties on the right. The

Interfront movements quickly became irrelevant in Estonia but produced some hardline pro-Russia parties in Latvia.

Prior to the elections in 2015, there were four parties in the Estonian parliament (*Riigikogu*). The largest, the liberal conservative Reform Party, has been a mainstay in Estonia since 1994. Pro Patria/Res Publica is the result of a merger between a national conservative party (Pro Patria) and a more liberal conservative (but also vaguely populist) party (Res Publica). The Social Democratic Party claims to be exactly what the name indicates and aligns with the larger European family of social democratic parties, but has, in fact, roots in a centrist party formation (the Moderate Party). The party enjoyed a boost in 2004 when former foreign minister and later president Toomas Ilves was their top candidate in the European Parliament election. The Centre Party (*Keskerakond*) describes itself as social liberal but is clearly to the left of the other parties in the *Riigikogu* (including the Social Democrats). Like the Social Democrats, the party has roots in the Popular Front and has successfully managed to broaden its appeal to include minority voters, thus holding back the challenge from pure minority parties. It has been the second largest party of Estonia for much of the time since independence and has joined government coalitions three times (albeit as a junior partner) and dominated several local councils. The strength of the party among the Russian speakers might indeed have contributed to the party's reputation as something of an outcast in the Estonian political establishment. However, there are other, somewhat related, reasons why the party is held in contempt: notably the authoritarian leadership style of its leader, Edgar Savisaar; several high-profile corruption scandals in the Tallinn city council, where they have held power for several years; and alleged financial support from Russia (Milne 2015; Baltic Business News 2015; Pettai and Mölder 2013; Stratfor Global Intelligence 2010). However, it cannot be described as a party exclusively catering to minority interests.

Five parties were represented in the Latvian parliament (*Saeima*) prior to the 2014 election. Unity and the Reform Party are typical centre-right parties. The former is a coalition of several vaguely liberal-conservative parties, representing the political mainstream, while the latter could best be described as a challenger, vying for the same voters. It came to life not so much out of policy differences as the thorny issue of corruption and the crippling influence oligarchs.[6] However, the party forged an alliance with Unity ahead of the 2014 general elections and was entirely integrated with the latter by 2015. The Farmers' Union and the Green Party

have formed a centre-right alliance since 2002, backed by one of Latvia's most influential oligarchs—the very issue that gave birth to the Reform Party. Further to the right, the National Alliance is clearly a nationalist party. Indeed, nationalist rhetoric has for a long time had more enduring appeal in Latvia than in Estonia. While Estonia's Pro Patria Union, the standard-bearer of nationalism in the early 1990s, became a fairly moderate conservative party in the European mould, a comparable Latvian party, For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK, retained its nationalist credentials before merging into the National Alliance (Duvold 2010; Bennich-Björkman and Johansson 2012). The alliance includes the far-right All For Latvia!. Finally, the Harmony Centre, known as the Social Democratic Party "Harmony" since 2014, is on the one hand a leftist party, but to a large extent also an ethnic minority party. Compared with the Centre Party in Estonia, the Harmony Centre is not only further to the left, but also to a greater extent catering specifically to the Russian-speaking electorate—even though it also receives support from some Latvian speakers who reject the prevalent position taken by the other parties regarding citizenship, language and education. The Harmony Centre has its roots mainly in the Popular Front (via the National Harmony Party) but has also included successor parties to the Interfront (such as the Socialist Party until 2014). Additionally, there have been other, more hard-line, minority parties with ties back to the Interfront. Currently, the Latvian Russian Union seems to be the main challenger and might well become stronger if ethnic positions harden. The party claimed one out of eight seats in the election for the European Parliamentary in 2014. The party is also more left-leaning than the Harmony Centre. There have been several institutional overlaps between the radical and more moderate minority parties. For instance, the predecessor of the Latvian Russian Union was For Human Rights in a United Latvia, a coalition that at some point also included the National Harmony Party.

The parties that have catered mainly to the Russian-speaking voters, including the Harmony Centre, have been treated almost as pariahs by the other political parties and have yet to serve in a government coalition at the national level. In the general election in 2011, the Harmony Centre became the largest party but was unable to enter the government due to opposition from other parties. Instead, the National Alliance, including the far-right All for Latvia!, entered office in a coalition with two other parties (Table 6.1).

The *Baltic Barometer 2014* asked respondents about which party they would vote for "if there was an election tomorrow". The tables offer a

slightly different picture than recent election results, since it includes other preferences such as independent candidates, blank vote or abstaining. Estonian speakers are fairly evenly spread across different alternatives—with non-voters and those who wish to cast a blank vote as the largest group. Meanwhile, few of them feel close to a particular party. A rather similar pattern can be found among the Latvian speakers. Among the Russian speakers in Estonia, an overwhelming majority indicates that they would vote for the Centre Party, which appears to be the only significant party for this electorate. The picture is very similar in Latvia, where the bulk of the Russian speakers would opt for the Harmony Centre. Russian speakers in both countries are also much more likely to "feel close to a political party" than the rest of the population; the links between parties and voters within the Russian-speaking electorates are strong and native

Table 6.1 Party Support and Party Attachment in Estonia and Latvia (%)[a]

Party	*Position*	*Estonian*	*Russian*
Centre Party	centre-left	10	60
Reform Party	centre-right	13	1
Pro Patria/Res Publica	centre-right	13	1
Social Democrats	centre-left	14	6
Conservatives	right	4	0
Other/independent	–	15	7
Blank/not vote	–	19	16
Refuse/don't know	–	12	11
Close to a party	–	37	54
		Latvian	Russian
Harmony Centre	left	10	55
Unity	centre-right	17	1
Union of Farmers	centre-right	14	2
National Union	right	10	1
Other	–	13	5
Blank/not vote	–	23	18
Refuse/don't know	–	12	16
Close to a party	–	26	42

[a]The ideological placements of the parties are approximate and based on a mixture of self-placement, international affiliations and the Chapel Hill expert survey (http://chesdata.eu/). The level of party support is taken from the Baltic Barometer 2014. The survey item reads as follows: "In this envelope is a ballot with the names of political parties. Please put a cross by the name of the party that you are likely to vote for if a parliamentary election were held tomorrow." The exact question for "close to a party" reads: "Is there a particular political party you feel closer to than all the other parties?" Only positive responses are reported (Baltic Barometer 2014)

Estonians and Latvians are much less likely to feel strong affiliation to a particular party. The latter trend appears to be of recent vintage: previous research indicates that the Russian speakers were *less* likely to feel attached to a political party than ethnic Estonians and Latvians (Duvold 2010). It might suggest that the Harmony Centre and even the Centre Party are being consolidated as parties of minority interests.

Left/Right Placement

Most voters can (and, indeed, *do*) position themselves on a left/right scale. Moreover, most voters tend to locate themselves in the middle of the scale, either because they genuinely feel centrist or because they feel uncertain, uninformed or ignorant about the question (Inglehart and Klingemann 1976). Hence, it comes as no surprise that a plurality of Estonians and Latvians see themselves as "centrist" (see Table 6.2). However, there are two interesting patterns in the table: first, almost a quarter of the Russian Latvians either have no opinion on left and right in politics or refuse to give an answer. It could quite conceivably mean that the scale conceptually carries weaker resonance within this group. The other interesting trend runs between the majority and minority populations in both countries. Russian speakers are certainly more likely to be left-oriented than the majority populations. One-third describes themselves as leftists. By contrast, only one out

Table 6.2 Self-Placement on a Left/Right Scale (%)[a]

	Estonia		*Latvia*	
	Majority	*Minority*	*Majority*	*Minority*
(Extreme left)	*(1)*	*(2)*	*(1)*	*(7)*
Left-of-centre	16	30	15	33
Centrist	39	37	36	38
Right-of-centre	33	16	34	5
(Extreme right)	*(3)*	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(2)*
Refuse or don't know	12	16	14	22

[a]The question reads: "In politics people sometimes talk of 'left' and 'right'. Using this card, where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?" "Extreme left" denotes 0, "left-of-centre" denotes 0–4, "centrist" denotes 5, "right-of-centre" denotes 6–10, and "extreme right" denotes 10. Note that the extreme left and right categorizations are subsets of, respectively, the left-of-centre and right-of-centre categories. Majority and minority are denoted by the first language of the respondent. *Source*: Baltic Barometer (2014)

of six Latvian- and Estonian speakers claims to be on the left. Conversely, a third of the latter groups place themselves on the right. In Latvia, only 5 % of the Russian speakers place themselves on the right-of-centre.

These differences do in fact reflect the aforementioned party preferences in the sense that more Russian speakers not only identify with the left but also intend to vote for parties on the left. To that extent, there is a clear link between political beliefs and political behaviour. But are the Russian speakers also more left-leaning in terms of policy preferences? Are there socio-economic differences along ethno-linguistic lines? Many of the Russian speakers did indeed arrive during Soviet times as manual workers and, even today, tend to reside in compact Soviet-era settlements on the outskirts of urban areas. Clear-cut separations between national communities can be particularly felt in the case of Estonia, while the majority and minority populations of Latvia are more intertwined.

Policy Preferences

The *Baltic Barometer* asked a number of questions related to the role of the state versus the market, individual versus collective responsibility for jobs, income differences and taxation. These items cover typical attitudes that can be attributed to left/right placement on a policy level. The picture is inevitably mixed: although the Russian speakers in each country think income differences should be reduced instead of letting individual achievements decide, the majority populations do not hold significantly different views. A similar pattern emerges when it comes to job security in exchange for a better paid but less secure job. Conceivably, many people in the two countries have the recent financial crisis fresh in mind.

However, the minority groups turn out to be significantly more pro-state in other respects: namely when it comes to providing material security for everyone and that the state should run enterprises. A clear majority of the Russian speakers in each country holds the view that the state should secure the material benefits of ordinary people and even run enterprises. Native Estonians are considerably less likely to hold this view, while the Latvians are somewhere in-between. Yet another interesting pattern emerges when it comes to higher taxes in return for more spending on, for instance, education and health: a majority of all Estonians are in favour of this, whereas only a third of all the Latvians agree. In all likelihood, these patterns are the result of institutional performance and trust: Estonia has made considerably more progress than Latvia when it comes to building

well-functioning and transparent public institutions (Auers 2015; Duvold 2010). The Estonians might simply feel more certain that higher public spending will benefit ordinary citizens.

On the whole, many Estonians and Latvians seem to support the idea of state intervention, which suggests that the leading parties in the two countries deviate in important respects from the populations at large (see Table 6.3). That citizens appear more left-leaning in terms of redistribution, equality and welfare than the parties they vote for is, of course, not unheard of in Western democracies either: even parties that are voted into power on a left-wing ticket are often forced to readjust their priorities according to political and economic circumstances. Still, there is clearly much less scope for public spending and generous welfare policies in the Baltic countries (or, for that matter, in most new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe) than in many established democracies. Thus, given the clear evidences that many continue to cherish leftist, state-oriented ideas—although far fewer of them actually vote for left-wing parties—it should come as no surprise that large segments are disillusioned about politics and cynical about their politicians: the gap between public expectations on the one hand and the limited scope to fulfill them on the other simply appears to be wider in these countries than in many established western democracies.

Table 6.3 Attitudes Towards Equality and the Role of the State (%)[a]

	Estonia		*Latvia*	
	Majority	*Minority*	*Majority*	*Minority*
Incomes should be made more equal, so there is no great difference	49	53	44	58
The state should be responsible for everyone's material security	35	62	52	61
State ownership is the best way to run an enterprise	33	55	40	60
A good job is one that is secure even if it doesn't pay very much	61	42	65	62
Even if it means people like myself pay more in taxes, government should spend more on education, health and pensions	57	59	36	36

[a]The following answer categories were offered: "agree strongly", "agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "disagree", "disagree strongly" and "don't know". The figures are for "agree strongly" and "agree". *Source*: Baltic Barometer (2014)

The ethnic dimension strongly overlaps with—even eclipses—the left/right dimension in both Estonia and Latvia (but clearly more so in the latter case). No mainstream parties have called themselves "socialist", although there has been a moderately successful social democratic party in Estonia since 2004. Conversely, the bulk of the Russian speakers vote for leftist parties, even if many of them do not hold leftist views. Parties that call themselves "left-wing" have clearly been associated with the Russian minorities and enjoy pariah status by the right. As it appears, it is unacceptable to be simultaneously "left-wing" and "patriotic" in Estonia and, in particular, Latvia.

However, there are a couple of factors that make the two cases slightly different. First, every Latvian government from the early 1990s has been run by coalitions of centre-right parties without the presence of parties catering to Russian-speaking voters. By contrast, the Centre Party, one of the consistently largest parties in Estonia and which could be classified as a moderately leftist party, has participated in coalition governments with centre-right parties. The Centre Party has also to some extent managed to appeal to voters across the ethnic line. Having said that, the party is far from being universally respected among Estonians.

Parties catering to ethnic minorities do, of course, hold positions on a large number of policy fields, but they are likely to be subordinated to group-specific interests (Chandra 2011). This basically means that the pro-Russian left places a strong emphasis on ethnic inclusion, that is, supporting rapid integration of the minorities and de facto support for bilingualism (conversely, the parties of the right tend to support a restrictive line on citizenship and mono-lingual schools). The data at hand suggest that the division between "Estonian" or "Latvian" versus "Russian speaking" parties largely overlap with left/right: Russian-speaking voters tend to vote for left-wing parties regardless of their socio-economic interests, while Estonians and Latvians opt for right-wing parties—despite the fact that many of them do hold left-wing views on redistribution.

In a historical perspective, the weak emphasis on socio-economics in Latvia is actually surprising. Latvia's capital, Riga, was a city of major industry and a distinct working class movement before and during the interwar period. The social democratic movement in Latvia, which originally took its cues from Germany more than Russia, enjoyed a much stronger position in cities like Riga and Liepāja than anywhere else in the neighbouring countries (Lieven 1994, 57; Kasekamp 2010, 88–89).

The Contested Soviet Legacy

The majority and minority populations of Estonia and Latvia have perceived the break-up of the Soviet Union very differently; the shift from political subordination to national independence also affected the communities differently and, arguably, the end of the Soviet Union and the establishment of independent states left the minorities, dominated by Soviet-era immigrants, in a state of confusion. The minorities were by and large not too keen on independence and some of them actively opposed it. Ethnic Estonians and Latvians, in contrast, mobilized widely for independence in the late 1980s, and most of them held the view that their countries had been occupied by the Soviet regime in 1940 and, once again, in 1945. The question is to what extent this factor, clearly present around the time of the independence struggle, affects perceptions of the past a quarter century later. It is not far-fetched to infer that native Estonians and Latvians are likely to be more negative about the Soviet system of the past. Many of them most likely see the Soviet Union as a repressive regime—a political entity that turned their countries into Soviet republics for half a century. But how do the Russian-speaking minorities perceive the Soviet past? Russian leaders and ordinary citizens of Russia tend to take a particular pride in the achievements of the Soviet Union—as an entity that gave Russia influence and superpower status.[7] This factor is likely to affect Russians residing outside Russia as well. After all, they arrived during the Soviet era and many of them—particularly older people—are likely to feel a special attachment to this period and the Soviet system as such.

The Soviet experience covers a period of fifty years; it affected generations of people who were brought up as Soviet citizens. Many of the respondents who express sympathies with the former Soviet system are likely to be unhappy with the current economic and political conditions and possibly the entire system underpinning them. In fact, the meaning of left and right might well be as labels denoting attitudes to the current states, Russia, the West, and the legacy of the Soviet Union rather than contemporary public policy.

Table 6.4 shows that, on the whole, the Russian speakers in both countries hold the Soviet system of the past in higher esteem than Estonian- and Latvian speakers. A majority of them also indicate that the Soviet era was the best in the two countries' modern history. Fewer of them would like to return to communist rule, although the figures are significantly

Table 6.4 Perceptions of the Soviet Past (%)[a]

	Estonia		*Latvia*	
	Majority	*Minority*	*Majority*	*Minority*
Positive rating of the Soviet political system	35	68	44	58
Positive rating of the Soviet economic system	48	71	58	76
Soviet era the best	11	56	27	66
Return to communist rule	5	18	13	24
Strongman rule	19	39	42	62
EU interferes too much	25	24	37	57

[a]*Note*: The ratings of the Soviet political system and political system are based on a scale running from +100 to −100. We have included all positive answers. "The Soviet era the best" was one out of four choices—the others being the Interwar era, the post-Soviet period up to EU membership, and the current era. "Return to communism" and "strongman rule" are introduced by the following question: "Our present system of government is not the only one that this country has had. Some people say that we would be better off if the country was governed differently. Please tell me to what extent do you agree with the following statements", followed by the following questions: (1) "We should return to communist rule", and (2) "Best to get rid of Parliament and elections and have a strong leader who can quickly decide everything". "Strongly agree" and "somewhat agree" are included. "EU interferes too much" is measured as "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: the EU tends to interfere too much in our domestic affairs?" "Strongly agree" and "somewhat agree" are included. *Source*: Baltic Barometer (2014)

higher among these groups than the majority populations. Many of them would like to replace the current system of parties and free elections with a strong leader. In Latvia, a staggering two-thirds of the Russian speakers hold this view, although also many Latvian speakers seem to agree. Finally, it turns out that Latvians in general harbour much more negative perceptions of the European Union than Estonians, although the Russian-speaking population very much stands out in this respect. The *Baltic Barometer* discloses negative views about the EU along several dimensions among the Russian-speaking Latvians. Exactly what accounts for the rather different figures in Estonia remains to be investigated. But with regards to Latvia, the negative perceptions of the EU might perhaps be part of a larger East–West discourse, where the Russian speakers side with the *Russian world* (*Russkiy mir*) in a sort of civilizational conflict with "Europe" and the "West", something the Kremlin and Russian media regularly play up.[8]

Concluding Remarks

Political cleavages are either divisible or non-divisible. Divisible issues are about "more-or-less", while non-divisible issues are about "either-or"; "what are my interests?" versus "who are we?" "Normal politics" in a democracy is primarily about interests, while ethnically, religiously or ideologically fragmented societies wrestle with non-divisible issues related to identities (Hirschmann 1995). Of course, the latter also have to face up to distributional issues, but "more-or-less" questions are likely to be eclipsed by identity politics. To what extent distributional politics can truly surface in a competition with questions like "who belongs to the community" is a moot question. Moreover, given the scope and willingness to exploit it, identity politics can easily lead to serious social confrontations and the breakdown of distributional divisions of society—if these were ever allowed in the first place. Political leaders who exclusively utilize such broad and fundamental "either-or" issues shun the notion of diverging societal interests and specific group interests. The left/right dimension usually co-exists with other dimensions and makes up a complex political configuration. This can surely be a source of stability: if a certain division just partly overlaps with another division, they might "dilute" each other and, hence, appear less explosive. But this kind of equilibrium does not always exist: if two different divides are not merely cross-cutting, but systematically overlap, they are likely to reinforce each other and create a much more volatile situation—particularly if at least one of the divides is of a categorical/non-divisible character. If the left/right division coincides with ethnicity, ethnic divisions may even take on a class character (Horowitz 1985, 337).

There is little to suggest an overlap between class and ethnicity in Estonia and Latvia. But data presented here, as well as consecutive election results, disclose that the division between "Estonian" or "Latvian" versus "Russian-speaking" parties largely overlap with left/right: Russian speaking voters tend to vote for left-wing parties regardless of their socio-economic interests, whereas Estonians and Latvians opt for right-wing parties—despite the fact that many of them might hold left-wing views on socio-economic issues. The two dimensions appear to be mutually reinforcing, which has proved to be a highly potent combination in many contexts (Horowitz 1985).

This descriptive analysis reveals that there are systematic differences between the majority and minority populations in Estonia and Latvia

regarding left/right voting, self-placement on a left/right scale, and to a certain extent in terms of policy preferences. It also reveals ethnic differences in terms of attitudes towards the Soviet past and the European Union, as well as strongman preferences. Obviously, we do not have conclusive evidence that left/right attitudes are directly linked to either policy preferences or attachment towards the Soviet past (and, indirectly, contemporary Russia), the European Union or democracy.[9] But we might draw the conclusion that identifying with the right is a matter of patriotism and a way to mark distance to Russia and the Soviet past for many ethnic Estonians and Latvians. Conversely, identifying with the left is for the Russian speakers an expression of the opposite: of emotional ties with the former Soviet Union and sympathies with Russia—and to some extent also a rejection of the current republics of Estonia and Latvia.

But as pointed out earlier, this is more of an accurate description of Latvia than of Estonia: to a much larger extent, Latvian politics still revolves around ethno-political questions like integration, citizenship and language rights, and Latvia's Russian speakers have been more inclined to vote according to group interests. It might indeed be argued that ethnicity is the *only* salient cleavage of Latvian politics (Auers 2013). Hence, one could argue that the Russian speakers in Latvia are "better" represented than in Estonia. It is nevertheless vital to ask if strong minority representation is actually preferable for the group(s) in question; after all, ethnic minorities have several interests that transcend ethnicity. Ethnic cleavages may pave the way for "representative" elites, but it is hardly good news for representation based on *interests*.

Notes

1. By comparison, the communist/anti-communist divide dominated party politics of Lithuania throughout the 1990s and it has not quite vanished after twenty-five years. But the party configuration has resembled those of Central Europe more than those of Estonia and Latvia.
2. The term "Russian speakers" is widely used in the scholarly literature on ethnic relations in former Soviet states (see for example Laitin 1998). It is, self-evidently, based on language rather than ethnicity. On balance, there are sound reasons for using this category instead of dividing the minority populations, largely Soviet-era immigrants, into smaller, ethnically defined groups. First of all, it

appears that they (the East Slavic minorities, in particular) have tended not to draw strong distinctions among themselves—or to identify themselves in narrow ethnic terms at all. The logical extension of this argument is that most of the Russian speakers have a fairly weak sense of ethnic identity. As immigrants of the Soviet period, many of them instead adopted a Soviet identity. It has for instance been discernible in their attachment to Communist and Soviet symbols—even after the fall of the Soviet Union. If the Soviet Union ever succeeded in creating a distinct Homo Sovieticus, it was among the Russian speakers residing outside their titular republics. Nevertheless, it is worth pondering whether the term "Russian speakers" remains equally valid twenty-five years after the fall of the Soviet Union, with the rise of a more assertive and national-minded Russia and a war in eastern Ukraine.

3. There are several perspectives on and theories of the nature of ethnic parties. One important feature includes insistence on differentiation, ranging from protection status, via autonomy and self-government, to fully-fledged separatism (see for instance Müller-Rommel 1998; Horowitz 1985).
4. The survey was prepared by Prof. Joakim Ekman (Södertörn University) (principal investigator), Prof. Sten Berglund (Örebro University) and Dr. Kjetil Duvold (Dalarna University) within the framework of the research project *European Values Under Attack? Democracy, Disaffection and Minority Rights in the Baltic States*, sponsored by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies. The data were collected by Saar Poll (Tallinn), TNS (Riga) and Vilmorus (Vilnius) in February and March 2014. Around 1500 respondents in each country were interviewed face-to-face, based on multi-stage samples, stratified according to language, region and urban density. The samples were weighted to match official data, which brought about some marginal adjustments. Due to a smaller Russian-speaking population in Lithuania, a booster sample in town and cities with a high proportion of Russian speakers was included.
5. The main exception being Latvia's Farmer's Union, a conservative party currently aligned the Green Party, and which has roots in the Interwar era.
6. The Reform Party forged an alliance with Unity ahead of the 2014 general elections and was entirely integrated with the party in 2015.

7. President Putin has often played on Soviet nostalgia in order to boost Russian patriotism, calling the breakup of the Soviet Union as "the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the twentieth century" as early as 2005.
8. It should be kept in mind that the Russian speakers overwhelmingly consume mass media produced in Russia, at the expense of home-grown media outlets (see Vihalemm and Kalmus 2009; see also Cheskina 2012).
9. However, the present author has conducted a regression analysis on the same data material and found that the strongest predictor of left/right preferences, by far, is ethnicity/language. Nevertheless, several of the factors discussed are also statistically significant predictors of ideological placement (Berglund and Duvold 2015).

References

Auers, Daunis. 2013. Latvia. In *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe* (3rd ed.), edited by Sten Berglund, Joakim Ekman, Kevin Deegan-Krause, and Terje Knutsen, 85–124. Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

———. 2015. *Comparative Politics and Government of the Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the 21st Century*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baltic Barometer. 2014. *Baltic Barometer 2014: A Decade of EU Membership* [Data file]. Södertörn University.

Baltic Business News. 2015. Estonia Rocked by Second Major Corruption Scandal in Weeks. *Baltic Business News*, September 23. http://balticbusinessnews.com/article/2015/9/23/estonia-rocked-by-second-major-corruption-scandal-in-weeks-1.

Bennich-Björkman, Li, and Karl Magnus Johansson. 2012. Explaining Moderation in Nationalism: Divergent Trajectories of National Conservative Parties in Estonia and Latvia. *Comparative European Politics* 10: 585–607.

Berglund, Sten, and Kjetil Duvold. 2015. *The Lingering Impact of the Past: Political Divides in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*. Paper presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, University of Warsaw, 29 March–2 April.

Berglund, Sten, Joakim Ekman, Kevin Deegan-Krause, and Terje Knutsen, eds. 2013. *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*. 3rd Enlarged ed. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.

Bobbio, Noberto. 1996. *Left and Right. The Significance of a Political Distinction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chandra, Kanchan.2011. What Is an Ethnic Party? *Party Politics* 17(2): 151–169.

Cheskina, Ammon. 2012. History, Conflicting Collective Memories, and National Identities: How Latvia's Russian-Speakers Are Learning to Remember. *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 40(4): 561–584.

Dalton, Russell J., David M. Farrell, and Ian McAllister. 2011. *Political Parties and Democratic Linkage. How Parties Organize Democracy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Dimitrova, Antonaneta, and Geoffrey Pridham. 2004. International Actors and Democracy Promotion in Central and Eastern Europe: The Integration Model and Its Limits. *Democratization* 11(5): 91–112.

Duvold, Kjetil.2010. *Making Sense of Baltic Democracy: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania between the Soviet Union and the European Union*. Saarbrücken: LAP Lambert Academic Publishing.

Duvold, Kjetil, and Mindaugas Jurkynas. 2004. Lithuania. In *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe* (2nd ed.), ed. Sten Berglund, Joakim Ekman, and Frank Aarebrot. Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

Hirschmann, Albert O. 1995. Social Conflicts as Pillars of Democratic Market Societies. In *A Propensity to Self-Subversion*, ed. Albert O. Hirschmann, 231–248. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Inglehart, Ronald, and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. 1976. Party Identification, Ideological preference and the Left-Right Dimension among Western Publics. In *Party Identification and Beyond*, ed. Ian Budge, Ivor Drewe, and Dennis Farlie, 243–273. New York: John Wiley.

Jahn, Dietlef. 2011. Conceptualizing Left and Right in Comparative Politics: Towards a Deductive Approach. *Party Politics* 17(6): 745–765.

Kasekamp, Andres. 2010. *A History of the Baltic States*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Laitin, David D. 1998. *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Lauristin, Maarju, and Peeter Vihalemm. 2009. The Political Agenda during Different Periods of Estonian Transformation: External and Internal Factors. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 40(1): 1–28.

Lewis, Paul. 2000. *Political Parties in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*. London and New York: Routledge.

Lieven, Anatol. 1994. *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Markowski, Radoslaw. 1997. Political Parties and Ideological Space in East Central Europe. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 30(3): 221–254.

Milne, Richard. 2015. Party with Ties to Putin Pushes Ahead in Estonian Polls. *Financial Times*, February 27. http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1decfbac-be8a-11e4-a341-00144feab7de.html#axzz41qnh9phW.

Müller-Rommel, Ferdinand. 1998. Ethnoregionalist Parties in Western Europe. Theoretical Considerations and Framework of Analysis. In *Regionalist Parties in Western Europe*, ed. Lieven De Winter L., and Tursan Huri, 17–27. London and New York: Routledge.

Nakai, Ryo. 2014. The Influence of Party Competition on Minority Politics: A Comparison of Latvia and Estonia. *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 13(1): 57–85.

Okulicz-Kozaryn, Adam. 2014. Winners and Losers in Transition: Preferences for Redistribution and Nostalgia for Communism in Eastern Europe. *Kyklos* 67(3): 447–461.

Pettai, Vello, and Klara Hallik. 2002. Understanding Process of Ethnic Control: Segmentation, Dependency and Co-optation in Post-communist Estonia. *Nations and Nationalism* 8(4): 505–529.

Pettai, Vello, and Martin Mölder. 2013. Estonia. Nations in Transit 2013. *Freedom House*. https://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT13EstoniaFinal.pdf.

Stratfor Global Intelligence. 2010. A Political Scandal in Estonia and Russian Influence in the Baltics Analysis. *Stratfor Global Intelligence*, October 27. https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/political-scandal-estonia-and-russian-influence-baltics.

Vihalemm, Triin, and Veronika Kalmus. 2009. Cultural Differentiation of the Russian Minority. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 40(1): 95–119.

Zielinski, Jakub. 2002. Translating Social Cleavages into Party Systems: The Significance of New Democracies. *World Politics* 54: 184–211.

CHAPTER 7

Russian Speakers in Estonia: Legal, (Bio) Political and Security Insights

Thomas Hoffmann and Andrey Makarychev

Introduction

The key question this chapter explores is how two governments, the Russian and the Estonian, tackle a whole range of issues pertaining to the Russian-speaking community of Estonia. We single out the legal, political and security aspects of the existence and functioning of this community and put them into different contexts, in particular those embedded in Estonia's relations with the EU, EU–Russia conflicts and the refugee crisis in Europe.

In policy terms, the binary composition of the population of post-Soviet Estonia is a challenge to both Tallinn and Moscow. The Estonian government has, since independence, rather consistently conducted a policy of nation-building on the basis of prioritizing Estonian cultural (including linguistic) identity. This has been done even if the pursuance of this policy made Estonia an object of criticism from European institutions and a target of harsh complaints and even threats from Russia. The Kremlin, having unequivocally recognized Estonia's independence, however still retains a certain ambiguity regarding the interpretation of the Soviet past. The dominant Estonian narrative of occupation does not resonate in Russia's official discourse, which has a far-reaching consequence for debates on the

T. Hoffmann (✉) • A. Makarychev
Technical University of Tallinn, Tallinn, Estonia

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_7

status of Russian speakers. In fact, the questioning of the Estonian concept of occupation allows Russia to contest the dominant idea of post-1991 Estonia as the successor to the pre-Second World War Estonian state, and therefore to challenge the attitude towards Russian-speaking residents of this country as unwelcome Soviet era migrants. On a more practical level, the Russian government pursues policies of "protecting" Second World War veterans, raising the issue of the Russian language, and promoting the concept of the Russian world, which particularly resonates in Narva, a city located on the border with a third of its population being Russian citizens.

Academically, the status of Russian speakers in Estonia for years was a matter of intense scholarly debates, mostly in sociology, cultural studies, comparative politics and international relations. What is missing in existing scholarship is an interdisciplinary discussion on the conditions of politicization and the securitization of legal issues pertaining to Russian speakers as a distinct social group, in other words, the transformation of juridical matters into an object of political conflict and security concerns. This is exactly what we endeavour to investigate in this chapter. We claim there are different ways of approaching the issue of Russian speakers in Estonia. One would be to tackle it as a legal issue, with integration being viewed as a process of setting and implementing a set of technical and administrative rules. The law in this respect plays the role of the universal institution which binds society. Another possible option would be to take a political stance towards linguistic differences and present them as an identity problem with ample space for self-other distinctions. Closely related to this is the security dimension. It is the existence of a large group of Russian speakers in Estonia that creates preconditions for viewing Russian–Estonian relations as existentially insecure and replete with potential conflicts, where the potential for escalation is particularly consequential due to Estonian membership in the EU and NATO.

The juxtaposition of legal and political aspects of analysis might appear to some extent questionable, since law and politics are two dissimilar regimes of control over social relations. Law is a set of instruments that fixes and stabilizes the social, while politics is exactly the opposite. It unsettles dominant discourses and challenges their nodal points, and contests what is otherwise taken for granted. Yet, as we see, it is a combination of legal and political explanatory frames which might give an adequate and balanced picture of reality on the ground.

The chapter consists of four sections. We start with conceptualizing the changing functional modalities of the institution of citizenship in nation-

states and apply identified trends to Estonia. In the second section we explicate the set of legal issues pertaining to the status of the Russian-speaking community in Estonia. From here we move to the third section, in which we address conditions of politicization of otherwise legal matters pertaining to the Russian diaspora in Estonia. Finally, in the fourth part of the article we go one step further and identify the modes that turn legal and political controversies into security problems.

Framing the Debate: Citizenship as an Institution

Similar to Latvia, Estonia after independence opted for a restrictive approach to the legal incorporation of most of its Russian population. This approach has to be seen in the wider historical context and analyzed against the background of the general concept of citizenship and statelessness.

Citizenship and Statelessness in Comparative Perspective

Statelessness as a challenge to both law and politics is as old as the modern notion of citizenship itself, although the actual deprivation of citizenship is a rather new phenomenon. It first became a major issue after 1918, when the mass expatriation of Russian refugees by Soviet Russia (Aleinikoff 1986) resulted in around 800,000 stateless persons whose status had to be defined during the interwar period in Western Europe and Northern America. While the act of "stripping away citizenship and all the rights that come with it are usually associated with despotic and totalitarian regimes" (Herzog 2012, 709), "acquiring dual citizenship or perpetrating an act that represents changed or divided national loyalty is considered a legitimate reason for forced expatriation" (Herzog 2012, 801).

In the 1920s, the "Nansen-passport" (see Hieronymi 2003 about the details) was created by the League of Nations as a simple and effective standard instrument to alleviate the most essential burdens of statelessness. It was an initiative of Fridtjof Nansen, and the measure was so successful that the Nansen International Office for Refugees was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1938. In functional terms, the Nansen passport is quite comparable to the grey passports issued by Estonia 80 years later.

In terms of denial of citizenship due to alleged conflicts of loyalty, France is often taken as the precedent to the Estonian policy of the 1990s. After 1918 France did not automatically grant citizenship to Germans who had lived in Alsace-Lorraine after 1871. To be more specific (and to

point out the striking parallel to Estonia), § 1 of the annex to par. 58 of the Treaty of Versailles stated that "*as from November 11, 1918, the following persons are ipso facto reinstated in French nationality:* (1) *Persons who lost French nationality by the application of the Franco-German Treaty of May 10, 1871* [for Estonia, this date would be 16 June 1940—T.H., A.M.] *and who have not since then acquired any citizenship other than German,* (2) *the legitimate or natural descendants of the persons referred to in the immediately preceding paragraph, with exception of those descendants who in the paternal line include a German who migrated into Alsace-Lorraine after July 15, 1870.*" In any event, just like Estonia 80 years later, France granted the possibility for Germans living in Alsace-Lorraine to become French citizens through naturalization (Visek 1997, 349).

These examples from the past make clear that historically in Europe the institution of citizenship was directly linked to the nation-state and in many respects conflated with the concept of nationality. This view has become increasingly controversial in the twenty-first century: "Instead of being a means of protecting … refugees, asylum seekers, ethnic minorities and stateless persons, [citizenship] is becoming a means for protecting the majority from the outsiders … It has become a means by which minorities can be deprived of their rights rather than being a means of solidarity and a basis of democracy" (Delanty 1995, 162). We shall turn to this controversy in more detail in the next section.

Nation-States and Citizenship

The debate concerning the Russian-speaking community in Estonia has to be placed in the context of the wider set of changes to the role and function of nation-states, in general, and the institution of citizenship, in particular. Reflecting upon statelessness as a problem for many nation-states, two major voices in critical political philosophy assume that "life has become separated from the political (i.e., conditions of citizenship), but that formulation presumes that politics and life join only and always on the question of citizenship" (Butler and Spivak 2007). A similar logic is noticeable in the following reasoning: "In the past, political membership was seen as a biological condition. Being born into a particular community determined a person's natural subjecthood. Therefore, persons who did acquire allegiance to a new ruler were considered to be 'naturalised' … [Yet nowadays] we can observe a process of separation between national identity and biology" (Herzog 2012, 795). This perspective not only

tackles citizenship from a biopolitical perspective, but also suggests that individual and group identities might become delinked from the configuration of nation-state borders. Indeed, citizens or legal residents of a certain state can existentially associate themselves with a different entity, and these denationalized affiliations, loyalties and affinities can stretch beyond legal boundaries. In many respects, citizenship is not the only precondition for enjoying human rights-based protection by transnational "regimes of justice" (Malakhov 2013).

Due to the imbrication of multiple identities and political logics behind each of them, societal integration is always a high profile issue. One may argue that "the enforced order of the utopic space of territorial justice is premised on a series of abstractions, including the citizen and the community. In these abstractions, that which remains inchoate, which cannot be abstracted, is placed 'outside', consigned to the border, at the edges of the norm" (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007, X). Critical border studies literature claims that borders are "continuously traversed by a number of bodies, discourses, practices, and relationships that highlight endless definitions … between inside and outside, citizens and foreigners, hosts and guests across state, regional, racial, and other symbolic boundaries … The 'edges' of the nation-state [are] places where different ideas of space, territoriality, sovereignty as well as identity, citizenship and otherness in and across the nation-state boundary lines are formulated, reformulated, negotiated and acted" (Brambila 2015, 19).

These controversies impact the legal framework for Estonian–Russian relations, which will be discussed in the next section.

Russian-Speaking Population: Legal Issues

In this section we explore the legal aspects of the status of Russian speakers in Estonia as seen from the perspectives of the Estonian and Russian law systems.

Estonian Legislation

During the *Eesti Vabariik* (the first independent Estonian state founded in 1918), Estonian citizenship could be gained by having had previous Russian citizenship, supplemented with the additional criterion of being a registered resident in Estonia. Also, after Estonia was occupied by the

Soviet Union in 1940, the Estonian government-in-exile in London continued to issue Estonian passports.

Soviet settlement policies (mainly during the Stalin era, but also in the 1970s and 1980s) considerably changed the ethnic composition of the Estonian Soviet Republic. In 1922, 97.7 % of the entire population of Estonia was composed of Estonian citizens; this percentage even grew to 99.8 % by 1934. Ethnically, 88.1 % (992,500) were Estonians, while the remainder (134,000) were mainly Russians, but also, among others, German and Swedish. But, by 1989, the percentage of ethnic Estonians had shrunk to 61.5 % (963,281), compared to 602,000 non-Estonians. When Estonia's independence was restored in August 1991, the regulation of the legal status of the non-Estonian minorities was among the most essential issues to be addressed, especially in terms of their active and passive rights within the new electoral system. The re-establishment of independence in 1991 took place on the base of a referendum, where "non-Estonians" were entitled to participate. One year later, the citizenship act of 1938 was re-enacted, re-establishing the *ius sanguinis* principle for determining Estonian citizenship. More specifically, all who were (or whose ancestors were) Estonian citizens on 16 June 1940 or later, were automatically granted Estonian citizenship (Hoffmann 2012, 311). This concerned about half the 1.5 million inhabitants of Estonia in 1992, causing considerable turmoil for the other half in terms of the consequences of denial of citizenship (Visek 1997, 333). As the citizenship act did not provide the possibility for dual citizenship, although the act's wording was not entirely without contradictions in this respect (Herzog 2012, 805), the remainder had the choice either to acquire Russian (or Ukrainian, or Belarusian) citizenship or to become Estonian through naturalization or to remain passive.

For the first time citizenship became a relevant issue in terms of electoral legislation after 1992, when a referendum on the new Estonian Constitution was held in which only Estonian citizens were entitled to participate (Sikk 2010, 580). The referendum was extended to the question of whether only Estonian citizens should be entitled to elect future parliaments. Both points brought pro-Estonian results (91.3 % for the new Estonian Constitution, and a mere 53.0 % for the restriction of parliamentary electoral rights for Estonian citizens). At this point, the absolute majority (52.3 %) of the non-Estonian population still identified more or less closely with the re-born Estonian state (with an overwhelming 97.3

% of them wishing to stay in Estonia), as a 1994 survey taken by the Estonian Foreign Ministry demonstrated (Baltic News Survey 1997).

In 1996 the Estonian government started issuing "grey passports" ("alien's passport") to non-citizens, thus granting them a permanent right of residence in Estonia. Also the "personal identity card", established in 2002 to implement Estonia's digitization policy and enhance the use of respective instruments (such as a digital signature), was extended to non-Estonian citizen residents as well. Today, altogether 1,207,493 inhabitants possess an *Isikutunnistus*.

According to the "Action plan" of the Estonian government for 2004–2007, at least 5000 persons were to be naturalized per year. A 2011 survey by the Estonian Ministry of Culture showed that 64 % of all non-citizens wished to be naturalized. Reacting to recurrent requests by the UN (Visek 1997, 342) and later, European institutions, on 3 June 2014 the Estonian parliament alleviated the naturalization procedure. For all residents born in Estonia after 1992, whose parents lived at least five years in Estonia, the tests were declared dispensable, and the application was deemed sufficient for obtaining Estonian citizenship. Further measures induced by the criticism from Brussels facilitated the procedure for disabled persons, included the "Constitution test" in final high school examinations, simplified and shortened test procedures, and envisaged reimbursement of language courses once the test was passed. Besides, the tests themselves are now free of charge and can be repeated an unlimited amount of times. At present, the following naturalization rules apply in Estonia. The applicant has to be at least 15 years old and hold a permanent or temporary residence permit in the country. She/he must have spent at least eight years in Estonia prior to applying, with a registered residence in Estonia. Finally, applicants have to obtain an Estonian language certificate at the B1 level and pass a test on the Estonian Constitution.

The Estonian attitude has therefore been marked by a two-fold approach. On the one hand, Estonia has always been quite contentious of eventual threats to national security that could be initiated by the pro-Kremlin part of Estonia's Russian population (just as it materialized in the events in Crimea and in Eastern Ukraine). This resulted in the desire for encapsulating its population against any possible undesired interference by Russia in Estonian domestic policy, through exempting grey passport holders from active voting rights and barring them from high positions in public administration (Visek 1997, 335). On the other hand, Estonia realized, especially after being extensively advised in that respect by European

and international institutions, that this policy has been to a considerable degree the cause rather than the antidote for the drift of many in the Russian-speaking population towards Russia. Arguably, the damage caused to this population's loyalty to Estonia by its citizenship policy of the 1990s exceeded the benefits of increased Estonian security from an eventual pro-Russian influence induced by the Russian-speaking population.

Russian Legal Policies

The Soviet Union established citizenship legislation in 1922, based as in Estonia on previous Russian citizenship. The 1991 citizenship act bestowed Russian citizenship to all those having their permanent residence on Russian territory, as far as it was not individually contested until 6 February 1993.

There was, however, no regulation for other former Soviet republics until 1999, when Article 11 of the Compatriots Act stated that other former Soviet republics' citizens should be assumed to be Russian citizens, providing this was not contested by the host-state (Zevelev 2001, 52). This regulation was highly controversial even in Russia, leading to the draft of a more modest regulation of citizenship issues in form of the 2002 Citizenship Act. This document set up positive criteria, meaning that Russian citizenship would be granted by birth, naturalization, restoration of citizenship, or on the basis of parents' citizenship. Naturalization criteria boiled down to permanent residence in Russia for not less than 5 years, economic independence and a thorough command of the Russian language.

After the Tallinn Bronze Soldier crisis of 2007, Russia launched a more aggressive compatriot policy towards Estonia (Schulze 2010, 14), including a 4.6 billion-rouble budget program promoting the repatriation of ethnic Russians from Estonia (RIA Novosti 2006). In Estonia the Russian naturalization approach was seen as controversial. On the one hand, this development was seen as an efficient contribution to the generally welcome reduction of stateless persons (OSCE 1996), yet on the other hand, it was assumed that this would result in an unfavourable decrease of loyalty among Russian citizens to Estonia. While the national Estonian census estimated a total of 86,000 Russians in 2000 and 114,000 in 2008, the exact number of Russian citizens in Estonia today remains unknown. At present, the Russian "law and programs for compatriots abroad have practically no connection to the law on citizenship and immigration" (Zevelev

2001, 61), making a distinct legal analysis of the Russian approach largely impossible. In fact, there is no such thing as a coherent Russian legal strategy with regard to the Russian population in Estonia. Instead, "Russian soft power is a clumsy attempt to mirror a variety of Western diplomatic (as implemented through NGOs) and cultural efforts, most of which the Russian government has strongly protested against … but has adapted to its own use in Estonia" (Conley and Gerber 2011, 40).

Therefore, the Russian compatriot policy had its heyday in 2007. Since then, the Estonian government has instigated more lenient naturalization procedures and demography has changed, resulting in a steady decrease of applications for Russian citizenship from Estonia. One needs to take into account that many ethnic Russians who do not wish to apply for Estonian citizenship are provided, in the form of the grey passport, a permanent right of residence in the EU combined with visa-free travel opportunities to Russia. Against this background, in terms of benefits of daily needs, Russian citizenship indeed offers little beyond formal affiliation with the Russian state, which will make this option an even less desirable instrument in future.

(Re)Sources of Politicization

There is an opinion that Russian speakers' dissatisfaction with their legal rights is not translating into political actions and that they are disengaged from political life in Estonia (Dougherty and Kaljurand 2015, 17). This disavowal of political momentum looks problematic to us and raises an issue of what ought to be considered political in the context of our research.

In our interpretation, political qualities directly stem and thus are linked with experiences of crossing and transcending borders and boundaries, their (re)construction, contestation and reconfiguration as a basis for making collective subjectivities. Thus, in our reading, politics implies engagement with border-(un)making and reshaping. On the contrary, depoliticization is a set of practices and a mode of social relations premised on accepting the extant systems of distinctions and partitions and avoiding challenging group identities and distances among them.

As seen from this perspective, analysis of Estonia in general and its Russian-speaking community in particular, implies strong political connotations due to the inevitable engagement with multiple bordering/debordering projects, practices and experiences. After Estonia regained

independence in 1991, the institution of citizenship was a focal point of debate due to the large Russian-speaking minority whose integration was by no means automatic and, moreover, became very problematic. The language-based model of the revived nation-state, be it Estonia or Ukraine, could have been criticized for a tendency to produce homogenous cultural and political structures of power (Sakwa 2015) and fostering "banal nationalism", a concept that describes habits of everyday life of the citizenry, in which language plays a key role (Billig 1995, 6). Apparently, Estonian society "remains a field of power struggles of ethnic groups, classes, elites and others … Clashes over hegemonic historical narratives … reflect clashes in the struggle over ideological and political hegemony … [The dominant] teleological interpretation of history serves well the construction of antagonistic confrontations" (Seelg and Ruutsoo 2014, 389). An Estonian scholar posits that after the annexation of Crimea, estrangement between Estonians and Russians "has grown stronger, further exacerbating the isolation of the unintegrated groups and pushing them deeper into Russia's sphere of influence. In connection to the recent events in Crimea, this divide has started to show very clearly, in everything from social media postings and public demonstrations to ruptures in families and old friendships" (Koort 2014). According to other evidence, quite a few grey passport holders not only do not speak Estonian, but they dissuade their children from taking Estonian citizenship (Fenoglio 2014).

By sheer virtue of its location at the intersection of different identities—imperial Russian, cosmopolitan supranational European and national Estonian—Estonia is embedded in a political milieu of multiple political discourses. Yet, politics in this specific context ought not to be understood in terms envisioned by Ernesto Laclau as a discursive construction of a chain of equivalences composed of dispossessed and marginalized group identities determined to challenge the domination of the hegemonic discourse through resignifying its nodal points. This model of generation of political impulses and actions needs some readjustment due to the blurred nature of hegemony in the specific context of Estonia. Indeed, it is the dual structure of hegemony, as pertaining to EU norms of liberal post-national/post-sovereign discourse and the Estonian national narrative, which makes the whole political landscape inherently variegated and necessitates the reconceptualization of politics. This can be done not as a collective contestation of a single dominant position of power, but rather as a movable and intrinsically unstable system of relations between solidarity and estrangement grounded in unstable identities and shifting alliances.

In terms of our analysis, four discourses play key roles in shaping the contours of political relations. These are the Estonian national narrative, EU normative power, the Russian world concept and the stories of Russian minority groups. These four discourses might form diverse combinations. For years the Estonian government was under a triple pressure from European institutions, the Kremlin and Estonian Russian speakers, where more permissive integration laws were demanded by the outside sources. Besides, there was a meaningful gap between Estonian- and EU-generated narratives as soon as it came to memory politics as well. For example, the Baltic states "have been particularly vigorous in criticizing the imbalance of the EU's historical approach that grants the victims of communism a second class status … [and in] reminding the West of its co-responsibility for the complexity of the region's immediate past, and thus about 'the other in themselves' as well" (Malksoo 2009, 662–663).

After the annexation of Crimea, the EU and Estonia took a consolidated position against Moscow, while the latter was largely supported by a significant part of the Russian community in Estonia. The Estonian government did its best to convince EU member states to adhere to the principle of solidarity in beliefs. Yet the whole debate on solidarity was significantly reshaped by the refugee crisis that revealed a highly sceptical attitude in Estonia towards the EU's imposition of quotas on member states. The configuration of discourses has seriously changed again, this time forging an alliance between Estonian national(ist) (including right-wing) forces and the Russian minority, with visible Eurosceptic tones shared by both.

In this context Russia always plays many politicizing roles. One of them is related to historical legacies of the last years of the Soviet Union that were marked by an explicitly political denial of the very idea of an independent Estonia, coming from Moscow-oriented groups of Russian speakers. "Interfront" and other organizations had publicly decried the prospects of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which definitely set a highly negative background for their subsequent integration within post-1991 Estonian society. It was this political legacy that prevented the post-Soviet authorities in Estonia from automatically bestowing citizenship on those who denied Estonia's very existence. It is this situation that has pitted Estonia against some European institutions that advocated for a more inclusive model of integration.

Implicitly or explicitly, the attachment of Russian speakers to the Moscow-constructed Russian world as a particular "regime of belonging" (Leone 2012, 458) places the issue in a biopolitical context. The exter-

nal projection of the "Russian world" beyond Russian borders constitutes an attempt to reconceptualize Russia's power in transterritorial terms, as "infused through bodies and diffused across society and everyday life" (Vaughan-Williams 2009, 733). The Russian world discourse is structurally based on biopolitical reasoning. The alleged abnormality of the post-1991 Baltic developmental model is explained through their sovereignty deficiency: "they would have territories, but not population" (Nosovich 2015a, 11). The Russian world not only produces an imagined "biopolitical body" (Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero 2008, 276), but what is very important is that this collective body is constructed on behalf of the sovereign power and therefore needs to be distinguished from non-sovereign power. Estonia is for the Kremlin an example of non-sovereign power, as it is a country that has allegedly voluntarily given up its sovereignty to the EU and NATO and so can be easily manipulated by them, to its population's detriment. Since the 2000s, many Russian government officials and pundits have consistently argued that the period of independence of the Baltic States is an "abnormality", as opposed to the "normality" of the period when the region was under Russian or Soviet rule. Since Moscow insists that the Baltic states were legitimately incorporated into the Soviet Union, the following logic is that their independence from the Soviet Union was illegitimate. These efforts to reassess the legality of Baltic independence are correlative with the attempts to enforce Soviet laws on Lithuanian citizens who avoided conscription in the last years of the USSR's existence (Grigas 2015). This makes historical debates part of a larger Russian perspective of "normalizing" the inclusion of the Baltic states in a Russia-patronized sphere of influence and, concomitantly, denormalizing their integration with the West. Paradoxically, the nostalgic remembrances of the Baltic states under the Soviet rule are articulated through the idea of their exceptionality as "a space of freedom" in the Soviet empire (Nosovich 2015a, 7).

Against this backdrop, citizenship is one of the institutions that can be analyzed through a biopolitical lens (Blencowe 2013, 22–24). In the next section we shall discuss several policy tracks that Russia can, in some cases hypothetically, consider in developing its strategy toward Russian-speaking compatriots residing in Estonia.

Four Pathways

There are at least four different policy options that we shall range through, from more neutral to more radical approaches.

A *first* option would be to remain passive towards the Russian population's concerns, classifying them as matters of internal affairs of Estonia. This was Russia's attitude to the referendum in Narva that called for the inclusion of this city into Russia. Moscow simply did not react to this, thus demonstrating its lack of interest in discussing this prospect.

Analysis of the structure of discourse by Russian speakers themselves makes this option feasible. Apparently, in most cases local discourse appeals either to Europe or to the Estonian government, but not to Russia. Many Russian Estonians are eager to contest the European view of Estonia as a success story of transition to European standards and to address these messages to a European audience rather than to Russia. They portray Estonia as a "depressive periphery with low potential for industrial production" (Kivit 2015) and as a "country immersed in ethnocracy that can't be masked by any means" (Opros … 2015b). Yet, in most cases the addressees are Estonians. This is the case of narrating stories about Russian merchants of the eighteenth century who traded with the Baltic countries and could have been called "first Russian human rights defenders" due to their advocacy for the freedom of commerce (350 let … 2015c). Stories about officers of the White Army that settled in Estonia after the revolution serve the same purpose of underlying not only the local roots of Russian Estonians, but also their loyalty to, or at least compatibility with, European values (Mitropolit Korneliy … 2015). Russian influence in Estonia is basically defined in cultural and partly religious categories, and its specific forms are detached from the policies of the Russian state. For instance, the editor of "Komsomol'skaya Pravda—Baltiya" newspaper aimed at Russian speakers, relates to the future with the Habermasian idea of constitutional patriotism rather than with the 'Russian world' (Teterin 2013).

Even for opinion-makers in Estonia who are loyal to the "Russian world" idea the main reference point is Europe. Russian-speaking journalist Rodion Denisov puts it in the following way:

> People in Narva can be happy with cheap vodka and food in Ivangorod, on the other side of the border, but as soon as they see decomposing highways, ugly marketplace and dull buildings, they are eager to come back to Estonia

> … Let's take [the] cultural sphere: there was a European project of building a common walkway between Ivangorod and Narva. In Narva it is fully operational, including play zones, fountains, monuments, etc. In Ivangorod the walkway is only 100 meters long, what is farther is a devastation area … Estonia makes huge investments in marketing its tourist attractiveness, while Russia is in limbo … This is how Western countries work—through the multiple NGOs that are funded by states. This type of well-targeted project is more effective for image making than grandiose events with matrioshkas and bears … The dominant attitude of Russians living in Estonia to those who turn the "Russian world" idea into a hollow window dressing is more than negative. In my view, this is a complete discredit of a good idea due to a combination of greed, verbiage and unprofessionalism, which only make lives of Russian speaking in Estonia harder. (Denisov 2015)

At a different occasion he called the inaction of the Russian authorities to the closure for financial reasons of a major Russian language magazine in Estonia, "Molodiozh Estonii", insulting. In his forecast, since the Russian community in Estonia lacks common public spaces of communication, the Russian world would disappear in ten to twenty years (Denisov 2014).

A *second* pathway would be to assist the integration of Russian speakers into Estonian society. This can be done in two related ways. One would be to keep demanding from Estonia a change in its citizenship laws and thus to enable non-citizens to obtain passports under a simplified procedure. By the same token, Russia can provide Estonian language courses to help Russian speakers pass language exams and obtain Estonian citizenship, thus being able to take advantage of European norms protecting minority languages. This policy would fit into Russia's strategy in the Baltic Sea region, as it would increase the people's chances of influencing the politics of their resident countries from the inside. It is therefore one of the highest priorities of the pro-Russian Centre Party (Keskerakond).

A *third* variant is the repatriation of Russian compatriots, a policy effectively pursued by some countries (Germany or Israel) for decades. This option would be logical against the background of the Russian propagandistic thesis of declining economic conditions in the Baltic states and the much spoken discrimination of the Russian population and a state of "biopolitical abandonment" (Selmeczi 2009, 519–538). However, the Russian government never developed a proactive and effective incentive-based policy of bringing Russians back home, and it will hardly be able to do so under the strain of financial hardship and economic sanctions.

A *fourth* option is to directly or indirectly stimulate the existing feelings of alienation towards the Estonian state in the Russian community, and thus politically capitalize on the existence of a large Estonia-sceptic population that constitutes a fertile ground for Russia-friendly attitudes. This logic is based on acknowledging that Russia's major political resource in Estonia is a people "excluded from political calculations and mechanisms" (Vaughan-Williams 2009, 734). This policy includes granting some privileges to non-citizens (for example, visa-free travel to Russia and education), thus fixing the difference between their "historical homeland" (Russia) and "the country of residence" (Estonia).

Politically, Moscow could use these large numbers of non-citizens for discrediting the Baltic states in the European Union, United Nations and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Russian representatives to these organizations persistently accuse the Baltic states of human rights violations and demand pressure on them, especially Latvia and Estonia, where the percentage of the Russian-speaking population is high. Yet Russia can also take a more Estonia-unfriendly stand and ignite irredentist attitudes among Russian loyalists and sympathizers, an option that some scholars have seriously considered since the 1990s (Visek 1997). This can be done through intensively bestowing Russian citizenship on those who would like to get it, thus sharpening the divide between Estonians and non-Estonians. This may actualize some, though obviously imperfect, analogies with Russia's policy towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where "Russian passports were a powerful marker of political inclusion in a polity that was not Georgia (…) A Russian passport was an unambiguous sign that Moscow's writ—and its military might—extended at least as far as to the soil upon which its bearer stood" (Artman 2013, 693).

The politically tense constellation of issues described in the fourth scenario gives a green light to deploying them in a security context. Many analysts deem that policymakers must seriously consider dangers emanating from Russia (Laurinaucius 2015). Former NATO Secretary General Andres Fogh Rasmussen has assumed that Russia indeed could attack the Baltic states (Evans-Pritchard 2015). This is a good example of the logic of securitization. Putin can "repeat what he is currently doing in Ukraine (and what he had done in Georgia before), particularly as Estonia has not dealt with the Russian minority in an exemplary fashion. The pattern is as simple as it is predictable: creating border incidents, developing a rhetoric of assisting beleaguered ethnic Russians in a former Soviet republic, infiltrating the border area with Russian special units in disguise to stir unrest,

creating a phony and fabricated resistance and separatist movement, gradually occupying territories and integrating them into his Greater Russia" (Hess 2015). In many international publications, NATO and the EU are portrayed as demonstrating their weakness toward Russia's increasingly self-assertive policy in this region (Putin Squeezes … 2015).

Much of the discourse of Russian Estonians seems to confirm security concerns. A member of the Russian Alliance of Public Associations of Estonia in an interview mentioned, for example: "Estonia's borders are only 155 km away from the centre of St. Petersburg. Should mass upheavals happen here, one may expect irregularities on the border with Russia." (Linter 2015) Other voices are even more straightforward: "If we speak about a hypothetical war, I am on Russia's side … NATO can only add excessive agitation in the complicated Russian–Estonian relations. But Estonia won't get any protection from NATO", a local businessman with Russian citizenship said in an interview (Opros: Nado li … 2015a). Strong security connotations are part of many other media discourses: "One of the strongest military units of Russian Armed Forces—the 76 Pskov division—is located in immediate vicinity to our borders. Second division of Russian Air Forces is located near St. Petersburg … In the case of a military conflict Russia would be able to close all airspace in the Baltic State in a matter of minutes" (Ingerman 2015).

Pro-Russian sympathies are particularly strong in Narva: "Yes, there is such a fear that one day Russians might rebel or push for riots, discontent, or something like that. Everyone has their own opinion on that and me, as a mother, I fear for my family … I would say that in Narva an estimated 30 % of Russian speakers would be glad to join Russia" (von der Brelie 2015). However, according to local estimates, there will be a tiny minority (0.02 %) of Russian speakers who would be ready to take up arms against Estonia (Opros … 2015b).

These four scenarios can be viewed as a repertoire of different policies that Russia can pursue. It is highly unlikely that the Kremlin has a clear predilection for any of them. The likelihood of each of these options depends on the political context and structural circumstances. By and large, we are pretty sure that the time for the first scenario, Russia's passivity and inaction has gone, and it is highly improbable that Russia would ever return to it in the foreseeable future.

The second option, Moscow assisting the reintegration of Russian speakers into Estonian society, was logical and feasible within the framework of the paradigm of Russia's positioning as an integral part of Europe

and a country loyal to a common European historical legacy. This logic implies that Russia and Estonia share a set of important political commitments and have meaningful common denominators in terms of culture and identity. It is this reasoning that Russia could use for helping its compatriots to reshape their discourse in consonance with European norms, principles and values. Consequently, the exhaustion of this paradigm after the annexation of Crimea and the ensuing detachment of Russia from the European normative order deprived Moscow of the argumentative force embedded in this policy line.

The alienation of Russia in Europe, which took its sharpest form with the third presidential term of Vladimir Putin and included economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation, leaves Russia with two options. These are scenario three (repatriation) and four (capitalization on the feelings of discontent by Russian speakers with issues of security placed high in Moscow's agenda). The mass-scale repatriation scenario is much less likely, though in 2016 Kremlin propaganda has widely covered an initiative of a group of Russian Germans to resettle in Russia (including Crimea) as a gesture of protest against the alleged social insecurity provoked by the refugee crisis in Europe. Yet this scenario can be considered as mostly a declaratory PR move with no practical outcomes, which can, among other factors, be explained by its high material costs, costs that Russia cannot afford during a time of stagnation and financial trouble.

The fourth scenario, with different variations of it, appears much more likely. In the years to come, Russia will definitely keep attaching high importance to the whole spectrum of the compatriot policy in Estonia (as well as Latvia), trying to influence the Russian-speaking community from the inside and maintain their loyalty to Putin's regime. The task of the integration of Russian speakers into Estonian society is under this scenario sidelined due to the fact that the annexation of Crimea and subsequent Western sanctions have seriously weakened the Kremlin's argument of Russia's belonging to Europe. It has thus complicated Russia's ability to practically utilize European norms and institutions for the sake of promoting ideas of a more inclusive model of citizenship.

The Refugee Crisis and the Precarious Equivalences

The refugee crisis that erupted in Europe has significantly altered the context of the debate on Russian speakers in Estonia, adding important elements to the analyzed discourse.

From a technical perspective, for the Estonian government the crisis has largely boiled down to negotiating the national quota for refugees to be settled in the country. Yet from a political viewpoint, Estonia's position, very far from welcoming newcomers, was aimed at defending the principle of national jurisdiction in matters of hosting refugees, migrants or asylum-seekers. The major constraint for a nation-centred policy in this domain is Estonia's deep interest in maintaining and even strengthening the principle of European solidarity that is essential for Tallinn as soon as it comes to a common policy towards Russia, which remains the main security threat for Estonia.

In the meantime, the Russian-speaking community is also an important reference point in Estonian narratives about refugees. On the one hand, the Estonian president has indicated that the large Russian-speaking population has to be considered as a factor inhibiting Estonia's ability to accept large groups of migrants (Prezident Estonii … 2015). This statement, with all its practical background, spurred indignation from Russian speakers who were insulted by being compared with Asian refugees. The recycling of this old argument put Russia in an awkward position. From a logical viewpoint, in this situation Moscow should have made a strong emphasis on inclusiveness as a precondition for democracy, and thus align with those forces in Europe that speak in favour of a more emancipatory model of political rights and participation, as opposed to those adhering to sovereign-centric policies (Balibar 2004, 60). Yet the very possibility of this turn to the European left is inhibited by strong liaisons between the Kremlin and far-right parties across Europe that advocate exactly the opposite to what might be in the best interests of Russia's strategy in Estonia. This is the renationalization of foreign and domestic policies, and a more exclusionary stance towards citizenship.

On the other hand, some political forces in Estonia suggested that the threat of an inflow of people with an alien cultural background could potentially be a factor for reconciling ethnic Estonians and Russians. Some social preconditions for that could be traced back to the annexation of Crimea and the military separatism in Donbas, events that demonstrated that many Russian speakers in Estonia shared the EuroMaidan agenda. This impression was strengthened by the growing number of anti-Putin opposition figures that settled in Estonia. For many Estonians this reduced the importance of linguistic and cultural divides, as opposed to political values.[1]

These changes were challenging to Russia's policy discourse. Moscow is keen to use the refugee crisis for lambasting both EU liberalism and Estonian nationalism as two different yet mutually correlative discourses (Andreeva 2015). Russian propaganda reacted to the refugee crisis by concluding that the "European future" for Estonia might turn into a massive inflow of non-Europeans onto its soil (Veretennikova 2015). Russian language media are very sceptical about the ability of the Baltic States to integrate migrants and refugees, especially due to the failure to integrate ethnic Russians (Polonskiy 2015). Moreover, Estonia, along with Latvia, is presented as exceptions to, if not deviations from, EU rules and principles:

> The distribution of refugee quotas became a litmus test that revealed a xenophobic and national conservative core of the Baltic societies and singled them out against the backdrop of the EU. The behavior of the Baltic elites confirmed all what was said about their countries' attitudes to Russians and other minorities … [Baltic politicians] didn't expect to have paid for their unconditional support of all what Americans do. Now it's time to share the responsibility for that. (Nosovich 2015b)

Yet by pitting "nationalist Estonia" against "cosmopolitan/post-national EU" in normative terms, Russian discourse-makers implicitly recognize the EU's status as a normative power and a meaningful source of policy standards. Moreover, in lambasting Estonians for nationalism which resurfaced due to the refugee crisis, Russian propaganda ignored the rapprochement between anti-migrant forces in Estonia and Russian speakers whom they see as potential allies in protecting their country from unwelcome aliens of a different race. Thus, the "Soldiers of Odin", an anti-migration group established in Estonia in 2016, has appealed to Russian speakers as loyal citizens or residents, as opposed to refugees that cannot be socially and economically integrated (Antonenko 2016). Kristiina Ojuland, the head of the Party of People's Unity, also assumed that the challenge of the refugee crisis might bring ethnic Estonians and Russians closer together (Ojuland 2016). She came up with a proposal to introduce 72-hour visa-free regime with Russia (Estonian Party … 2016). An officer of the Estonian Interior Ministry who made derogatory anti-refugee comments, in the meantime presumed that Estonian municipalities might need "people similar to ours and preferably speaking Russian" (Reznikov 2015). Like-minded attitudes exist in Estonian academia: "Estonians and Russians are so similar. … We are much more similar compared to

those new people coming in, so we should integrate fast, or more efficiently", claimed Raivo Vetik, a professor of comparative politics at Tallinn University (Llana 2015). His colleague Eugen Tsybulenko made an even stronger anti-migrant statement:

> If, for example, someone deems that wives have to be confined to the household and appear outdoors only with a veiled face and in presence of husbands, or that any women who walks alone, moreover if she wears a mini skirt, is a prostitute and might be raped, I don't care whether he is an Estonian or someone coming from the Middle East … I don't accept explosions in trains, executions of journalists publishing cartoons, or assaults on clients in a kosher shop. Of course, not all migrants adhere to these attitudes; but almost all bearers of these ideas are migrants in first or next generations from a certain regions of the planet. (Tsybulenko 2015)

That type of attitude resonates among Russian speakers who are even more opposed to the refugees' inflow than ethnic Estonians. For instance, while 71 % of ethnic Estonians are against having migrants as their neighbours, among Russian speakers these attitudes are shared by 82 % of the group's population (Estonozemel'tsy ne … 2016). There are suspicions among the Russian-speaking community that refugees might get better treatment in terms of integration (from language courses to citizenship prospects) than Estonian Russians. Mikhail Stalnuhhin, an ethnic Russian member of the Estonian Parliament, shares this scepticism:

> We have spent half-a-century trying to solve issues that divide people belonging to one European Christian civilization. The question is: are we ready to accept thousands of people from a different culture, strong in their solidarity and belief that we are guilty in bringing war to their peaceful areas? (Stalnuhhin 2015)

There are other similar voices as well:

> The information about hundreds, if not thousands, of poorly educated refugees with an absolutely different cultural background that are about to move in made many faint. At this juncture feelings of local Russians and Estonians were identical. It is the instinct of self-protection that works, marginalizing all internal tensions. (Denisov 2015)

Therefore, the political discourse produced by the refugee crisis is structured as a series of equivalences. First, on the part of the Estonian

anti-migrant lobby we have seen an attempt to construct relations of equivalence between ethnic Estonians and Russian speakers on the basis of opposing the threats of intrusion from unwelcome non-Europeans. It appears that many authoritative voices among Russian speakers might sustain this type of solidarity based on the securitization of migration and a civilizational argument. Against this backdrop attempts to equate Russian speakers with de-facto migrants of Soviet times and thus draw a parallel between them and contemporary refugees from non-European countries face strong objections from Estonian Russians and have slim chances of becoming a dominant narrative.

Second, Russian discourse addressing Estonia endeavours to draw its own chain of equivalences, linking Baltic states, the EU and the US together, and making a case for the Balts' responsibility for a general Western policy towards countries that are the main sources of refugees. Yet in the meantime many Kremlin-supporting Russian voices are eager to exceptionalize the Baltic states as pursuing nationalist policies incongruent with EU norms, which evidently destroys relations of equivalence. This is exactly what challenges the Russian discourse from the inside. It is torn between accepting EU role identity as a source of dominant norms and admitting Estonia as a nation-state with its own sovereign rights and policy strategies (Kuus 2002, 393–412). Both points look problematic for the Kremlin's wider foreign policy philosophy, which is reluctant to give any credit to Brussels, and is equally hesitant to treat Estonia as a fully-fledged independent country.

It is from this point that we can discuss a politically relevant question of whether Russian speakers residing in Estonia can be treated as being to some extent similar to Russian speakers in Crimea or eastern Ukraine. Our analysis of different discourses unfolding after the refugee crisis makes us assume that they complicate further the manipulative potential of Moscow and the prospects for the "Russian world" in Estonia. To succeed in biopolitically constructing the Russian population as an object of Russia's care and protection, the Kremlin would need to go as far as claiming that Russian citizens are outcasts and their physical lives are in danger. Yet the effects of the refugee crisis on the constellation of political discourses make this storyline improbable.

Conclusions

In this chapter we combined legal and political insights on the gamut of issues pertaining to the Russian-speaking community in Estonia. The legal part of the story unveiled juridical mechanisms of the institutions

of citizenship. The political perspective made it possible to connect legal arrangements with polarizing debates on integration. By the same token, the application of concepts of biopower and biopolitics allowed us to demonstrate how different social categories of a population (ethnic Russians and ethnic Estonians, citizens and non-citizens, migrants and "authentic" locals) are socially constructed.

Our legal and political analysis was focused on a complex and movable framework of relations that involved Estonia's Russian-speaking community along with other major actors, such as Russia, Estonia and the EU. In this sense the citizenship conundrum is not only an Estonian but a wider EU-scale issue, especially taking into account the ongoing debate on European citizenship that is not simply an aggregation of national citizenships of member states but an institution of a supposedly qualitatively different level.

In our study we have found out that all three major discourses, those pertaining to the EU, Estonia, Russia and Russian speakers in Estonia, are structurally controversial. From a legal point of view, the key challenge for Estonian policy towards Russian speakers is its inconsistency, with the more inclusive approaches advocated by international and European institutions since the 1990s). Yet in many respects the initially restrictive policy of the Estonian government seems to have come to an end, taking into account considerably more generous naturalization criteria and various essential advantages of a residence in Estonia, which are not contested even by the most pro-Moscow Russian speakers. Besides, the non-Estonian younger generation's command of Estonian is now much higher than among Soviet-born non-Estonians. Therefore bilingualism and identification with Estonia are on the rise. Statistically, since 1992 the proportion of residents of Estonia classified as "non-citizens" has fallen from 32 to 6.3 % in 2015 (Person 2015).

The Russian approach to this issue is at present less distinct in a legal perspective. Russia has not developed a coherent policy towards Russians living in Estonia. The passportization waves of the 1990s and, less extensive, after 2007, did not essentially tie the Russian population in Estonia closely to Russia. Their main ties remain a common cultural space provided especially by the consumption of Russian-guided media.

Russian speakers themselves failed to develop a narrative conducive to an inclusive collective identity, involving "the possibility of cutting across ethnic and cultural divides" (Hansen 2000, 155). Russian-populated localities in Estonia are by no means more open to engage with refu-

gees than the Estonian government. Moreover, as stems from discussions among Russian speakers in online media, many of them feel offended by any parallels between them and refugees from non-European countries. This lack of a solidarity discourse is illustrative of the reluctance of Russian speakers to accept their role identity as aliens amenable to naturalization and assimilation, which limits the political space for demands for a more inclusive understanding of political and social rights in Estonia.

Note

1. We are thankful to Kristina Kallas and Piret Ehin for this argument, which was in detail discussed during a workshop "Whose Compatriots? Russophone Communities between New Homelands and the Russkiy Mir", held in Narva in March 2016 as part of the UPTAKE project "Building Research Excellence in Russian and East European Studies at the Universities of Tartu, Uppsala and Kent".

References

Aleinikoff, Alexander T. 1986. Theories of Loss of Citizenship. *Michigan Law Review* 84(7): 1471–1503.

Andreeva, Daria. 2015. ES prigrozil Pribaltike sanktsiyami za natsizm. *Politicheskoe Obozrenie* web portal, August 12. http://politobzor.net/show-61695-es-prigrozil-pribaltike-sankciyami-za-nacizm.html.

Antonenko, Oksana. 2016. Estonskie 'Soldaty Odina' na marshe—protiv migrantov, no za russkikh. *BBC Russian Service*, February 26. http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2016/02/160224_estonia_soldiers_of_odin.

Artman, Vincent. 2013. Documenting Territory: Passportization, Territory, and Exception in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. *Geopolitics* 18: 682–704.

Balibar, Etienne. 2004. *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Baltic News Survey. 1997. Poll Shows Most Russian-Speaking Estonians Seek Estonian Citizenship. January 3. Reprinted in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, January 6, 1997, available in LEXIS, World Library.

BaltNews. 2015a. Opros: Nado li russkim dokazyvat' svoiyu loyal'nost' Estonskomu gosudarstvu? November 23. http://baltnews.ee/voice_of_the_people/20151123/1014268198.html.

———. 2015b. Opros: Sovet Evropy kritikuet Estoniu—spravedlivo? October 23. http://baltnews.ee/voice_of_the_people/20151023/1014188893.html.

———. 2015c. 350 let nazad v Pribaltike poyavilis' pervie russkie pravozaschitniki. August 20. http://baltnews.ee/russian_in_Estonia/20150820/1014043157.html.

Barsegyan, Vladimir. 2015. 350 tysiach skeletov v shkafu. *RIA Novosti*, November 18. http://ria.ru/radio_brief/20151118/1323602301.html.

Billig, Michael. 1995. *Banal Nationalism*. London: SAGE Publications.

Blencowe, Claire. 2013. Biopolitical Authority, Objectivity, and the Groundwork of Modern Citizenship. *Journal of Political Power* 6(1): 9–28.

Brambilla, Chiara. 2015. Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept. *Geopolitics* 20: 14–34.

Butler, Judith, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 2007. *Who Sings the Nation State? Language, Politics, Belonging*. London, New York, Calcutta: Seagull Books.

Conley, Heather A., and Theodore P. Gerber. 2011. *Russian Soft Power in der 21st Century—An Examination of Russian Compatriot Policy in Estonia*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Delanty, Gerard. 1995. *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Denisov, Rodion. 2014. Russkaya kul'tura v Estonii: nuzhen Dostoevsky, a ne balalaika. *Pravoslavie.ru* web portal, September 18. http://www.pravoslavie.ru/73670.html.

———. 2015. Bol'no—i za Rossiyu, i za russkikh po obe storony granitsy. *Pravoslavie.ru* web portal, October 27. http://www.pravoslavie.ru/87123.html.

Dillon, Michel, and Luis Lobo-Guerrero. 2008. Biopolitics of Security in the 21st Century: An Introduction. *Review of International Studies* 34: 263–292.

Dougherty, Jill, and Riina Kaljurand. 2015. *Estonia's 'Virtual Russian World': The Influence of Russian Media on Estonia's Russian Speakers*. Tallinn: International Center for Defense and Security, October http://www.icds.ee/fileadmin/media/icds.ee/failid/Jill_Dougherty__Riina_Kaljurand_-_Estonia_s__Virtual_Russian_World_.pdf.

Evans-Pritchard, Ambrose. 2015. Putin Could Attack Baltic States, Former NATO Chief Warns. *The Telegraph*, February 5. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/11393707/Putin-could-attack-Baltic-States-warns-former-Nato-chief.html.

Fenoglio, Jerome. 2014. Les frontieres invisibles de Narva. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 13. http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2014/05/13/les-frontieres-invisibles-de-narva_4415822_3214.html.

Govorit, Moskva. 2015. Prezident Estonii predlozhil priravniat' russkoyazychnykh zhitelei strany k migrantam. May 20. http://govoritmoskva.ru/news/39640/.

Grigas, Agnia. 2015. How Russia Sees Baltic Sovereignty. *The Moscow Times*, July 14. http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/how-russia-sees-baltic-sovereignty/525643.html.

Hansen, Peo. 2000. *Europeans Only? Essays on Identity Politics and the European Union*. Umeå: Umeå University Press.

Herzog, Ben. 2012. The Paradoxes of Citizenship Removal: Soviet and Post-Soviet Citizenship. *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 26(4): 792–810.

Hess, Peter. 2015. Estonia's Russian Legacy and Putin's Great Russia. *Cultural Contexts* web portal, February 28. https://sites.utexas.edu/culturescontexts/2015/02/28/estonia-russian-legacy-and-putins-greater-russia/.

Hieronymi, Otto. 2003. The Nansen Passport: A Tool of Freedom of Movement and Protection. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 22(1): 36–47.

Hoffmann, Thomas. 2012. Sachunmittelbare Demokratie im Baltikum. In *Sachunmittelbare Demokratie im interdisziplinären und internationalen Kontext 2010/2011—Mittel- und Osteuropa*, eds. Peter Neumann and Denise Renger, 309–327. Baden-Baden, Nomos.

Ingerman, Andres. 2015. Inogda stabil'nost' i suverenitet obuslovleny voennym prisutstviem. *Stolitsa*, December 2. http://stolitsa.ee/116484.

Kivit, Yurii. 2015. Estonia stala depressivnoi okrainoi, nikakim brendingom eto ne popravit'. *BaltNews*, November 18. http://baltnews.ee/voice_of_the_people/20151125/1014273825.html.

Koort, Katja. 2014. The Russians of Estonia: Twenty Years Later. *World Affairs*, July–August. http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/russians-estonia-twenty-years-after.

Kuus, M. 2002. Sovereignty for Security? The Discourse of Sovereignty in Estonia. *Political Geography* 21: 393–412.

Laurinaucius, Marius. 2015. *Why Russia's Threat to Baltic States Is So Real*. Vilnius: East European Security Research Initiative, EESRI Comment, May. http://eesri.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Russia%E2%80%99s-threat-to-Baltic-States-2015-05-C-ENG.pdf.

Leone, Massimo. 2012. Introduction to the Semiotics of Belonging. *Semiotica* 192: 449–470.

Linter, Dmitry. 2015. Savisaar meshal razvitiu protsessa destabilizatsii obschestvennogo prostranstva v Estonii. *BaltNews*, September 22. http://baltnews.ee/policy/20150922/1014121748.html.

Llana, Sara Miller. 2015. In Estonia's Refugee Debate, Soviet Past Makes for Present Angst. *Christian Science Monitor*, August 28. http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2015/0828/In-Estonia-s-refugee-debate-Soviet-past-makes-for-present-angst.

Malakhov, Vladimir. 2013. Grazhdanstvo i natsional'nost'. *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, December 26. http://postnauka.ru/longreads/21601.

Malksoo, Maria. 2009. The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe. *European Journal of International Relations* 15(4): 653–680.

Mitropolit Korneliy. 2015. V dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii russkuyu kulturu ne nazyvali russkoyazychnoi. *BaltNews*, July 5. http://baltnews.ee/russian_in_Estonia/20150605/1013872435.html.

Nosovich, Alexandr. 2015a. *Zadvorki Evropy. Pochemu umiraet Pribaltika*. Moscow: Algoritm Publisher.

———. 2015b. Tema bezhentsev raskryvaet Evrope pravdu o Pribaltike. *Lev Gumiliov Center*, September 16. http://www.gumilev-center.ru/tema-bezhencev-raskryvaet-evrope-pravdu-o-pribaltike/.

Ojuland, Kristiina. 2016. Bezhentsy—eto problema, kotoraya ob'edinyaet zhivuschikh v Estonii liudei. *NarvaCity* web portal. February 9. http://narvacity.ee/2016/02/09/oyuland-bezhentsy-eto-problema-kotoraya-obedinyaet-zhivushhih-v-estonii-lyudej/.

OSCE. 1996. *Letter from the Estonian Foreign Minister to the HCNM*, No. 1/19028. November 27.

Person, Robert. 2015. Baltic Russians Are Not Pawns in Strategic Games. *The Moscow Times*, October 26. http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/opinion/article/baltic-russians-arent-pawns-in-strategic-game/540416.html.

Polonskiy, Ilya. 2015. Chto delat' s bezhentsami? Vostochnoi Evrope predstoit razmestit' tysiachi afrikantsev i aziatov. *Voennoe Obozrenie* web portal, September12.http://topwar.ru/82221-chto-delat-s-bezhencami-vostochnoy-evrope-predstoit-razmestit-tysyachi-afrikancev-i-aziatov.html.

Putin Squeezes the Baltics. 2015. Editorial. *Wall Street Journal*, August 18. http://www.wsj.com/articles/putin-squeezes-the-baltics-1440026019.

Rajaram, Prem Kumar, and Carl Grundy-Warr. 2007. *Borderscapes. Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.

Reznikov, Andrei. 2015. Chornye chelovechki mogut byt' vmeste s zelionymi. *Vzgliad*, August 4. http://vz.ru/world/2015/8/4/482926.html.

RIA Novosti. 2006. Russia to Spend $171 mln on Repatriation Program in 2007. October 24. http://sputniknews.com/russia/20061024/55088022.html.

Sakwa, Richard. 2015. Ukraine and the Post-Colonial Condition. *Open Democracy*, September 18. https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/richard-sakwa/ukraine-and-postcolonial-condition.

Schulze, Jennie L. 2010. *Playing the Compatriot Card in Estonia and Latvia: School Reform and the Bronze Soldier Crisis*. APSA 2010 Annual Meeting Paper. http://ssrn.com/abstract=1643469.

Seelg, Peeter, and Rein Ruutsoo. 2014. Teleological Historical Narrative as a Strategy for Constructing Political Antagonism: The Example of the Narrative of Estonia's Regaining of Independence. *Semiotica* 202: 365–393.

Selmeczi, Anna. 2009. "…We Are Being Left to Burn Because We Do Not Count": Biopolitics, Abandonment, and Resistance. *Global Society* 23(4): 519–538.

Sikk, Allan. 2010. Estonia. In: *Elections in Europe*, eds. Dieter Nohlen and Philip Stöver, 565–592. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Sputnik. 2016. Estonozemel'tsy ne khotyat zhit' riadom s migrantami. March 8. http://ru.sputnik-news.ee/society/20160308/627177.html.

Stalnuhhin, Mikhail. 2015. Chetyre osnovnye problem migratsionnoi politiki Estonii. *Mikhail Stalnuhhin* web site, October 31. http://stalnuhhin.ee/?p=6193.

TASS. 2016. Estonian Party Suggests 72-Hour visa-Free Regime with Russia. March 13. http://tass.ru/en/world/861925.

Teterin, Igor. 2013. Kak v Estonii sozdayut 'vragov' i razzhigayut fobii. *RuBaltic* web portal, February 18. http://www.rubaltic.ru/article/kultura-i-istoriya/kak-v-estonii-sozdayut-vragov-i-razzhigayut-fobii-/.

Tsybulenko, Eugen. 2015. Pochemu ya protiv izmenenia konservativnoi migratsionnoi politiki Estonii. *ERR* web portal, September 9. http://rus.err.ee/v/opinion/c4ffa54e-5fc4-4300-b70a-f0d55a7d2f22/evgen-tsybulenko-pochemu-ya-protiv-izmeneniya-konservativnoy-migratsionnoy-politiki-estonii.

Vaughan-Williams, Nick. 2009. The Generalized Bio-Political Border? Re-Conceptualising the Limits of Sovereign Power. *Review of International Studies* 35: 729–749.

Veretennikova, Ksenia. 2015. Nerusskie idut. *Nasha Versia* web portal, June 15. https://versia.ru/evrosoyuz-zaselyaet-vymirayushhuyu-pribaltiku-bezhencami-iz-afriki-i-azii.

Visek, Richard C. 1997. Creating the Ethnic Electorate through Legal Restorationism: Citizenship Rights in Estonia. *Harvard International Law Journal* 38: 315–373.

von der Brelie. 2015. Concerns over Ukraine in Estonia's Russia-Speaking Community. *EuroNews*, March 6. http://www.euronews.com/2015/03/06/concerns-over-ukraine-in-estonia-s-russian-speaking-community/.

Zevelev, Igor. 2001. Russia's Policy toward Compatriots in the Former Soviet Union. *Russia in Global Affairs* 6(1): 49–62.

CHAPTER 8

The Baltic Region and Central Asia: What Does It Take to Make a Region? A Critical Perspective

Anastasia Vishnevskaya

Introduction

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, efforts were undertaken to keep the former member states together: the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was created and many attempts at integration mushroomed on the post-Soviet territory. The results were not necessarily impressive: most of the regional organizations remained paper tigers, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union continued. Due to a large variety of cultures and historical backgrounds of the newly independent states, the geographical proximity and distance between them as well as the variety of external powers influencing the respective regions, one could have expected new strong regions (in the economic, political, and institutional sense) to emerge or at least that there would be close cooperation in certain regions. However, this outcome happened only in the Baltic region. The three former Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania collectively joined the EU and NATO, started to actively participate in the work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and even voiced shared

A. Vishnevskaya (✉)
Free University Berlin, Berlin, Germany

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_8

concerns over the European strategy of the Northern Dimension (Aalto et al. 2003, 11).

Counterintuitively, a coherent region has not emerged even in the part of the former Soviet Union widely regarded as a "region" by area students and political scientists—that of Central Asia. A closer look at the five countries belonging to the geographic region of former Soviet "Middle Asia"—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—demonstrates that one can hardly speak of an economic, political or geopolitical region there. Economic ties between the countries are loose, mutual migration low, their political relations marred by regular border conflicts, and even the necessity to coordinate action within the framework of transborder water resources does not facilitate cooperation.

The factors frequently mentioned to explain these differences include the different stages of economic development; the dramatically different types of regimes; differences in the role and number of external actors; and the whole security environment (Allison 2008; Bohr 2004; Collins 2009; Frye and Mansfield 2009; Mansfield and Milner 1999). Though these factors are definitely important and should be kept in mind, while comparing the trajectories of these two parts of the former USSR, I stress here another important difference between the two regions, one which in my opinion has played an important role in their development—both in terms of the different nation-building patterns and the external influences thereof. The Baltic states emerged as independent states and nations after the First World War, they were occupied by the USSR, and their national borders have never significantly changed (except for Lithuania's). The Central Asia states were created by the Soviet Union and were deeply, unfortunately dependent on the patterns and concepts granted to them by the late empire (Bustanov 2015). These in turn were aimed at dividing the newly created states and not creating a region with a shared identity (Bustanov 2015). My argument is that these different stages and patterns of post-Soviet nation-building, as well as the variety of external actors influencing them, have also been important for fostering regionalization in the Baltics and for impeding it in Central Asia.

This can be best explained by the theoretical approaches of critical geopolitics on the one hand and that of suture on the other, on which I briefly expand below. I then describe the different integration results in both regions, citing the most prominent explanations for them, after which I focus on nation-building processes in the two regions.

The comparison of regionalization among the three Baltic states on the one hand and the Central Asian countries on the other might appear counterintuitive at the first glance. Indeed, a typical region with the respective institutional structures is rather the whole Baltic region, including the Scandinavian states and Russia. The three Baltic countries are rather a part of this region, or a subregion. However, for the purpose of this contribution, I have chosen to look at the cooperation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as they share a common Soviet past with the Central Asian states and therefore provide a more accurate comparison when it comes to post-Soviet nation-building.

Application of Critical Geopolitics to Studying Regions

"Critical geopolitics" is a set of ideas within constructivist thinking that emerged at the end of the Cold War as a reaction to the inability of classical geopolitics to explain political processes and changes on the political map of the world. It builds upon the thinking of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida as well as post-colonial discussions started by Edward Said and post-feminist authors (Power and Campbell 2010, 1). It evolved out of the discussion on the correlation between space, power and knowledge, and it bridges geography and international relations (Lossau 2001, 58–59; Dalby 2008, 418). It investigates how geopolitical claims and assumptions are represented in political debate and practices and deals with geopolitical units (borders, territory, places, living space) not as with given, natural dispositions, but as politically constructed ones. To do so, the critical geopolitics approach, in the first place, engages not with geopolitical power-constellations, as geopolitics does, but much more with the geopolitical thinking itself, the "culture of geopolitics" (Dalby 2008; Tuathail 1999). In this particular contribution, it means I look not at the interests of the external actors in the regions as such (like security-driven actions of NATO in the Baltics or economic interests of China in Central Asia) but at the implications their actions had on cooperation or a lack thereof between the countries of the respective region.

Critical geopolitics helps to understand how states tend to subordinate their foreign policy to their monopolized geopolitical identities (Aalto et al. 2003, 1; Tuathail 2010, 257). The choice of a particular identity necessarily results in and aims at differentiating "us" from "them" and

drawing a dividing line between the different identities. Especially at the early stage of nation-building this imagined line is reinforced by a real one—that of the national border. The border, however, can be the dividing line between states and nations, but it can also act as a juncture creating a system of sovereign states (Salter 2012). Transparency of the border is decided within the sovereign states on each side. Borders protect sovereign identities of the states, and a visual presence of a border can be important at the early stages of nation-building in order to highlight where one identity ends and another begins. These identities are created and interpreted during the nation-building process. For the purpose of this contribution I understand nation-building as put by Hippler:

> Government policies intended to stimulate patriotism, to make a country function more effectively as a unit, and to ward off threats of secession and civil war … They [nation-building policies] range from the promotion of simple symbols of national identity … to the establishment of national educational curricula, compulsory military service, and the construction of nationwide transportation and communication systems. (Hippler 2004, 16)

According to this interpretation, nation-building is mostly an internal process promoted by the government of a respective state. Important for this interpretation of nation-building is the fact that those promoting this process should have a clear image of what they are aiming at and what they want their nation to look like. This means they should also have a clear strategy and also a set of tools at their disposal (Hippler 2004, 19). The more inclusive the nation-building concept and the broader the support of a particular idea about the nation within the border, the less is the need for an impermeable, visible border. The moment the neighbouring societies manage to overcome or at least to reduce the importance of the borders is when a region comes into being.

Regionalism has become a popular concept in recent decades. Without the necessary space here to expand on this significant direction area of political research, I would like to highlight its one important aspect, which is relevant to this contribution. When talking about regionalism and the formation of a region, it is important to keep in mind that the latter cannot be reduced to regional integration, that is, to institution-building; the important difference is that borders of a region do not necessarily coincide with those of a state (Hurrell 1995, 335). At least as important is how the respective neighbour is perceived in public discourse. A region emerges

if the societies of the neighbouring countries do perceive each other as similar groups with similar or at least not mutually exclusive interests, if some sort of homogeneity exists. According to Pourchot and Stivachtis (2014), the mere existence of regional organizations can be seen as a sign of at least initial regionalization. They use the approach of the English School to claim that even Central Asia presents a case of regional society. However, regionalization is to a much greater extent about the growth of societal integration in a region, the closer economic and social ties. First and foremost economic factors are highlighted as cause as well as effect of regionalization (Mansfield and Milner 1999). However, regionalization cannot be reduced exclusively to economy. According to Hurrell:

> Regionalism can also involve increasing flows of people, the development of multiple channels and complex social networks by which ideas, political attitudes and ways of thinking spread from one area to another, and a creation of a transnational regional civil society. (Hurrell 1995, 335)

This society emerges if certain ideas, values and patterns of thinking are shared among people of neighbouring states or at least if they do not perceive each other as a threat or as an enemy. Below I emphasize the nation-building patterns in the two post-Soviet areas of the Baltics and Central Asia. Before looking at those closely, I briefly discuss other important factors of regionalization or lack thereof with respect to the two areas.

Comparing the Baltic Region and Central Asia

Nowadays, the very comparison of Central Asia and the Baltic states appears peculiar, as the differences between the two regions, or better said, areas, could not be greater. Right after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, however, they were less obvious. Decades of Soviet rule had a dramatic impact upon the structure of society, its values, economy and the role of the countries in the international community in both the Baltics and Central Asia. In both regions, discourses on the Soviet rule after its dissolution were focal for post-1991 identity building. Both have used some sort of post-colonial narrative, frequently unintentionally (Kazancev 2008, 36).

And yet, the developments in the two regions could not have been more different. Right after the dissolution of the Soviet Union the cooperation among the three Baltic states had been very intense. They established the

Baltic Assembly, Baltic Council of Ministers and regular meetings of presidents. A free trade agreement between the three states was signed as early as September 1993 and came into power in the spring of 1994 (Sumilo 2006, 2). There was talk about enhancing the cooperation and creating a "Baltic Benelux". Later this cooperation was partially neglected due to the fact that the three countries were about to join the EU and NATO, and the harmonization of legislation proceeded in that multilateral format. However, they still cooperate closely within multiple formal and informal institutions and, what is no less important, are *perceived* as a regional group.

Post-Soviet Central Asia (the five former Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), on the other hand, is frequently referred to as a "region" just for the sake of geographic convenience, while many scholars doubt the applicability of this term to the five states (Allison 2008; Moylan 2013). The most appropriate term seems to be "geopolitical region" as used by Delovarova et al., or "geographic region", as the countries are closely connected to each other by the shared rivers and the ethnic patchwork of the Fergana Valley, but not by sustainable economic or political bonds. Indeed, one would expect a close cooperation among the five states considering the geographic proximity and the shared history of first Russian Tsarist and later Soviet colonization. Moreover, regionalization and regional integration is not an issue of fashion or "just" an option; it is a burning issue: ethnic patchwork up to $300 million is lost to trade barriers, corruption, transit and transport in trade alone (Moylan 2013). Still, what can be observed in Central Asia is a kind of "virtual regionalism" (Bohr 2004, 487). There are organizations existing in the region—Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Central Asia Cooperation Organization (CACO), Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and so on—most of which, however, remain "paper tigers". They have different participants and are used by the Central Asian members mainly to play major external actors like Russia, China and the United States against each other and against their neighbours. In Central Asia the external actors had very limited interests and involvement in the region. None of them would offer a "full package" of integration, political and economic support, as was the case with EU and NATO support for the Baltic region. The Central Asian regimes tried therefore to maximize their benefits from every cooperation project, frequently at the expense of the others. The most prominent case of such

unsustainable cooperation is Kyrgyzstan, which has switched its alliance multiple times between Russia and the US (Allison 2008; Bohr 2004).

The lack of sustainable integration structures looks less problematic compared to the frequent incidents on the Uzbek–Tajik border and the Osh events in 2010, when more than a thousand Uzbeks were slaughtered by the local Kyrgyz population (Safarov 2010). Last, but not least, there is still no sustainable format for water management of the major transboundary rivers, which is a continuous source of tensions.

When talking about the reasons for the diverging ways the countries in the two regions went after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, researchers most of the time highlight the respective structures of economies, regime types and security issues typical of each region. Below, I briefly analyze the two former aspects and then show the latter is more a consequence than cause of the problem.

Explanations for Different Developments in the Regions

Different Stages of Economic Development

The most prominent explanatory factors for regionalization or lack thereof are the differences in the development levels and types of economies in the two regional areas. While the economies of the Baltic States have been more industrialized, the economies of the Central Asian states have been highly dependent on exporting natural resources. Later remittances from labour migrants to Russia became at least as important for some of the countries as other sources of national income (The Economist 2016). The economic development of the Baltic States was at a higher level, and they had the European Union (back then, European Communities) as a strong pole of integration and source of economic support. However, their trade with each other was not that extensive, and the European countries remained for a long time as important as trade partners as Russia. Trade with Russia grew more important once again after the economic crisis of 2008 (Dudzinska 2013). Moreover, the poorer Central Asian countries needed integration and cooperation no less than the Baltic states, and they also had a strong economic and political pole in their region, namely Russia. However, no such integration has taken place, even though the chances for regional division of labour were quite sufficient, given the

resource richness of the region, its sheer size and the different potential trade partners such as Turkey, Iran, China and Russia at its borders.

Different Types of Regimes

An important argument in the debate on why some countries form a region and others do not is the regime type of the states in a geographic region. Presumably, democracies are more prone to integrate than authoritarian regimes; therefore, the Baltic countries had fewer problems with cooperating and integrating than did the authoritarian and hybrid regimes of Central Asia (Moylan 2013). Democratic regimes are by definition more open and cooperative than authoritarian ones, which avoid exposure to the international milieu. Examples of successful regionalization can much more frequently be found when the integrating parties are democratic states or mild authoritarian regimes (Arel 2002; Pourchot and Stivachtis 2014). However, here we face a chicken and egg problem. The regimes of the independent Baltic states before the Soviet occupation had not been democratic, and they all had drifted towards more or less authoritarian regimes by the beginning of the Second World War (Kasekamp 2010). During the Soviet occupation the countries existed under an oppressive regime, so that democratic transition after its dissolution was not necessarily a self-fulfilling prophecy. More importantly, a striving to be protected by NATO and to be financially supported by the EU has been a powerful incentive for the local governments to liberalize their regimes and economies (Kramer 2012). Consequently, it is often said that the fate of the post-Soviet Baltic states was determined not by their ruling elites, but by the very fact of their proximity to the EU and its spillover effects (Kapustans 1998; Muiznieks et al. 2013; Sumilo 2006; Stead 2013). Certainly, the prospect of EU admission has strongly influenced policies in these countries. However, I would argue that the EU spillover effects affected primarily the domestic policies of individual governments rather than their ability and willingness to cooperate with each other and voice shared demands. Moreover, domestic policies of the three countries differed dramatically in regard to individual issues like accommodation and language policy towards local Russian speakers (Van Elsuwege 2004; Muiznieks et al. 2013). Last but not least, the "mental borders" within the EU, that is, the differences between the Baltic and other East European countries on the one hand and the Western and Southern EU members on the other, are not negligible. They became quite obvious, for example,

during the Ukrainian crisis. The Central European members and the three Baltic States in the first place have been pushing extremely hard for sanctions and favoured a very harsh policy towards Russia. This emphasized once again not only their distancing from Russia but also the dramatic differences in perceptions of space and borders between the Baltic countries on the one hand and the old EU member states on the other (Aalto et al. 2003; Kaza 2014). In addition to that, one could argue that Central Asia also had a strong integration nucleus, namely Russia, as almost all of the countries of the region had joined the CIS in 1991.

In Central Asia, on the other hand, there was no incentive for liberalization, and ruling elites had no motivation to share the power. This brought the countries into an "authoritarian tailspin": the authoritarian rulers were so protective of their regimes that they were not willing to open up their countries even to their neighbouring illiberal regimes (Allison 2008; Collins 2009; Moylan 2013). A string of this pattern of argumentation explains why Central Asian regimes have agreed to establish many regional organizations but have never been willing to implement the agreed upon integration measures. Allison (2008) sees these integration attempts as "protective" integration. According to him, the EEU, CSTO and SCO are supposed to reinforce the domestic regime's security and protect individual countries and the whole region from "external agendas of good governance or democracy promotion" (Allison 2008, 185). This, however, does not explain why authoritarian regimes in the region are reluctant to cooperate even with fellow autocracies and why the overlap in terms of participating countries is so small among the integration projects.

However, the argument about the role of the EU in region formation in the Baltics is not completely irrelevant. According to Kazancev, the EU is good at forging national identity, imposing particular perceptions, while there was no such power in Central Asia and therefore its states lack any shared identity (Kazancev 2008, 41). If we suggest that the EU did not impose, but rather offered, the Baltic states a particular pattern of postcolonial nation- and state-building, while there was no such "one size fits all" offer in Central Asia, this would partially explain the differences in region formation. Nation-building, i.e., a set of symbols, narratives and values promoted in the society as such, is a kind of informal institution that can bring states together or separate them. Therefore, diverse identities can create additional borders in what is perceived as a region (Kazancev 2008, 23).

This also explains why different security situations cannot be viewed as independent factors reducing or enhancing cooperation in a region. The threats can be real or imagined, and the geopolitical reality, as suggested by critical geopolitics, is not given but constructed and "imagined" first, before it becomes political reality. One of the most significant differences between the regions under consideration is that the Baltic states coherently accepted a Western identity, perceived Russia as the major external threat and therefore sought to join NATO. At the same time Central Asian countries were using divergent narratives for their post-Soviet identities, which often implied that neighbouring states would be perceived as enemies or challengers, an approach that naturally impeded regional cooperation. These identities were fostered—just like in the Baltic states—under external influences with different countries active in the region offering different narratives and patterns of interaction. Moreover, in contrast to the Baltic region, where Western influence has been coherent from independence up until today, in Central Asia external actors would come and go, making geopolitical narratives even less stable. Below, I focus on the post-Soviet state- and nation-building in the Baltic states and Central Asia and give an overview of how the respective governments dealt with real and artificial borders during the state- and nation-building processes.

Nation-Building Patterns in the Baltic and Central Asian Regions

The Baltics

Nation- and state-building in the Baltic states has been split into three periods— the one from independence after the Russian Revolution till the Soviet occupation, the one during the Soviet occupation, and the one after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Due to the shared experiences of occupation and attempts to break free during World War II, the governments of the three countries were willing to develop joint policies (Annus 2012). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the emigrants who had fled from the Soviets and their descendants came back. Many of them constituted the new national elites, and their shared experiences and understanding of the history also facilitated cooperation between the newly independent states (Gaponenko 2013). Due to the shared experiences of emigration and exile, a very important mental border, which

often exists between neighbouring countries—a division into "our" and "their" history—never emerged in the Baltics. As they all emphasized the distance between themselves and the former occupant, they all had a common perception of their nations as being eminently European and therefore of shared identities and self-perceptions as nation-states. The experience of Soviet occupation rather caused a different understanding of history between the Baltic and East European states, on the one hand, and Western Europe, on the other. While for the West Europeans the experience of fascist and Nazi regimes was the major tragedy of the twentieth century, the East Europeans considered the Soviet regime to be the major criminal of the century. It took the Europeans almost a decade and much hard debate to bridge this gap and agree on a common commemoration day, that being August 23—"Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes" (Waehrens 2014).

This has important consequences for national borders. The borders between the Baltic states were settled before the Soviet occupation, and there have been no changes since the independence. The Soviet Union did not change borders within the region (with the exception of the Lithuanian–Polish border). This drew the focus in bi- and multilateral relations away from border delimitation to cooperation and shared interests. The borders with the former occupant, on the opposite, were of crucial symbolic and political importance. Border delimitation between Russia and Latvia was settled only in 2007 after more than 15 years of negotiations. An even more complicated case is the Russian–Estonian border dispute, which has yet to be resolved. During ratification in 2005, the Estonian parliament adjusted the text with references to the Tartu Peace Treaty of 1920, which could have been later used by the Estonian side in order to claim a change of border. Negotiations were reopened and the new text finalized in 2014. The agreement was finally signed and brought into the Russian parliament for ratification in the spring of 2015, where it still now is. In 2015 Estonian government announced a plan to build a wall on Estonian–Russian border (Ekho Moskvy 2015).

Another important unifying factor for the three countries was a large Russian-speaking population. All the three countries had (and still have) not only external borders but also internal, societal ones. With large Russian-speaking populations remaining on their territories after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, all three countries perceived the new multiethnic nature of their societies as a significant challenge. National policies varied from simply ignoring Russian speakers to encroaching on their

rights. The focus on those domestic borders between "own" and "alien" population has been a powerful source of common identity for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Van Elsuwege 2004; Muiznieks et al. 2013; Smith 2011).

Yet another factor demonstrating that the spillover effects from the EU have been important, but not crucial, for Baltic regionalization is that the Baltic countries have been successful not only in joining the biggest integration projects and military blocs like NATO and the EU, but they have also established close and solid ties with countries in their immediate surroundings, working intensively within the framework of various Baltic regional initiatives (e.g., Baltic Council). Interestingly, here the role of external "enemy" has been as important as the consolidating impact of the "friend", the EU. While Brussels has been developing different forms of Nordic cooperation, in the first place the Northern Dimension (ND), the three former Soviet Republics have been reluctant to accept this idea, as this concept introduced a more obscure perception of the EU–Russian borders and was more inclusive towards Russia, and was not in line with the more modern, sovereignty-focused perceptions of borders and identities applied in the Baltic countries (Aalto et al. 2003, 12).

Central Asia

Right after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian states had an understanding of the urgency to cooperate; however, the priority for the ruling elites has been to establish and protect their individual regimes, not a shared economic or political space (Delovarova et al. 2013). In contrast to the case of the Baltic states, the post-Soviet state- and nation-building processes in Central Asia have shifted the emphasis from regional cooperation to seeing neighbours as the major danger to their own sovereignty. Most of the time, as mentioned above, the authoritarian nature of the Central Asian regimes is blamed for this. I would, however, rather stress that it was first of all the variation in regime types that created additional borders within the region. While all three Baltic states have chosen the same EU-integration path and therefore the same regime type, the variety of regimes within Central Asia is much bigger. This is why comparatively more liberal Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have been more eager to cooperate, while the totalitarian Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have extremely little interest in cooperating with their neighbours, which hindered a comprehensive solution for the region.

The five Central Asian countries have a twisted history of nation-building. The Soviet regime invested a vast amount of resources into creating "national" histories of each of the five states, none of which had ever existed within the current borders before the introduction of the Soviet rule in 1924 (Bustanov 2015). Unexpectedly acquired independence in 1991 confronted the national governments with a hard question of how to frame the post-Soviet identities, which narratives to refer to, and how to evaluate the Soviet past. Like in the Baltics, the five Central Asian republics used the language of modernity for their nation-building with a strong focus on formation and development of a nation-state with a strong nationalistic rhetoric (Allison 2008, 187). The task of creating sovereign states with national symbols, heroes and histories had been to a major extent completed by the delimitation of the national borders, writing of the "national" histories and categorization of national languages by the late 1960s by Soviet (predominantly ethnically Russian) historians and anthropologists (Bustanov 2015). By the time the Soviet Union ceased to exist, national ethnic elites had already emerged and developed an interest in retaining the power of their clans, so that creation of a common regional identity was perceived by them as an existential threat. Personal relations between individual leaders were of vital importance in the region, and they have not been too warm most of the time. For example, Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev's first visit to neighbouring Uzbekistan, which has been ruled by President Karimov from its independence on, took place in March 2006—15 years after the two states became independent.

Additionally, the Central Asian countries have been exposed to different external influences on their nation-building strategies and have been trying to use integration concepts as vehicles to reduce each other's influence in the region (Allison 2008, 193). While the Baltic states had a shared European identity, which they were able to tune into, the Central Asian states had no such opportunity and were torn apart by pan-Turkism, pan-Iranism, post-Soviet identity and a multitude of other norms. In the last decade China has joined the list of the major external actors in the region. The infrastructural projects within the framework of "One Belt, One Road" can be implemented only in cooperation with all of the countries in the region. However, whether this cooperation will or will not foster shared identity cannot be predicted yet.

The nation-building concept based on ethnicity and the notion of the nation-state is something the Baltics and Central Asia have in common. However, what differs is the notion of the "other", the nature of the real

and imagined borders between the nations. While in the Baltics, Russia and the local Russian speakers have been perceived as the "others", there has been no such "shared" enemy for the Central Asian countries. The Russian-speaking population in the region was numerous as well, but it shrunk dramatically during the first years after independence, and it keeps shrinking. The emphasis was put on the "otherness" of different ethnicities and in some cases, religions within the region, as was the case with the Isma'ilis in Tajikistan.

Central Asian states, opposite to the Baltics, had to bridge the secular and religious identities, that is, to secure peaceful co-existence of the Muslim and post-Soviet mentalities. While choosing how exactly national and religious identities could be brought together, they were inspired by the models offered by Turkey, Russia, EU and US, Iran, and by Asian external actors active in the region, such as Japan and India—those models being pan-Turkism, Eurasianism, democratization and pan-Asianism, respectively (Kazancev 2008, 79–108). None of these patterns has been, however, accepted completely. All of the leaders used democratic rhetoric in their speeches and their legislation, but none of the countries has ever managed to become anything but "partially free" according to the "freedom of the world" index (Freedom House 2016). Tajikistan was receiving massive aid from Iran, and in the early years even the Aryan origin of the Tajiks was highlighted (Kalishevskij 2013; Bushuev 2006). As a consequence of the civil war, political and "popular" Islam became a much more important source of national identity than occurred in the case of other Central Asian states (Kalishevskij 2013). Uzbekistan, conversely, adopted a strictly secular nation-building strategy with multiple references to the Turkic origins of its language and culture, stressed the "originally Uzbek" nature of Samarkand and Bukhara (both cities were claimed by Tajikistan), and cooperated with Turkey as the "cultural brother", even if to a limited extent. Just like for Tajik state, the role of Aryan and Samanid heroes has been important: in Uzbekistan the Amir Timur was levelled up to a national hero—indicating a trend of referring to ancient history, which was completely absent in post-Soviet state- and nation-building in the Baltics (Mavashev 2014). Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan both had less ideologically loaded nation-building patterns, with Islam being less important. However, in Kyrgyzstan the national epic Manas was turned into a powerful instrument of forging a shared identity. After the revolution, the Kyrgyz government tried to depart from a national identity that focused on ethnicity and to create a more civic understanding of the Kyrgyz nation

(Kalishevskij 2013). By that time the myth of former national glory had, however, already had an impact: during the riots in the city of Osh in the South-West of the country, ethnic Kyrgyz killed and wounded up to 3000 Uzbeks (Safarov 2010).

The imagined borders in the minds of people living in the region have been reinforced by the design and protection of the real borders on the ground. According to the theory of regionalism, one of the major reasons for creating regional integration blocs is the need to manage security issues and intraregional tensions. The very strategy of nation-building in Central Asia, however, with its emphasis on "national" and not regional identity, caused those security issues in Central Asia. Especially, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were eager to seal the borders and the Uzbek-Tajik and Uzbek-Kyrgyz borders have witnessed multiple border conflicts.

However, since 2002 security cooperation in the areas of intelligence sharing, military training and cooperation, joint exercises and military modernization has grown due to the growth of the external threat of Islamist terrorism, which leaves some hope for more integration in the region in the long run (Collins 2009, 257–260).

Conclusion

The differences in the bilateral relations within the two parts of the former Soviet Union—the Baltic states and the Central Asian countries—could not have been greater. While the Baltic states started cooperating with each other from the moment they became independent, the Central Asian countries demonstrated a very limited willingness to find shared interests and pursue them. They have entered a wide variety of organizations, none of which gained any significant influence in the region or brought any significant improvement to the lives of the local populations. The borders between the five republics remain sealed, trade limited and mutual mistrust enormous.

There is no perfect answer to the question of why developments in the two regions have been so different, as the initial situations have differed dramatically as well. One argument, which brings more or less together all the other ones, is that the state- and nation-building strategies of the countries in the two regions have been very different from the moment they gained independence. While in the Baltics the European integration project (the EU) was the single major partner and also role model

in terms of values and norms to be dispersed in the society, the Central Asian states have been exposed to a wide range of such models. Different neighbouring countries were offering the five republics their models of state- and nation-building. None of them, however, had a "one size fits all" approach to offer, as they were addressing not the whole region, but only individual, culturally closer countries.

Another important aspect is the role of "the other" in nation-building. In the Baltics, which experienced independence and where people had identified themselves strongly with the respective states by the time they were occupied by the Soviet Union, the shared "others" were Russia and their own Russian-speaking population. This provided the governments and the societies an important unifying factor, as this was a problem shared by all the three countries. In the Central Asian countries, nation-building processes began during Soviet rule and went on after its dissolution. The Soviet state-building in the region left many questions unanswered and many demands unsatisfied, so that "the other" or even "the enemy" would be found right across the border most of the time. Multiple border conflicts, water management difficulties and ethnic and religious tensions made efficient regional cooperation impossible.

The question remains open, Can the success story of cooperation and integration, experienced by the Baltic countries could somehow be used for the Central Asian region? The Baltic states were unified with the help of an external "friend" (EU) and "enemy" (Russia). At the moment there are no such actors for Central Asia. One of the actors active in the region who might play one of these roles is China. At the moment, Beijing is supportive of the existing regimes and acts in the region according to the "Chinese compromise": no pressure on the governments, no urge to reform and no immediate demands—only a "win–win" cooperation. Allison states that the Central Asian regimes have been more willing to cooperate in the twenty-first century as the pressure on their authoritarian regimes to provide security has been rising. China with its transborder projects like "One Belt, One Road" might also be interested in smoother relations between neighbours and more open borders in the long run. However, prospects for a sustainable, value-oriented cooperation and integration, based on shared willingness to abandon at least some sovereignty in order to achieve prosperity for the region as a whole, remain limited.

References

Aalto, Pami, Simon Dalby, and Vilho Harle. 2003. The Critical Geopolitics of Northern Europe: Identity Politics Unlimited. *Geopolitics* 8(1): 1–19.

Allison, Roy. 2008. Virtual Regionalism, Regional Structures and Regime Security in Central Asia. *Central Asian Survey* 27(2): 185–202.

Annus, Epp. 2012. The Problem of Soviet Colonialism in the Baltics. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 43(1): 21–45.

Arel, Dominique. 2002. Demography and Politics in the First Post-Soviet Censuses: Mistrusted State, Contested Identities. *Population* 57(6): 801–827.

Bohr, Annette. 2004. Regionalism in Central Asia: New Geopolitics, Old Regional Order. *International Affairs* 80(3): 485–502.

Bushuev, Mikhail. 2006. Tajikistan: W Poiskah Nazionalnoy Idei. *Deutsche Welle*, April 18.

Bustanov, Alfrid K. 2015. *Soviet Orientalism and the Creation of Central Asian Nations*. London: Routledge.

Collins, Kathleen. 2009. Economic and Security Regionalism among Patrimonial Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of Central Asia. *Europe-Asia Studies* 61(2): 249–281.

Dalby, Simon. 2008. Imperialism, Domination, Culture: The Continued Relevance of Critical Geopolitics. *Geopolitics* 13(3): 413–436.

Delovarova, Leila, Arad Davaris, Asanov Seylbek, and Fatima Kukeyevais. 2013. Regionalism and Regionalization in Central Asia. *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology* 7(3): 636–639.

Dudzinska, Kinga. 2013. The Baltic States' Success Story in Combating the Economic Crisis : Consequences for Regional Cooperation within the EU and with Russia. *PISM Policy Paper* 6(6): 1–6.

Ekho Moskvy. 2015. Estonija Hochet Otgorodit'sja Ot Rossii Vysokim Zaborom. *Ekho Moskvy*, August 25. http://echo.msk.ru/news/1609986-echo.html.

Freedom of the World Index. 2016. *Freedom House*. Last modified January 10, 2016. https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016.

Frye, Timothy, and Edward Mansfield. 2009. Fragmenting Protection: The Political Economy of Trade Policy in the Post-Communist World. *British Journal of Political Science* 33(4): 635–657.

Gaponenko, Alexander. 2013. Ethnic Conflict in Post-Soviet Baltic States: Content, Form, Mechanisms of Formation, External Influences. *OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights*.

Hippler, J. 2004. Gewaltkonflikte, Konfliktprävention Und Nationenbildung—Hintergründe Eines Politischen Konzepts. In *Nation-Building. Ein Schlüsselkonzept Für Friedliche Konflikbearbeitung?* ed. J. Hippler. Bonn: Dietz Verlag.

Hurrell, Andrew. 1995. Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics. *Review of International Studies* 21(4): 331–358.
Kalishevskij, Mihail. 2013. Tadzhikistan: Ot «arijskogo Pervorodstva» k «spravedlivomu Shahu». *Feragana. Informacionnoe Agentstvo*, December 2. http://www.ferghananews.com/articles/7965.
Kapustans. Jan. 1998. Cooperation among the Baltic States: Reality and Prospects. Last modified February 15, 2016. http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/96-98/f96-98.htm.
Kasekamp, Anders. 2010. *A History of the Baltic States*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Kaza, Juris. 2014. Merkel Promises Support for Baltic States Alarmed by Russia. *The Wall Street Journal*, August 18.
Kazancev, Andrey A. 2008. *"Bol'shaja Igra" S Neizvestnymi Pravilami: Mirovaja Politika I Central'naja Azija*. Moskva: MGIMO-Universitet.
Kramer, Mark. 2012. The Baltic Countries After Two Decades of Independence. Policy Memo no.20, PONARS Russia.
Lossau, J. 2001. Anderes Denken in Der Politischen Geographie: Der Ansatz Der Critical Geopolitics. In *Politische Geographie: Handlungsorientierte Ansätze Und Critical Geopolitics*, eds. P. Reuber and G. Wolkersdorfer, Heft 112, 57–76. Universität Heidelberg.
Mansfield, Edward D., and Helen V. Milner. 1999. The New Wave of Regionalism. *International Organization* 53(3): 589–627.
Mavashev, Jurij. 2014. Nacional'naja Ideologija v Uzbekistane. *Polit-Gramota*, February 9. http://polit-gramota.ru/bez-rubriki/natsionalnaya-ideologiya-v-uzbekistane/2143.
Moylan, Tom. 2013. Regionalism in Central Asia.pdf. *E-International Relations*, July 28. http://www.e-ir.info/2013/07/28/regionalism-in-central-asia/.
Muiznieks, Nils, Juris Rozenvalds, and Ieva Birka. 2013. Ethnicity and Social Cohesion in the Post-Soviet Baltic States. *Patterns of Prejudice* 47(3): 288–308.
Pourchot, Georgeta, and Yannis A. Stivachtis. 2014. International Society and Regional Integration in Central Asia. *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 5: 68–76.
Power, Marcus, and David Campbell. 2010. The State of Critical Geopolitics. *Political Geography* 29(5): 243–246.
Safarov, Radmir. 2010. Oshskaja Reznja. *Slon*, June 13. https://slon.ru/world/oshskaya_reznya-412335.xhtml.
Salter, Mark B. 2012. Theory of the / : The Suture and Critical Border Studies. *Geopolitics* 17(4): 734–755.
Smith, Kenneth. 2011. Labour Force Participation in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Baltic States. *Economic Change and Restructuring* 44(4): 335–355.
Stead, Dominic. 2013. European Integration and Spatial Rescaling in the Baltic Region: Soft Spaces, Soft Planning and Soft Security. *European Planning Studies* 22(4): 680–693.

Sumilo, Erika. 2006. Trade and Trade Policy Developments in the Baltic States after Regaining Independence before Joining the EU. In *XIV International Economic History Congress*, Helsinki.

The Economist-online. 2016. From Russia with Love. January 16. http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21688441-remittances-are-good-thing-except-when-they-stop-russia-love.

Tuathail, Gearóid Ó. 1999. Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society. *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22 (August 2014): 107–124.

———. 2010. Localizing Geopolitics: Disaggregating Violence and Return in Conflict Regions. *Political Geography* 29(5): 256–265.

Van Elsuwege, Peter. 2004. Russian-Speaking Minorities in Estonia and Latvia: Problems of Integration at the Threshold of the European Union. 20. *ECMI Working Paper*. Vol. 20.

Waehrens, Anne. 2014. Is Soviet Communism a Trans-European Experience? Politics of Memory in the European Parliament, 2004–2009. *Baltic Worlds*, no. 4: 19–26.

PART III

Inclusions and Mobilities: Cultural Strategies of Border-(Un)locking

CHAPTER 9

Shaping the Estonian: National Identity in Films, Arts and Song

Alexandra Yatsyk

Introduction

The chapter seeks to uncover how Estonia after the 1990s defines itself through films, contemporary art and the Song and Dance Festival. I particularly focus on these three spheres of national cultural production as containing different but meaningful narratives of Estonianness, created within society and by discourses that are both hegemonic and critical. Arguably, none of the areas is homogeneous, and they have been transformed in the past two decades. What is more or less common in these understandings of the nature of Estonian nationalism is the grounding in the experience of "triple colonisation" (Baltic German, Tsarist Russian, and Soviet) (Peiker 2016, 114). It is a variety of interpretations of the Soviet past that continues to be an unalterable "stumbling stone" for both hegemonic and critical discourses, uncovering their inner ruptures and challenging their consistency.

Being a small borderland country located at the crossroads of cultural, religious, geographic and civilizational flows, Estonia unavoidably depends on its neighbours, first of all the EU and Russia. In the light of the rising neo-imperial ambitions of the latter and due to a significant

A. Yatsyk (✉)
University of Uppsala, Uppsala, Sweden

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_9

part of Estonia's Russian-speaking population sympathizing with the idea of a "great Russia", able to protect its compatriots living abroad, the issue of "inner aliens with grey passports" as well as the reinterpretation of Estonia's Soviet past, are rearticulated both politically and artistically. Against this background, the discussion about the place of Estonia in the European family—among the group of "new Europeans" (Mälksoo 2013) or "proper"/"anti-Greece" "Europeans" (Repeckaite 2015) finds its new reading in debates on the refugee crisis as exemplified by criticism of the EU policies within the Estonian political class and new shifts in discussions on the Estonian Russian-speaking population (Ranks 2015; Russkiy Mir 2016; Ino.tv 2015).

In this chapter I demonstrate a variety of strategies of identity-making in Estonian art discourse aimed at discursively shaping political identities through stabilizing or contesting key meanings ascribed to the political community in the making. The Estonian Song and Dance festival as a social phenomenon was, undoubtedly, one of the most powerful tools for national identity-making during Estonia's occupation by Tsarist Russia, Germany and the USSR, as well as during the struggle for independence. The famous "Singing Revolution" of 1988 and the "Baltic chain" of 1989 demonstrated the political power of peaceful performative actions of mass social mobilization that presaged the collapse of the Soviet system. National opinion surveys (see Lauristin and Vihalemm 2014) as well as our own research on this topic (see Makarychev and Yatsyk 2016) revealed the deep emotional involvement of Estonians in the national celebration. Statistically, the share of performers and spectators in the three most recent major Song and Dance festivals in a country of 1.3 million is steadily growing. It was 100,000 in 2004; 200,000 in 2009; and about 160,000 in 2014 (Estonia.eu 2016; To Breath as One 2009; Laulapidu2014 2015). By comparison, in Latvia with 2 million inhabitants there were 40,000 performers and between 150,000 and 200,000 visitors to the 2013 Song and Dance Festival (Dziesmusvetki.tv 2015). In Lithuania with a population of 3 million, the 2014 Song and Dance festival brought together 37,000 singers and dancers, and 50,000 visitors (Dainusvente.lt 2015). Top Estonian officials and foreign leaders repeatedly emphasized the great importance of the event as one of the pillars of Estonian nationhood.[1] Against this backdrop, the discourse of Laulupidu (the Estonian Song and Dance Festival) can be considered an eloquent example of the hegemonic rhetoric of Estonian nation-building. As seen through this prism, the question of whether Russian songs should be included in the repertoire of the event seems to be a marginal but inalienable element of the

debates on national identity since independence. Remarkably, not only pro-Russian groups in Estonia but also Estonian national cultural elites raised this issue (see more Makarychev and Yatsyk 2016).

Estonian films might be dubbed another playground for representing national identity. As one scholar notes, being supported financially mostly by national foundations, the film industry in Estonia was aimed originally at a domestic audience, but it has evolved to be a cultural instrument transmitting the image of the country eager to relinquish its Soviet legacy (Laaniste 2011, 140). As the domestic success of films issued in 2014 and 2015—"1944" (dir. by Elmo Nüganen), "In the Crosswind" (dir. by Martti Helde) and "The Fencer" (dir. by Klaus Härö)—demonstrated, World War II and Soviet totalitarianism are highly sensitive topics in Estonian identity narratives. This can be illustrated by several debates in contemporary Estonia in recent years. It was particularly seen in the Polish exhibition on the Holocaust in the Tartu Art Museum in the summer of 2015, which triggered a sharply negative reaction from those who considered it sacrilege and irreverence to the Holocaust victims (Fomina 2015). Works of young artists such as Kristina Norman and Tatjana Muravskaja seem to be less provocative, but they also focused on issues of memory and nationalism in the Estonian and wider European contexts.

The chapter is structured as follows. In the first part, I introduce my research optics, based on the idea of the suture, a key theoretical ground of this edited volume (see more in Chap. 1, Introduction: The Baltic Sea Region—Scars, Seams and Stitches). The second section addresses the Estonian Song and Dance Festival and national debates on the "Russian question", which I analyze based on my research of the XXVI 2014 Song and Dance Festival. This research comprises 25 in-depth interviews with experts, singers, artists and managers from Tallinn, Tartu and Narva who participated in the event, as well as discourse analysis of Estonian media on the topic (in Russian and English).[2] The third section is devoted to representations of the Russophone population in contemporary art and film, with a particular emphasis on the issues of Estonian war memories and Russians as "inner migrants" in the light of the recent refugee crisis in Europe.

Post-Colonial Self-Description

Estonia's self-reflection in post-colonial terms does not belong to the sphere of mainstream discourse, but exists as a language of self-description in both academia and a cultural milieu. A special issue edited by Epp

Annus in 2016 titled "A Postcolonial View on Soviet Era Baltic Cultures" (Annus 2016), as well as a number of other recent works (Annus 2012; Dovydaityte 2012; Laaniste 2011; Kelertas 2006) open some room for discussion on this vein. In this chapter I would like to follow this discourse and—due to the excessively wide understanding of the concept of the post-colonial—to apply it to studying the phenomena of a local self-description (Beissinger 2006). Thus, I intend to look at cultural representations of contemporary Estonian identities as products of post-colonial feelings and thinking of Estonian producers, intellectuals, artists, politicians and civil activists.

The application of post-colonial concepts basically boils down to identifying the Baltic states as parts of a European civilization, and Russia as the oriental "Other", while conceptualizing the "USSR as an empire equivalent to the capitalist empires of Western Europe" (Dovydaityte 2012, 97). For Annus, the Baltic states had more experience with Soviet military occupation than with colonization. The colonizer is mostly portrayed, at least in Western discourse, as an agent of enlightenment, while the role of an occupant presumes violent sway over the territory (Annus 2012). Yet, Kapper emphasizes a widespread adjustment to colonial interventions in terms of a rhetoric of enlightenment (Kapper 2016, 98). In Annus' later works she acknowledges that "the Soviet period in the Baltic states can be characterized as a colonial situation, wherein colonial strategies were deployed. So one might say that the 'occupation' of the Baltic states by a foreign power (the Soviet Union) was followed by the gradual institution of a colonial matrix of power" (Annus 2016, 2). Valuable for my research here are those nodal points of discursive ruptures and possible sutures of post-Soviet Estonian identity that scholars marked as essential.

To think about present-day Estonia in terms of post-colonial language implies emphasizing the situation of symbolic domination brought about by the Soviet system, which has echoed in a separation of opposing value systems (national Estonian and imperial Russian) in the newly independent Estonia. According to Annus, "The "term 'colonialism' enables us to stress the fact that the regime was, in the Baltic states, forced from the outside and brought with it … specific ethnic and cultural tensions, related to the effort to privilege a non-local cultural tradition" (Annus 2016, 3). This implies the denial of colonizers' value system and the impossibility for mutually understanding each other in the post-colonial period (Annus 2012, 25). This conflict of two dominant narratives "creates a situation where almost any reinforcement of the definition of the self (through spe-

cific policies, discursive practices of social rituals) automatically implies a negation of other's constitutive narrative of self, and thus, is perceived as a hostile act" (Berg and Ehin 2009, 9).

This perspective reveals an essential and unavoidable civilizational and cultural gap that could not be filled solely by "choosing only one of the 'truths'" (Norman 2009). What might renegotiate this hard binary, though, is an attempt to deploy post-colonial academic language in art discourses that might reformulate the above mentioned scholarly reading of post-colonialism from binary lines of clear-cut distinctions to various versions of hybridity. In her study of the history of the Dance Festivals, Sille Kapper (2016) concludes:

The new Soviet-style stage dance that has come into being through mimicking a colonialist culture now continues its existence, representing and reinforcing national feelings of decolonized subjects … The Soviet colonial mimicry that came into being as a deficient reproduction of classical ballet now continues its ambivalent existence as a manifest of Estonian nationality in the minds of many dancers and spectators on one hand and as a reminder on Soviet ideals on the other. The colonialism-born hybrid dance style has been adopted by the colonized culture and developed into a vital and sustainable national tradition." (102)

She identifies two dominant trends in Estonian culture. Firstly, continuing the "contamination" of traditional folk dancing with elements promoted during the Soviet era; secondly, the search for "genuine" folk dance as a reaction to the Soviet colonial heritage (Kapper 2016, 104). This argument reinforces the rethinking of Estonian post-coloniality through the prism of experiences of ambivalent hybridity rooted in the Soviet past, with its "conformity with colonial power, on the one hand, and still a certain portion of national self-pride, on the other. A typically ambivalent colonial situation emerged—collaboration combined with resistance in different fluctuating proportions" (Kapper 2016, 100). In the post-Soviet context this hybridity in many respects can be viewed as a peculiar type of suturing Estonian identity on the basis of distancing itself from colonial times, yet in the meantime engaging with it in different forms.

This is precisely my focus in this chapter. The different art practices of bridging, linking and suturing as exemplified by discourses (not always compatible with hegemonic ones) on Estonian Russophones. In tackling these issues, I analyze the conception of identity as based on cultural representations "of territories and borders" (Rockhill and Watts 2009, 49). Cultural strategies shape national identities by producing

differences through cultural practices, public performances, commemorations, celebrations and festivities, and visual imageries (Hemple 2012, 4). Constructivist and post-structuralist literatures view these strategies as elements of systems of representation, conceptual maps and languages of collective expressions. Thus, they are "different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and establishing complex relations between them" (Hall 1997, 17). Politics of representation are viewed as "the way meaning can be struggled over, and whether a particular regime of representation can be challenged, contested and transformed" (Hall 1997, 8).

Another concept used in this chapter is the idea of the *suture*, as it appears in post-structuralist literature with some analogies in cultural semiotics. To quote Slavoj Žižek, the term "suture" means that "self-enclosure is *a priori* impossible, that the excluded externality always leaves its traces within" (Žižek 2001, 58). Suture denotes "a mode in which the exterior is inscribed in the interior" to the point of erasing substantial differences and forming "a consistent, naturalised, organic whole" (Žižek 2001, 58). Several academic works address the issue of ways of suturing the Estonian political community in post-colonial frameworks (Kapper 2016; Hanovs 2016).

In a Lacanian sense, suture as a concept is applicable to situations in which fragmentation and dispersal in a semantic field result from a lack of, or an understanding of, a missing chain in the process of signification. Concomitantly, this lack (or emptiness) is filled or compensated through borrowing meanings from different semiotic fields, with the intention of stabilizing the discourse. Stabilization can be achieved on the basis of ideological closure, with all external elements ousted and obliterated, so that the semantic "field is neatly 'sown up', and perceived as a seamless continuity" (Žižek 2012, 155). As a result, one single subject centralizes the field and "appears to dominate and run the process" (Žižek 2012, 155). Gaps and ruptures are obliterated, and the semantic field appears "as a naturalized organic whole" (Žižek 2012, 157).

"To Breathe as One"[3]: Singing Nationalism Through the "Russian Question"

The questions of how a substantial part of Estonia's population could be culturally represented on the national level and whether Russian songs might be included in the repertoire of *Laulupidu* has remained a topic of contestation during all 25 years of Estonian independence. Discourse

analysis of local Russian media[4] suggests that in many aspects discussions on the topic were for years marginal and usually not taken seriously in mainstream discourse. However, in 2007 on the wave of the Bronze Soldier conflict, the national authorities made an effort to integrate ethnic Russians into the cultural frame of the national Song and Dance Festival. These attempts included Russian language coverage of the Festival and a lottery with 5000 travel grants for Estonian Russian speakers to visit the National Youth Festival, the second most important festival after the nation-wide *Laulupidu*. At that time the Estonian Minister of Education claimed that the participation of Russians in this singing performance is a way "to feel yourself part of your country" (Rus.delfi.ee 2007a). The mayor of Tallinn and leader of the Centrist Party Edgar Savisaar pointed to the unifying function of the Song and Dance Festival for the whole country (Rus.delfi.ee 2011), in the meantime complaining that "the Song Festival 'Time to Pay Attention' fell short of its title, since the organizers disregarded the Russian speakers of Estonia" (Rus.delfi.ee 2008). On the contrary, the ex-minister and vice-speaker of the Estonian parliament, the *Riigikogu*, Laine Randjärv questioned the possibility of including a mixed Russian-Estonian choir in the Laulupidu programme, emphasizing the difference between Soviet times and the current cultural situation in Estonia that allows different communities in the country to have "different song festivals" (Kornysheva 2011a).

The Song and Dance Festival held in 2014 in Tallinn rekindled these debates. The rector of the Estonian Art Academy, Signe Kivi, claimed: "it was sad that yesterday I did not see performers in Russian national costumes next to us" (Rus.delfi.ee 2014a, b). Other high-ranking Estonian speakers, such as the art director of the XXVI Song and Dance Festival, Hirvo Surva, and the director of the Foundation of the Song and Dance Festival, Aet Maatee, were ambivalent on the issue. On the one hand, they were open to the idea of including Russian pieces in the repertoire; yet, on the other hand, they assumed that "as soon as it comes to traditions, one should go ahead without damaging them" (Rus.delfi.ee 2014a). Some of our experts also shared the idea that Russian songs could be included into the *Laulupidu's* repertoire since this might contribute to a decrease in tensions between ethnic Estonians and Russian speakers. Others emphasized, "It is important to understand what kind of Russians we are talking about. Are they Russians who speak Estonian or are they Russian speakers? It could be discussed. If a composer is Estonian who writes music in Russian it could be doable."[5]

Experts from the XXVI Song and Dance Festival PR and managerial team noted that it was very important to popularize the Festival among Russian speakers in Estonia. The translation of information into Russian on the Festival's official website and a special PR programme for Russian language media are examples of this policy. Yet as a PR manager of the Festival pointed out, "we understand that communication with the Western and Russian media has to be different … We didn't think that Russia should be addressed with messages about the independence movement or the 'singing revolution'".[6]

However, in our interviews the criticism of a more inclusive model for the Song Festivals was quite strong. Some of the organizers of the 2014 *Laulupidu* noted that it should not "mix" the celebration and "daily policies", since "if we try to put [Russian songs] there only once and don't do anything else to win Russians' hearts and minds in Estonia, then I think we are going the wrong way. We can't … cure problems over there in a couple of days."[7]

Others were even more sceptical, assuming that the question of whether the Russian language could be used is not essential since people in Estonia have many opportunities for their "cultural expression": "Estonia makes headway towards building a multinational state, a growing percentage of ethnic Russians have become citizens of Estonia. But Song Festivals are not meant for state-building representations".[8]

Other experts also exposed a similar self-reflection, based on the strong antagonisms between the culture of the Estonian-speaking community and the Russian one, which resembled the situation of the Soviet colonization. Thus, it is an identity gap, often formulated in cultural or even civilizational terms, that divides the Estonian majority and the Russian speaking minority: "This festival is for Estonians. Russians do not belong there … All that leads to integration undoubtedly has its merits, but we feel ourselves to be at the margins" (Kornysheva 2011b). A high social and professional status and fluency in the Estonian language can so far barely bridge this gap (Karaev 2014).

Our interviews revealed the resilience of Soviet cultural practices, which over two decades since the collapse of the USSR still remain a key reference point and dominant cultural frame for a significant number of Russian speakers (Kornysheva 2008). In this type of discourse the Kremlin's version of history finds fertile ground, from the denial of the Soviet occupation of Estonia (Simonian 2011) to the questioning of the legality of Estonia's secession from the Soviet Union: "Many came here because they

were incited to raise industry [in Estonia] from scratch, not because they wanted to occupy someone's place … then suddenly these people were pushed out of their jobs and deprived of any respect. This is how the wind of freedom blew—as if they [Estonians] didn't have freedom before."[9]

In their discourse local Russian-speaking residents did not distance themselves from Soviet times, but on the contrary, they gladly associated themselves with it:

The "Baltiyets" factory in Soviet times was known all across the country … People from all of Estonia came to share our experience … We were able to take children in groups to Moscow to see the Bolshoi Theatre … And there were funds for all this … When *Komsomol*[10] was in charge, everything was easier … Yet, then Estonia seceded … Estonians first didn't know themselves what to do with their freedom. They asked for economic autonomy, but Yeltsin gave them freedom."[11]

This phenomenal combination of Soviet cultural stereotypes and historical dilettantism contravenes one of the core arguments in Russia's mainstream discourse on Russia being a victim of the Soviet regime to the same extent as other Soviet republics (Nikitina 2014). A significant number of Russian speakers in Estonia prefer to look at the post-war period as an era of industrialization rather than colonization. They expose a surprising insensitivity to Estonian concerns about the erosion of the Estonian majority during the Soviet period (Person 2014, 14). They deny the objective factors that ultimately led to the decomposition of the Soviet Union, and don't see a reason to regret the mass deportations, Russification and subjugation to Moscow's rule, which all constitute a major pivot of the Estonian national narrative.

Suturing Through a Different Singing: The Slavic Wreath

The *Slavic Wreath* (*Slyaviansky Venok*) cultural project is an example of an alternative festivalization based on ethnic grounds. It might be considered an example of suturing a different Estonian cultural space through borrowing and resignifying social practices traditional to Estonian culture, yet also relying on traditions of Russian singing festivals held in 1937 and 1939 in Narva and Pechiory (Rus.delfi.ee 2015b).

Laulupidu and *Slavic Wreath* therefore are two different cultural spaces that exist independently of one another and epitomize two distinct cultural traditions. In the meantime, from the Estonian viewpoint, the very existence of a regular Russian-language cultural event is a practical means

to incorporate Russian culture into a wider Estonian identity (Stolitsa.ee 2015). Among supporters of this festival are several Estonian municipal organizations and foundations like "*Eesti Kultuurkapital*" (Kolobova 2008).

Our interviews with Russian-speaking locals from the Estonian town of Narva quite clearly indicated this integrationist discourse: "We are connected to the whole Estonia … We hold joint contests, festivals. All doors are open to us."[12] As pointed out by a director of a musical school in Narva, "The strength of the Narva musical school is the aggregation of post-Soviet cultures and our positioning between St. Petersburg and Tallinn. Mutual fertilization and hybridity is the key advantage."[13] Yet hopes for direct support from Russia are scarce ("Moscow lacks forces to tackle its own domestic troubles"), which leads Russian speakers to deny any possible politicization of identity cleavages: "There is talk about some kind of 'fifth column', allegedly made of Russians living beyond Russia. Some say they are capable of making unfriendly moves towards countries of their residence. Simply come to the *Slavic Wreath* and see: these people are unable to betray or do nasty things, I am convinced" (Turpakova 2009).

Arguably, the deeper integration of Russian speakers into Estonian society might be conducive to their alienation from Russia, and ultimately this raises questions of the practicability of the suturing function. Our informants have noted that they have not identified themselves with Russia despite being originally from there. Some of those who deny communicative or linguistic problems with ethnic Estonians ("when we try to say something in Estonian, they say, 'speak Russian, don't bother'")[14] are in the meantime less prone to culturally suture the two countries. It is typical that assertions about "support from Estonians" and "many rights given to us here" are accompanied with scepticism toward sustainable connections with Russia. This was epitomized in an interview with a director of a boys' choir in Narva: "Submitting documents for Russian visa is awful, so much time consuming and complicated … We would better go to Europe."[15]

Organizers of *Slavic Wreath* prefer to publicly avoid political connotations, characterizing this festival as a feast of dance and songs that illuminate "the breadth of soul", a metaphor that is widely used for describing one of the allegedly distinct elements of the Russian mentality. For many Russian speakers, not only Slavic Wreath but also Laulupidu boost "the comprehension of unity" and consolidation (Kornysheva 2011b). Yet, categories are understood in very different terms by the Estonian majority and the minority of Russian speakers. Unlike the former, the latter

thinks about themselves in terms typical for the current Russian logic of the mainstream great power narrative, such as an "unforgettable Olympic Games or a military parade in Moscow" (Kornysheva 2011c). The two festivals differ not only in size (*Laulupidu* is much larger in scope), but also in content. *Slavic Wreath* starts with an Orthodox service which not only underlines its Russian identity, but also deploys it within the framework of the Russia-sponsored conservative discourse in which religious components play a major role. The symbolic connection with Moscow is demonstrated by the raising of the Russian flag during the event (Bublik 2011).

Links to Russia as the most meaningful reference point for the whole project stretches far beyond the cultural or linguistic domain. In 2007 the organizer of the festival, the *Union of Slavic Educational and Charitable Societies*, was renamed to become the *Union of Russian Educational and Charitable Societies*, which was driven by the expectation that the organization could get funding from the Russian state. "It goes without saying that the finances provided by the Estonian government are insufficient. Estonian policy boils down to feeding those who are considered as 'real Estonians' and sidelining all others", a former head of the Union contended (Rus.delfi.ee 2007b). In the meantime, the renaming of the Union "does not mean that Ukrainian, Belarusian, Polish and other Slavic groups ought to be excluded. Members of the Union are certain that to avoid dividing lines we need to conduct a very well-thought policy within the organization" (Rus.delfi.ee 2007b). The neo-imperial momentum of this logic is not the renaming from Slavic to Russian as such, but the incompleteness of this semantic suture that betrays a metonymic distortion in the fabric of representation. The Union intends to sell in the cultural market its newborn Russian identity, yet at the same time maintain in its orbit all other Slavic ethnic groups as satellites or junior partners, who have to accept the new Russian umbrella as a cultural framework for distinguishing non-Estonian minorities from the dominant Estonian cultural majority.

The self-reproducing neo-imperial attitudes and sentiments give a clear political effect in the case of Ukraine, whose identity, especially after the anti-Russian consolidation of Ukrainian society as a reaction to the annexation of Crimea and militant separatism in the Donbas, remains problematic. Therefore, this identity cannot be inscribed into the pan-Slavic cultural framework dominated by Russia. A perfect illustration of this ambiguity was an incident that occurred in Sillamäe at the 2014 *Slavic Wreath* festival. This event was held on the Day of Slavic Writing and Culture, which dates back to the canonized brothers Cyril and Methodius. During the

parade some viewers were noticed exclaiming, “Glory to Ukraine!” the slogan of Ukrainian nationalist groups. A Russian-speaking member of the local city council, Oleg Kultaev, appealed to the Estonian media and law enforcement agencies to react to this incident, which according to him, evoked shock among local Russians, due to the close association of these slogans with the “events in Ukraine” (Rus.delfi.ee 2014c).

Indeed, even some of the Russophone population most loyal to the Estonian state expressed their approval of Russian policy in Ukraine. A respondent made a strong case for the lack of discrimination in Estonia, stating, “We as a Russian choir were invited to sing in front of the Estonian president—what kind of inequality are you talking about?”[16] Yet, then he continued: “It is abnormal that in Ukraine, the Russian language is banned … We all watch Russian TV, and see all the hoopla from the other [Ukrainian] side.”[17] Paradoxically, this double-edged identity gives many ethnic Russians a feeling of security. People feel relatively protected being citizens or residents of Estonia, but in the meantime they find it acceptable to identify themselves with Russia’s policies in Ukraine and even welcome some sort of protection from the Russian side. Most Russian speakers would intentionally or unwittingly reproduce the basic tenets of the Kremlin’s Ukraine discourse and share the perception of Ukraine as an artificial state with contingent borders. Many would project onto themselves the conflict in eastern Ukraine as a legitimate struggle for Russians to speak their own language: “Russian speakers here support the rebels. The secession of Crimea is quite normal to us. It all used to be Soviet.”[18] An incident with the flag of the Donetsk People’s Republic in Narva during the Victory Day celebration of May 9, 2015 (Rus.delfi.ee 2015a), was reported by local journalists and was perceived to serve as a gesture of symbolic solidarity with “Novorossiya”. A local resident, interviewed by a journalist, confirmed pro-Russian sympathies in Narva (Filatov 2015).

The high resonance of Ukraine-related matters in the cultural discourses in Narva and other Russian-populated areas made clear that the emancipation of Russian cultural identity is likely to take neo-imperial forms. This unveils a structural problem whose importance stretches far beyond Estonia. Due to the geographical dispersal of Russian-speaking communities across all post-Soviet territory, the revival of a Russian national collective Self inevitably spills over Russian borders. It thus ignites imperial sentiments, be they neo-Soviet, civilizational, Eurasianist, biopolitical, or a transborder community of Russian speakers solidified by the allegedly common norms of religion and socially conservative bonds. This irremov-

able imperial momentum inscribed in Russian nationalist projects distinguishes it from Estonian nationalism aimed at recreating national cultures and political institutions and protecting them from obtrusive Russian encroachments.

The Sacral and the Profane: Representing the Second World War

Discourse on WWII is another sensitive line of rupture between the Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities. As mentioned before, a significant part of the Russian-speaking community in Estonia shares, to a large extent, not only attitudes towards perception of WWII (and a Victory Day) as a sacral event, but supports current pro-Kremlin discourse about it. An eloquent example of the latter is the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII in Russia, which had a 7 billion rouble (RBK 2015) budget allocated for mass media coverage and advertising. Yet, the high symbolism of May 9 is accompanied by the shrinking public space for debates about the war, with alternative interpretations being emasculated, marginalized, or simply prohibited along the lines of well-known totalitarian practices. Archive materials are kept classified, human rights NGOs, such as "Memorial", are declared detrimental to national interests, and monuments attesting to crimes committed by the state against its citizens during the Stalinist repression vanish from public gaze.

The discursive production of war memories and its sacralization become a prerogative of the hegemonic state. The only legitimate and accessible forms of commemorating the sacrosanct objects for the population are affective, such as holy awe, mourning and consternation. Being ousted from the sphere of the profane as represented by wartime routine artifacts, documentary evidence and oral histories, war memory in Russian society is pushed to the domain of the *sacred*. Communication with this domain from the world of the *profane* is regulated by rigid rituals of commemoration that define loyalty and allegiance to the "authentic" political community. The ritualization of the St. George ribbon is the most obvious example of this. Within the Russian nation-building project, the ideas of the "holy war" are meant to consolidate the multinational Russian society. Any attempts to contest the hegemonic interpretations and the subsequent forms of communicating with the sacral are treated as punishable sacrilege.

In Estonia, memories of WWII are equally vivid. Yet, in contrast to Russia, Estonian memory policy is about its de-sacralization through reflective, as opposed to affective, transformation of its commemorative narratives and rituals. The film "1944" by Elmo Nüganen, released in 2015, perfectly illustrates this point. Its popularity among more than 100,000 viewers testifies to the acceptance of the key idea represented in it, namely its focus on the Estonian collective Self as a nation, on its own domestic traumas and losses (Rus.err.ee 2015). "1944" is an example of self-reflection as the main instrument that prevents slipping into a Russian-style patriotism. Nüganen's movie lacks evocative colours, and this is exactly because it is about a war that brought Estonia only the de facto loss of national sovereignty and provoked a split within the nation. This gives rise to the key question of what to do if you face the challenge of choosing one evil out of two, only due to the misfortune of living in a period when two gigantic systems clash with one another?

The filmmaker views Estonian patriotism as a controversial phenomenon, a feeling equally experienced by both parts of the divided nation. Ultimately, this sentiment is based on love for the motherland. "What are you going to do when the Red Army comes?"—a soldier asks his junior comrades, only to receive a straightforward answer: "I will kill."

Nüganen formulates his message through the personal stories of two heroes who, by the will of history, found themselves on opposing barricades. The parents of Karl Tammik were deported to Siberia, which predefined his personal revenge on the Communists. Jüri Jõgi, who we presume is a relative of someone who was guilty in the deportation of Karl's parents, kills Karl in a battle, yet he buries him in one grave with his fallen comrades. Jüri decides to deliver Karl's unsent letter to his sister Aino, with whom he ultimately falls in love, thus further complicating his personal tragedy. To protect Aino from possible repression, Jüri has to cooperate with the NKVD,[19] and only afterwards writes a letter to her in which he confessed to having killed her brother.

Andrey Kuzichkin, an Estonian journalist and actor, rightly claims that the film "1944" "managed to articulate a simple message: there are no winners in a war which pits one brother against another. One can for the sake of political motives re-write history, change pluses to minuses, yet one can't substitute the love of motherland with hate for other people" (Kuzichkin 2015). This is this civil nature of the war that became a momentous element in the construction of Estonian nationhood. The war corrupts the society, yet reflections about the war are conducive to its

de-sacralization. The contestation of the sanctity of the war is visible, for instance, in the acidic irony that Estonian soldiers in "1944" are afforded in ridiculing the portraits of Hitler that they received as awards for military service.

The other pivotal event for Estonian history was the mass deportation to Siberia in June 1941. This is represented in "*Risttuules*" ("In the Crosswinds"), a 2014 debut film by Martti Helde. Despite its art-house style, reminiscent of documentaries, the film was watched by 18,000 viewers in 2014 and was ranked as the third Estonian film of the year in terms of popularity (Boyce 2015). It won the Ecumenical Jury Award at the 30th edition of the Warsaw Film Festival in 2014, for being "a cinematic requiem … a contemplation of suffering, eternal human dignity and hope through an artful combination of pictures, words and music" (Kudláč 2014). The film's reflexive narrative revolves around a question of "What is Estonianness?" A peculiar artistic manner of the film, with minimal interactivity and endless "frozen" memory impressions looking like moving photos, is aimed at facilitating dialogue between viewers and the main character, Erna, and with the nation itself. As the director of "*Risttuules*" notes, the traumatic experience of the Estonian deportations in Soviet times is still important for current national self-awareness, since: "It is really hard to find a family who is not attached to the history … if you look at what Estonians are doing today, then it is a reflection of what happened. Because we are keeping this topic closely in our hearts." (Kudláč 2014) Thus, this kind of memory suturing is accompanied by artistic and mental ones. As Helde notes, "I wanted the audience in the cinema to feel the same way as people in Siberia felt. I wanted to take away the freedom of the audience, so they can't choose where to look, where is the focal point." (Kudláč 2014) There are other examples of building memory bridges that could be observed in the film, through images of borders, scenes of singing, maps, and dialogues in letters that are real and were written by deported people in prisons and camps.

Thus, in one of the episodes, the main protagonist Erna, deported to Siberia by train carriage, says: "When I had crossed the Estonian border, I heard the bell ring at a church. It was a funeral ring. Then someone in our carriage sung the song 'Estonia, our … courage' and all joined. It was the most powerful chorus, straight from the heart" (Risttuules 2014, 19.06 min). A spatial metaphor used for depicting Russia as an "enormous Other" is visualized by the map of the USSR on the wall of the village in Siberia where Erna lived. Elements of a post-colonial representation could

be exemplified by the conceptual dichotomy of the "enormous Russia" and "small Estonia". Remarkably, it is "Russia" and not the "Soviet Union" that is the name of Estonia's Big "Other", thus clearly linking contemporary neo-imperial Russia with its predecessor. Yet, what is peculiar for this type of suturing is an absence of enmity in representing Russia. The episode when Erna gets permission to return to Estonia after Stalin's death and her note that some Estonians have decided to stay in Siberia, which has become a "home" for them, might be an eloquent example of a discourse of post-colonial self-reflection through adapting and reinterpreting the alien culture to fit into Estonianness. In contrast with the WWII memory discourse in Russia, based on the idea of biopolitical conservatism (cf. Makarychev and Yatsyk 2015) and cultural foreclosure, the Estonian discourse is open to different interpretations of history and based on a reflective approach to the issue.

In this regard, the de-sacralization of war memories through contesting the hegemonic rituals of commemoration was a key element in the Holocaust exhibition hosted by the Tartu Art Museum in 2015. Its main task, in the words of its director, Yulia Poluyanenkova, was a healing of the tragic memories. Yet, the broader public discussion has led the Jewish and Muslim communities of Estonia to demand the closure of the exhibit as allegedly insulting war memories and being insensitive and disrespectful to the sufferings of people sent to the concentration camps (Fomina 2015). The Holocaust must, both physically and symbolically, be perceived with holy awe, and all other profane feelings, such as the joy of survival, are considered redundant and inappropriate. Discussions in Narva in 2015 on the appropriateness of arranging a city fair (the profane) on Victory Day (the sacred) are also about the boundary between the two, as was the removal of the Bronze Soldier from its sacred place in downtown Tallinn to a cemetery (the profane) eight years earlier (CaneCorso 2015).

As the Estonian art critic Airi Triisberg noted:

"[It] is the celebration of Victory Day that forms a central arena where cultural difference is articulated and performed in the public space. In the prevalent discourse, the current polarisation around the commemoration of WWI in Estonia is usually represented as an *unbridgeable* conflict between two memory collectivities, both trying to universalise their particularism." (Triisberg 2009, 107)

Estonian artists, Kristina Norman and Tatjana Muravskaja, both having partly Russian origins, are among those who have initiated the idea to build a "bridge" and thus resignify the post-colonial condi-

tion in terms of hybridity and connectivity. Some label them as pioneers in the field of "post-authoritarian" Estonian contemporary art, who have inaugurated the emergence of a new type of cultural object (Triisberg 2009, 105). I will address these issues in more detail in the next section.

After-War Positions: "Made from a Different Stuff"

Explaining the motives for creating her film "Monolith" (Monoliit 2007), the artist Kristina Norman said that it was inspired by

"a situation where the 'event' is being constructed and where it is getting too big to grasp from 'outside', as opposed to from 'inside'. The danger is to simply start defending one of those *putative truths* [my emphasis—A.Y.] and choose a side in this invented [the Bronze Soldier] conflict … In the film, indomitable natural forces solve the situation because human beings would continue to argue about the 'truth' until the end of their existence" (Norman 2009, 23).

She was widely criticized for her refusal to choose only one "truth" (Norman 2009, 25) in situations of conflict between ethnic Estonians and Russophones.

The key question for creating her "After-War" project (2007) was about the sacral and the profane in the context of the Bronze Soldier incident. Norman made small replicas of the Bronze Soldier monument and brought them to the original place of the monument, the Tõnismäe square in Tallinn. Asking whether "small copies of the Bronze Soldier could have some extra meaning that differs from those of the real one", she claimed to take "the representation of the monument from the sacral sphere that the community had created around it, and positioned it in the daily, profane sphere" (Norman 2009, 25). The artist emphasized the quasi-religious character of the memorial practices of the Russian community in Tallinn in relation to the monument, making the case for comparing the small copies of the Bronze Soldier monument to icons (Norman 2009, 26). "I had all of a sudden given the community an impulse that gave its members an idea of how to *re-sacralise* the place that had been claimed profane by the government a year earlier …. I am suggesting a new physical expression for the community, with their clear desire to bring together the previous and current location of the monument." (Norman 2009, 27). This performance was meant to inscribe the sacral, for Russians, meaning of WWII memories (both collective and personal

ones) with the Estonian community allegedly never understanding "the sacredness of these rituals performed by Russians" (Norman 2009, 28). The work of Norman, as a critic points out, "is an attempt to 'stitch together' the edges of the event in a way that maintains the many layers of meaning and guarantees the presence of escape routes, and which in turn helps to generate dialogue and a new understanding about integration" (Laimre 2009, 35).

The art project *Monuments* (2008, Tallinn Art Museum), by Tanja Muravskaja, also dealt with the artistic reflection on the 2007 Bronze Soldier conflict. The installation is composed of two equal mounds, one of limestone, the other of glass shards. The materials refer to two different images of Estonia, the industrial Soviet image and the European one. Limestone and glass were compounds also used for creating two monuments representing national images. These were *The Monument to the [Soviet] Liberators of Tallinn*, better known as *Alyosha*, and the newest one, planned as a replacement of the former and dedicated to the Estonian victory in the War of Independence (1918–1920) against the Red Army. As the author notes, "This installation illustrates today's reality, which sees a dramatic conflict between national ideology and the interests of a particular part of the society … The idea of symbolic exchange [between the two Estonias] was criticized into oblivion by public opinion." (Muravskaja 2010, 34) One could say that this is a paradoxical example of identity-suturing that both deconstructs the binary opposition and builds a new sense of unity, reducing both symbols to rude material, equally fragile in the face of memory. As Elin Kard, an Estonian art curator claims, "The extra value of the piece lies in the message that all monuments serving patriotic-nationalistic functions are pointless and unnecessary attributes that sometimes become the tools in the hands of dark powers." (Kard 2008)

Norman's performances look unacceptable for those who deem it inappropriate to intervene in the "sacral" ritual of the Victory Day celebration, a formative momentum in the cultural identity of the Russian-speaking population, and thus think of her as not "sufficiently Russian" (Triisberg 2009, 107–108). Yet the reverse question of "Who is sufficiently Estonian?" is still pending. Estonian-speaking artist Tatjana Muravskaja, argues, "I don't feel that I am not a part of Estonian society and separated from it, I feel I am made from a different 'stuff'." (Bersenyeva 2010)

Subalter's Dislocations

Apparently, a significant part of the contemporary art community in Estonia tends to conceptualize itself in terms of post-colonial approaches in which Estonia not only struggles with the remnants of the Soviet legacy, but also plays a subaltern role vis-à-vis Europe. As art curator Rael Artel notes, "The atmosphere in the Estonian art scene in the 1990s seems rather colonialist and the main aim seems to have been to modernize the art life." (Artel 2012, 31) This explains the international recognition of Kai Kaljo's video installation titled "*Loser*" (1997, 1 min 24 sec) (Kaljo 2010) which represents a parody on a self-marginalized and humiliated Estonian female artist. Artel suggests that the laugh the artist used in her work was a backdrop to the main character's narrative, which might symbolize the superiority of dominant Western feelings towards the subaltern East, subordinated and requiring civilization (Artel 2012). The irony of this piece points to the seeming attractiveness, but also impossibility, of suturing the Estonian national narrative on the basis of symbolically associating with—and borrowing from—the hegemonic Western/European discourses and vocabularies. Interestingly, another video installation "*Loser*" by Anna-Stina Treumund in 2011 in a similar genre of parody mocks Estonian anti-migration rhetoric,[20] thus denying its suturing on the basis of far-right discourse of national closure. Both "*Losers*" unveil the inherent incompleteness of narratives of national identity defined either through positive associations with Europe (Kai Kaljo), or through disengagement from its liberal values (Anna-Stina Treumund).

Film-making in the past two decades in Estonia plays an important role in identity-building aimed at offering "proof that Estonia is a beautiful place with European values… without any post-Soviet" remainders (Laaniste 2011, 140). Yet as some Finnish and Swedish film representations of Estonia in the 1990s and 2000s (such as "Darkness in Tallinn" [1993], "Screwed in Tallinn" [1999] or "Lilja 4-Ever" [2001]) demonstrate, it was rather typical for the "old Western view" to portray the country as an "alien territory", and "a post-Soviet Wild East" (Laaniste 2011, 142). The European Song Contest, which Estonia hosted in 2001, was one attempt to reverse this post-colonial image into a "reliable European" one (Jordan 2014).

Airi Triisberg, in her turn, emphasizes the ethnocentric character of the contemporary art discourse in Estonia since gaining independence in 1991 (Triisberg 2009, 89), which reproduces a "very common practice

of misidentifying all national minorities living in Estonia with Russians" (Triisberg 2009, 89). She speaks about the "dominant misconception of Estonia as a mono-cultural country accompanied by the tendency to confuse the notion of 'local' and 'national'" (cited in Triisberg 2009, 93). In her work she focuses on representations of migrants and minority groups in Estonia, whose subjectivities are not defined in terms of a monolithic ethno-national identity. She uses concepts of "the third space" and the "unhomed geographies" for dubbing different strategies used by "deterritorialized" and "dislocated" communities for "contesting the power of the state with its various apparatus for granting rights and deterring issues of belongingness" (Triisberg 2009, 100–101).

Tanja Muravskaja's works *Positions* (Tallinn City Gallery, 2007), *They Who Sang Together* (Vaal Gallery, 2008), *Lucky Losers* (Tallinn City Gallery, 2009), *Estonian Race* (Art Museum of Estonia, 2010), *Split Mind* (Art Museum of Estonia, 2010), as well as Norman's *The Pribalts* (Pribalty, 2006, video) seek to visualize a younger generation of Estonians (*Positions, The Pribalts*), and the issues they face (*Estonian Race*), the "founding fathers and mothers" of newly independent Estonia (*They Who Sang Together*), or champions of Estonian minorities (*Lucky Losers*). They are represented in the retrospective *Split Mind* in 2010, in which Muravskaja breaks with a hammer the glass covering the photographs from *Positions*. In 2015 she won a Sadolin Contemporary art award for her contribution to the discussion on Estonian identity. Yet quite symptomatically, the 2010 exposition was her last work in the series on Estonian identity, which gives us food for thought on whether and how the stitching of the Estonian–Russian gap is possible.

As the curator of the international exhibition *Let's Talk about Nationalism! Between Identity and Ideology* (Art Museum of Estonia, 2010) noted:

"Estonian nationalism, at first glance so *natural* and *justified* [my italics—A.Y.], also leads to segregation, discrimination, suffering and violence. Nationalism affects every country, even though the violence might not occur directly on the streets, but rather be hidden or institutionalized. The nationalist way of thinking has been welded into the collective mentality to such an extent that casting any doubts on it is seen as inappropriate" (Artel 2010, 14).

Works on Estonian identity, including Muravskaja's *Position* and others, were reactualized in the light of the current refugee crisis in Europe. It is through this prism that their exposition at the Tartu Art Museum in

2016 can be viewed. Remarkably, comments on the artists' work of 2007 have not lost their expedience a decade later, but ignited new meanings. As Triisberg writes, Muravskaja's *Position* (2007) shows her as posing in the black chador against the blue-white background, thus "referring to the Estonian government official's remark that as Estonia is facing the 'threat' of a new wave of immigration from Islamic countries, the local "Russian-speaking population should be appreciated more since "they" are culturally closer to "Estonians". By appropriating the image of the "absolute Other", as it is currently perceived in the Islamophobic West fighting, with an alleged war against "terror", Muravskaja refers to the absence of political and visual representations in Estonian society that go beyond the conservative phantasms of social, cultural and ethnic homogeneity that stigmatise, due to her migrant family background, as an alien" (Triisberg 2009, 105).

An international exhibition *On Disappearing and for Vanishing* at the Tartu Art Museum in March 2016 also included a plethora of cultural insights on migration. Estonia is known for its negative attitudes—stated by officials and supported by the population—towards accepting refugees from Syria and Iraq (Oll 2015; Tambur 2015). Against this background, some critical artists appealed to the "old European" ideas of multiculturalism and tolerance, which seem to be obsolete nowadays, and could hardly be deemed powerful. What is interesting in this regard is the rhetoric on "non-domestic" migrants, which was used by artists in Tartu. The installation *Phantom Camp* by Estonia-born artist Kris Lemsalu has referred to refugees as a part of wider marginal groups along with "weird artists, refugee terrorists, intrusive dark skinned people, womanly gay man", who "exist in the shadow of our projected stereotypes" (Artel and Ojavee, 2016, 14). Using figures depicted as men-dogs, who are sleeping in camp bags, the artist articulated a "typical Western imperialistic" perception of refugees as dangerously criminal and exotic (Artel and Ojavee 2016, 14). Laivi, a Finnish artist, through her piece *My Success Depends on Your Opinion*, draws direct parallels between refugees from the Orient and the Estonian "domestic" migrants. As the curators of the exhibition note, "The exodus from the Middle East to Europe … has lost its presumed end and has become statistically imperceptible. The selective media coverage has turned refugees looking for decent lives into an anonymous crowd, a 'grey mass' … the unsolved problem of non-citizens born in Estonia who hold grey passport also seems to be referenced" (Artel and Ojavee 2016, 14).

Conclusion

I started my analysis by singling out two meanings of post-colonial self-description in today's Estonia, either verbalized through texts or visualized through artistic imagery. One signifies drawing stricter lines of distinctions between the post-colonial subject (Estonia) and the external source of inimical otherness (Russia), while the other understands the post-colonial condition through the ideas of hybridity, plasticity and plurality, as opposed to a unitary Estonian identity. The first model by and large corresponds to what might be dubbed a "nationalist defense democracy" that has as its unintended effect "the frustrations of the rapid subjection to the 'European' norm and values in the name of the wealth and security promised by the EU membership" (Peiker 2016, 120). In its turn, the second option, along with the corresponding discourses and imageries, is more in line with a liberal civic model open to ethnic minorities.

In this sense Richard Sakwa's critique of Ukrainian post-colonial approaches can be applicable to Estonia as well:

"[In both cases postcolonial self-identification is often] reduced to little more than an anti-colonial struggle against subjugation … [P]ostcolonial theory appears to endorse conservative and exclusive positions, privileging a particular culture and inhibiting the forging of cross-cultural political solutions … From this perspective, the demand for 'pluralism' is itself an emanation of the classical imperial mentality. It is a new way to re-impose the cultural hegemony of the traditional imperial master and to inhibit the creative development of formerly subaltern nations … The struggle to escape from colonised situations is typically couched in the language and cultural norms imparted by the former colonial power, the logical trap that is at the heart of much debate over postcolonialism" (Sakwa 2015).

The problem raised by Sakwa can be conceptualized through the prism of the idea of suture that denotes a peculiar type of self-identification presupposing references to the Other as an inherent part of the collective Self. Suture signifies a complex process of "inclusive exclusion" where locking and unlocking intermingle, resulting in a structural incompleteness of the sutured identity. Against this backdrop one may argue that the Soviet past is a key element in the national self-reflection. This is raised in the debates of contemporary Estonian identity and the role of Russia as the other in Estonia's cultural projections of itself.

In different spheres of cultural production suturing is shaped differently. In the Song and Dance Festivals we have observed a situation of a parallel

existence of an Estonian dominant performative tradition and the Russian cultural enclave, with only scarce possibilities for mutual cross-fertilization. Some of cinematographic narratives about national memory do include Russia, but its representations are deployed in a context of alienation and estrangement. Russians as occupiers are but a context of stories focused on Estonians and their own ambivalent roles in the war. Contemporary Estonian urban art contains a strong message aimed at including Russians as interlocutors in a cultural dialogue, and thus leading to accentuating hybridity as a focal point in Estonian post-colonial reflexivity.

These different generic models, in fact, can be conceptualized as different forms and modalities of suture that ought to be understood not merely as a connection, but as attempts to attain a self-enclosed totality of meanings through the impossible expulsion of otherness from the nation's collective body. All the cases we have touched upon suggest that the outside (understood either spatially or temporally) ascertains its paradoxical presence through denial, as well as through inevitable references to either a Soviet past or to Russia (including the "Russian world") as meaningful signifiers shaping Estonian identity. Since each negation establishes a certain type of relationship with the negated, sutures inevitably create ambiguity and therefore appeal to hybridity as a structural (pre) condition. Apparently, it the language of art that through performative and creative imageries grasps the limitations inherent in the semiotics of bordering, directed either towards Russia or towards migrants. As a key element of erasing its Soviet legacy Estonian identity is deeply sutured in the European project, yet still this identity brews in a zone of tensions between the national and the supranational/cosmopolitan, and the national and the imperial. The quilting points that provide a common conceptual background for the ideas of suture and hybridity can contribute to the debates on limitations of different forms of ethnic and linguistic foreclosure and on principled incompleteness of practices of negation for identities floating from one regime of signification to another.

Notes

1. All presidents of Estonia visited this event. In 2003, UNESCO included the tradition of the Song and Dance celebrations in the three Baltic countries in the list of masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, which can be considered as a global recognition of its cultural significance. At his speech in

Estonia in 2014, US President Barack Obama also mentioned the Song and Dance Festival as a pillar of Estonian nationhood.

2. This chapter is supported by the Estophilus 2015 grant of the Estonian Institute (project "Song Festivals and Ongoing Nation-Building: Narratives and Identities in Independent Estonia"), Erasmus Plus 2014/2016 AURORA II mobility research programme (project "Celebrating Identity through Cultural Events: The Case of Estonia's 'Singing Nationalism' in a Comparative Perspective"), and the Archimedes 2016 research fellowship programme (project "EU-Russian Borderland Identities in Flux: the Case of Russian Speaking Minorities in Estonia").
3. It is a motto of the XXVI Song and Dance Festival that took place in 2009 in Estonia.
4. I have analyzed key local Russian media sources—Rus.delfi.ee and Rus.postimees.ee for the period 1990–2015 on the "Song festival" tag.
5. An interview with an organizer of the promotional events during the preparation for the XXVI Song and Dance Festival in 2014, Tartu, 2014.
6. An interview with a PR-manager of the XXVI Estonian Song and Dance Festival, Tallinn, 2014.
7. An interview with a manager of the organizational committee of the XXVI Song and Dance Festival, Tartu, 2014.
8. An interview with an Estonian speaking author of a song performed at the Song Festival in 2014, Tartu, 2014.
9. An interview with a representative of an NGO on national minorities, Narva, 2015.
10. Young Communist League during Soviet times.
11. An interview with a member of the Russian cultural society, Narva, 2015.
12. An interview with a musical school director in Narva, Narva, 2015.
13. An interview with a musical school director in Narva, Narva, 2015.
14. An interview with a conductor of the boys' choir in Narva, 2015.
15. An interview with a director of a boys' choir in Narva, 2015.
16. An interview with a choral conductor and festival organizer, Narva, 2015.
17. An interview with a choral conductor and festival organizer, Narva, 2015.
18. An interview with a member of the Russian cultural society, Narva, 2015.

19. The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, abbreviated NKVD, was a law enforcement agency of the Soviet Union that directly executed the will of the All Union Communist Party. It was closely associated with the Soviet secret police, which at times was part of the agency, and is known for its political repression during the era of Joseph Stalin.
20. According to Anna-Stina Treumund, "In Loser 2011 ["Lost in Transition" exhibition, Tallinn Contemporary Museum of Art, 2011—A.Y.] I perform as the Winners of post-Soviet country—Martin has three children with different women and he believes in marriage, Veiko works in Finland and hates immigrants, and Lauri is a closeted gay making homophobic comments in media. The expected values of Estonian citizens are nationalist and discriminative. Anyone different (not white, Estonian-speaking, straight and with children) is under pressure to "become a normal Estonian"—make more Estonian babies and go to song celebration." See Personal web-site of the artist. http://www.annastinatreumund.com/exhibitions/looser-2011/.

References

Annus, Epp. 2012. The Problem of Soviet Colonialism in the Baltics. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 43(1): 21–45.

———. 2016. Between Arts and Politics: A Postcolonial View on Baltic Cultures of the Soviet Era. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 47(1): 1–13. Routledge. doi:10.1080/01629778.2015.1103509.

Artel, Rael, ed. 2010. *Let's Talk about Nationalism! Between Ideology and Identity at the Kumu Art Museum in 05.02.–25.04.2010.* Tartu.

———. 2012. The Loser Takes It All. Story of an Official Portrait. In *HUH?PFUI!YUCK! AHA! WOW! The Classics of Estonian Contemporary Art.* 06.September–18. November 2012, ed. Tiiu Talvistu, 30–36. Tartu: Tartu Art Museum.

Artel, Rael, and Sten Ojavee. 2016. *On Disappearing and for Vanishing at the Tartu Art Museum, 11.03–29.05.2016.* Tartu: Tartu Art Museum, 14.

Beissinger, Mark R. 2006. Soviet Empire as 'Family Resemblance'. *Slavic Review* 65(2): 294–303.

Berg, Eiki, and Piret Ehin. 2009. *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration.* Burlington: Ashgate.

Bersenyeva, Nadezhda. 2010. Batareya: Tat'yana Muravskaya: Fotografiya—Eto prosto tekhnika khudozhnika. *Rus.err.ee*, October 24. http://rus.err.ee/v/

etv2/f381bf98-9b6e-4ba5-9eba-edacfc5b63a5/batareya-tatyana-muravskaya-fotografiya-eto-prosto-tekhnika-khudozhnika.

Boyce, Laurence. 2015. Estonia Celebrates Its Highest Number of Cinema Visitors since Regaining Independence. *Cineuropa*, May 29. http://cineuropa.org/nw.aspx?t=newsdetail&l=en&did=293447.

Bublik. 2011. Uchastniki 'Slavyanskogo venka' ustroili krasochnoe shestvie. *Rus. Delfi.ee*, May 29. http://bublik.delfi.ee/news/culture/foto-uchastniki-slavyanskogo-venka- ustroili-krasochnoe-shestvie?id=46859470.

CaneCorso. 2015. Narva: Den' Pobedy proydet na glavnoy ploshchadi Narvy. Vesennyaya yarmarka—Tozhe 9 maya. *Narva Internet Portal*, April 19. http://www.seti.ee/modules/news/article.php?storyid=75317.

Dainusvente.lt. 2015. Next Lithuanian Song and Dance Celebration will be held in July 2018 in the honour of Lithuanian Independence 100th anniversary. *Dainusvente.lt*, February 17. http://www.dainusvente.lt/en/next-lithuanian-song-and-dance-celebration-will- be-held-in-july-2018-in-the-honour-of-lithuanian-independence-100th-anniversary/.

Dovydaityte, Linara. 2012. Art History and Postcolonialism: A Lithuanian Case. *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi*. http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-84894292413&partnerID=tZOtx3y1.

Dziesmusvetki.tv. 2015. Fact Sheet—The Latvian Song and Dance Festival 2013. *Dziesmusvetki.tv*. http://www.dziesmusvetki.tv/media/59/n/.

Estonia.eu. 2016. Estonia.eu: Estonian Song and Dance Festivals. *Estonia.eu*. http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/culture-a-science/song-and-dance-festivals.html.

Filatov, Artem. 2015. Prigranichnoe sostoyanie. *Radio Polsha*, August 9. http://www.radiopolsha.pl/6/248/Artykul/216598.

Fomina, Elizaveta. 2015. V Tartu na skandal'noy vystavke na temu Kholokosta vystavleny raboty, zapreshchennye k pokazu v Germanii. *Rus.err.ee*, February 6. http://rus.err.ee/v/culture/eea4a16c-9972-49cc-90cf-9af785dc5693.

Hall, Stuart. 1997. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage.

Hanovs, Deniss. 2016. Can Postcolonial Theory Help Explain Latvian Politics of Integration? Reflections on Contemporary Latvia as a Postcolonial Society. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 47(1): 133–153.

Hemple, Danielle. 2012. Introduction: Forging the Nation through Performance and Ritual. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 12(1): 1–5.

Ino.tv. 2015. CSM: Bezhentsy s Blizhnego Vostoka pomogut estontsam polyubit' russkikh. *Ino.tv*, August 31. https://russian.rt.com/inotv/2015-08-31/CSM-Bezhenci-s-Blizhnego-Vostoka.

Jordan, Paul. 2014. Nation Branding: A Tool for Nationalism? *Journal of Baltic Studies* 45(3): 283–303.

Kaljo, Kai. 2010. Loser. *Vimeteo*, August 17. https://vimeo.com/14214871.

Kapper, Sille. 2016. Post-Colonial Folk Dancing: Reflections on the Impact of Stage Folk Dance Style on Traditional Folk Dance Variation in Soviet and Post-Soviet Estonia. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 47(1): 1–19.

Kard, Elin. 2008. Tanja Muravskaja's and Marge Monko's joint exhibition (9.–21. IV 2008). *Hobusepea Gallery, Curatorial Statement*. Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia. http://www.cca.ee/en/artists/tanja-muravskaja/texts/195-press-release-elin-kard-tanja.

Kelertas, Violeta, ed. 2006. *Baltic Postcolonialism*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Kolobova, Natal'ya. 2008. Sillamyaeskie Rusichi: Po-russki dlya russkikh i ne tol'ko. *Rus.delfi.ee*, December 11. http://rus.delfi.ee/archive/sillamyaeskie-rusichi-po-russki- dlya-russkih-i-ne-tolko?id=20600577.

Kornysheva, Margarita. 2011a. Eks-ministr kul'tury schitaet diskussiyu o svodnom russkom khore neumestnoy. *Rus.delfi.ee*, August 2. http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/estonia/eks-ministr-kultury-schitaet-diskussiyu-o-svodnom-russkom-hore-neumestnoj?id=50560269.

———. 2011b. Itogi oprosa: Etot prazdnik dlya estontsev, russkie tam lishnie. *Rus.delfi.ee*,July5.http://journalist.delfi.ee/news/news/itogi-oprosa-etot-prazdnik-dlya-estoncev-russkie-tam-lishnie?id=48956355.

———. 2011c. Vernite na Pevcheskiy prazdnik svodnyy russkiy khor! *Rus.delfi.ee*, July 4, 2011. http://rus.delfi.ee/projects/opinion/vernite-na-pevcheskij-prazdnik- svodnyj-russkij-hor?id=48892301.

Kudláč, Martin. 2014. Martti Helde: 'I'm Guided by My Inner Feelings—What Gets Me going, What Is Important to Create for Society'. *Cineuropa*, October 24. http://cineuropa.org/it.aspx?t=interview&l=en&did=265169.

Kuzichkin, Andrey. 2015. Andrey Kuzichkin: Voyna pod tonkoy skorlupoy istorii. *Rus.err.ee*, March 4. http://rus.err.ee/v/opinion/70d498a1-5bdc-465c-8260-2123cdf031b4.

Laaniste, Mari. 2011. Vastakad Vaated. Eesti Ja Eestlaste Käsitlustest Taasiseseisvusaegses Flmikunstis. *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* 20(3–4): 124–143. http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-84860556419&partnerID=tZOtx3y1.

Laimre, Marko. 2009. Kristina Norman's After-War. In *After-War*, ed. Kristina Norman, 29–48. Tartu: Center for Contemporary Arts.

Laulapidu2014. 2015. Press Materials. *Laulapidu2014*, December 13. http://2014.laulupidu.ee/en/media/press-materials/.

Lauristin, Marju, and Peeter Vihalemm. 2014. *Sustainability of Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Tradition*. Power Point Presentation, March 14. The Yale Conference of BSS.

Mälksoo, Maria. 2013. Liminality and Contested Europeanness: Conflicting Memory Politics in the Baltic Space. In *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration*, 65–84. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Makarychev, Andrey, and Alexandra Yatsyk. 2015. Refracting Europe: Biopolitical Conservatism and Art Protest in Putin's Russia. In *Russia's Foreign Policy: Ideas, Domestic Politics and External Relations*, ed. David Cadier, and Margot Light, 138–155. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

———. 2016. *Celebrating Borderlands in a Wider Europe: Nation and Identities in Ukraine, Georgia and Estonia*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Muravskaja, Tanja. 2010. Monuments. Artist's Statement. In *Let's Talk about Nationalism! Between Ideology and Identity at the Kumu Art Museum in 05.02.–25.04.2010*. Tartu: Tartu Art Museum, 34.

Nikitina, Yulia. 2014. Russia and the Baltic States: Problematizing the Soviet Legacy Discourse. *Nationalities Papers* 42(1): 1–7.

Norman, Kristina. 2009. Poetic Inverstigations. In *After-War*, ed.Kristina Norman, 7–28. Tartu: Center for Contemporary Arts.

Oll, M. Pomerants. 2015. Report: Estonia's Refugee Policy Needs Revision. *News.err.ee*,March24.http://news.err.ee/v/8f58a70b-aca5-4c0f-b00f-45def2e43901.

Peiker, Piret. 2016. Estonian Nationalism through the Postcolonial Lens. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 47(1): 113–132.

Person, Robert. 2014. *Resisting Hegemony: Transformations of National Identity under Foreign Occupation*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame.

Ranks, Konstantin. 2015. Pochemu Pribaltika buntuet protiv novoy migratsionnoy politiki ES. *Carnegie.ru*, May 31. http://carnegie.ru/publications/?fa=60255.

RBK. 2015. Na prazdnovanie 70-letiya Pobedy vlasti potratyat bolee 7 mlrd rub. *RBK*, April 30. http://www.rbc.ru/society/30/04/2015/553e729d9a794762bdb3ae84.

Repeckaite, Daiva. 2015. Why Are Baltic States Posing as Anti-Greece? *New Internationalist Magazine*, July 1. http://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2015/07/01/baltic-states-anti-greece.

Rockhill, Gabrielle, and Philip Watts, eds. 2009. Jacques Ranciere: History, Politics, Aesthetics. In *Jacques Ranciere: History, Politics, Aesthetics*. London: Duke University Press.

Rus.delfi.ee. 2007a. Rein, Sikk: 5000 russkikh—Na pevcheskiy prazdnik. *Rus.delfi.ee*, June 5. http://rus.delfi.ee/projects/opinion/5000-russkih-na-pevcheskij-prazdnik?id=16108142.

———. 2007b. Soyuz slavyanskikh obschestv stal "russkim". *Rus.delfi.ee*, December1.http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/estonia/soyuz-slavyanskih-obschestv-stal-russkim?id=17591532.

———. 2008. Savisaar: Organizatory prazdnika ne obratili vnimaniya na russkikh. *Rus.delfi.ee*, August 20. http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/estonia/savisaar-organizatory-prazdnika-ne-obratili-vnimaniya-na-russkih?id=19660581.

———. 2011. Savisaar: Dlya estontsev Prazdniki pesni i tantsa imeyut osoboe znachenie. *Rus.delfi.ee*, July 2. http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/estonia/savisaar-dlya-estoncev-prazdniki-pesni-i-tanca-imeyut-osoboe-znachenie?id=48803093.

———. 2014a. Na 'Slavyanskom venke' v Sillamyae neodnoznachnuyu reaktsiyu vyzval lozung "Slava Ukraine, geroyam slava!" *Rus.delfi.ee*, May 26. http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/virumaa/video-na-slavyanskom-venke-v-sillamyae-neodnoznachnuyu-reakciyu-vyzval-lozung-slava-ukraine-geroyam-slava?id=68753833.

———. 2014b. Organizator Prazdnika pesni ne isklyuchaet, chto sleduyuschiy raz mogut prozvuchat' pesni i na russkom yazyke. *Rus.delfi.ee*, July 8. http://rus.delfi.ee/archive/organizator-prazdnika-pesni-ne-isklyuchaet-chto-sleduyuschij-raz-mogut-prozvuchat-pesni-i-na-russkom-yazyke?id=69313305.

———. 2014c. Video Delfi: Signe Kivi: Mne bylo grustno, chto ya vchera ne uvidela russkikh natsional'nykh kostyumov. *Rus.delfi.ee*, July 5. http://rus.delfi.ee/archive/video-delfi-signe-kivi-mne-bylo-grustno-chto-ya-vchera-ne-uvidela-russkih-nacionalnyh-kostyumov?id=69299959.

———. 2015a. Muzhchina rasskazal, pochemu prishol na prazdnovanie Dnia Pobedy v Narve s flagom DNR. *Rus.delfi.ee*, May 9. http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/maailmasoda/video-delfi-muzhchina-rasskazal-pochemu-prishel-na-prazdnovanie-dnya-pobedy-v-narve-s-flagom-dnr?id=71434409.

———. 2015b. V Tallinne spleli 'Slavyanskiy venok'. *Rus.delfi.ee*, June 1. http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/estonia/foto-v-tallinne-spleli-slavyanskij-venok?id=71607589.

Rus.err.ee. 2015. Fil'm '1944' za mesyats posmotreli 100 000 zriteley. *Rus.err.ee*, March 25. http://rus.err.ee/v/culture/76b94af7-8968-41d5-a88d-3148b656151e.

Rus.postimees.ee. 2014. Nikolay Karaev: Põliseestlase poeg vs syn immigrant. *Rus.postimees.ee*, October 28. http://rus.postimees.ee/2969959/nikolaj-karaev-poliseestlase-poeg-vs-syn-immigranta.

Russkiy Mir. 2016. Estoniya: Osobennosti novogo natsionalizma. *Russkiy Mir*, March 4. http://vremya4e.com/world/print:page,1,31645-estoniya-osobennosti-novogo-nacionalizma.html.

Sakwa, Richard. 2015. Ukraine and the Postcolonial Condition. *OpenDemocracy Russia*, September 18. https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/richard-sakwa/ukraine-and-postcolonial-condition.

Simonian, Renald. 2011. S pozitsiy mezhdunarodnogo prava, sovetskoi okkupatsii Pribaltiki ne bylo. *Regnum*, 17 June. http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1416315.html.

Stolitsa.ee. 2015. "Slavyanskiy venok" zavershilsya gala-kontsertom. *Stolitsa.ee*, June 1. http://stolitsa.ee/100835.

Tambur, Siver. 2015. Estonia against EU Refugee Quota Plan. *News.err.ee*, November 5. http://news.err.ee/v/news/politics/bf7fdde2-6d69-4abd-86b6-5b4e145c7f0c/estonia-against-eu-refugee-quota-plan.

To Breath as One. 2009. To Breath as One Song: Celebration More Popular Than Michael Jackson's Last Concert in Estonia. *To Breath as One*. XXVI Song and Dance Festival web site, July 6. https://tobreatheasone.wordpress.com/2009/07/06/song-celebration-more-popular-than-michael-jackson's-last-concert-in-estonia/.

Triisberg, Airi. 2009. Between Nation and People: On Concepts of (Un) Belonging. In *After-War*, ed. Kristina Norman, 88–108. Tallinn: Centre for Contemporary Arts.

Turpakova, Liana. 2009. Igor' Sklyar: 'Ya ne znayu, chto takoe ruka Moskvy'. *Rus.delfi.ee*, March 25. http://rus.delfi.ee/press/mk_estonia/igor-sklyar-ya-ne-znayu-chto- takoe-ruka-moskvy?id=23544033.

Žižek, Slavoj. 2001. *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzystof Kieslowski between Theory and Post-Theory*. Suffolk: BFI.

———. 2012. 'Suture', Forty Years Later. In *Concept and Form. Vol. 2: Interviews and Essays on Cahiers Pour l'Analyse*, eds. Peter Hallward and Knox Peden, 147–168. London and New York: Verso book.

CHAPTER 10

The "Russian World" and the Securitization of Identity Boundaries in Latvia

Angela Kachuyevski

Western European, Eastern European and Scandinavian cultures converge in the Baltic, making this region a rich subject for the study of borders and boundaries that encompass diffuse identities, policies of inclusion and exclusion, and competing normative ideological orders. Within this context, Latvia offers an excellent illustration of these dynamics given demographics and the corresponding tension between Latvia's stated commitment to European norms of democracy and human rights, and its policies that have resulted in an exclusionary polity. The inconsistency between European Union (EU) norms, which are based upon an integrative model that is essentially post-national, and Latvia's nation-building policy, which is designed to (re)construct a Latvian nation-state, has exacerbated regional tensions that have persisted despite more than two decades of Latvian independence and full integration into the European order.

Thus, despite predictions of well-known social scientists, and in contrast to the assumptions underlying official governmental policies on societal integration, language acquisition and economic incentives have not resulted in the widespread assimilation of the Russian-speaking minority into Latvian society. Conflicting historical memories, language prefer-

A. Kachuyevski (✉)
Arcadia University, Glenside, PA, USA

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_10

ences and differing conceptualizations of who constitutes the legitimate polity continue to separate Russian speakers from their Latvian counterparts, with consequences not only for domestic but also for regional intergroup relations. Recently, the politicization of the "Russian World" and the Ukraine crisis have collectively exacerbated tensions throughout the region as Russian policy is seen as a realistic threat to the national security of neighbouring states, a factor that is leading to potential conflict between Russian-speaking minorities and their state of residence. Indeed, although small, significant numbers of Russian speakers support Russian policy and oppose their own government. This has led to the securitization of human rights issues such as choice of language and access to media, and has deepened suspicion of the loyalty of the Russian-speaking population among political elites.

In this context, it is timely to consider the forces shaping the identity of Russian speakers and to consider the impact securitization has on divisions in these societies. In this chapter, I draw upon the concept of identity boundaries to explore how border-locking dynamics might be transformed into border-unlocking dynamics and how identity threats might be deconstructed. I begin with a brief discussion of the challenges of societal integration in Latvia before turning to outline the analytic framework. I draw upon the concept of societal security and securitization theory to capture how and why issues typically seen as belonging to the minority rights and human rights fields have been recast as existential threats to the Latvian state. I then draw upon identity boundaries as an analytic tool to assess how the intersubjective process of boundary construction is challenged by regional politics, but opens up possible avenues of greater inclusion on a domestic level.

Identity, Language and Societal Integration

David Laitin's influential work (Laitin 1998) explored potential trajectories for the identity of the Russian-speaking population[1] left living outside of Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, in what Russia has termed the "near abroad". In his analysis he employed a rational choice approach using a tipping point model to capture how social pressures and rapidly changing circumstances might create incentives for widespread shifts in identity. He theorized that uncertainty about their social and economic position in the newly independent states would likely encourage Russian speakers to learn the titular language and assimi-

late into the new majority culture. Although the empirical research found, in the case of Latvia, no connection between economic incentives and willingness to assimilate (Laitin 1998, 254), Laitin attributed this to the relatively high out-group acceptance among the Russian-speaking population. In essence, the relatively positive view Russian speakers in Latvia had toward assimilation (Laitin 1998, 252), together with hypothesized future increased economic incentives led to the somewhat mixed conclusion that, while it was possible that a Russian-speaking "nationality" could emerge as a dominant identity, language acquisition in Latvia would more likely lead to assimilation and societal integration (Laitin 1998, 358–359).

Laitin relied on a rational choice model that, by design, does not capture the subjectivity of group identities that are in many ways shaped by the complex historical and social context of minority/majority relations in the region. Further, it is unclear that language acquisition in and of itself is a good proxy for assimilation. Laitin himself acknowledges "one might argue that adopting a new language does not automatically mean one has adopted a new identity" (Laitin 1998, 23). Yet, he presses his point that Russian speakers in Estonia who sought to master the Estonian language and qualify for Estonian citizenship were laying "the foundation for a constructed Estonian identity" for their grandchildren (Laitin 1998, 23).

Official government approaches to societal integration in Latvia have also relied heavily upon promoting language acquisition as a core objective. Yet, societal integration, which inherently is about inclusion, has been hampered by the distinctly exclusionary nature of nation-building after the restoration of independence in Latvia. Given the large increase of the number of non-Latvians living in Latvia during the Soviet period, and doubts about their loyalty to the Latvian state, the Russian-speaking minority "was perceived as a threat to Latvian democratic statehood" and was, therefore, excluded from automatic citizenship (Ijabs 2015, 3; Patsiurko and Wallace 2014, 195). The result was a form of ethnic democracy (Smith 1996) with nearly a third of the residents of Latvia in 1992 holding only the citizenship of the Soviet Union, a state that no longer existed. Yet, this exclusionary choice was not meant to institute permanent ethnic dominance; rather, "the initial exclusion of the Soviet-era immigrants from the Latvian *demos* was seen as a precondition for democracy, and a particular type of nation-building, centred on the ethnic Latvian nation, as a necessary limitation of democracy for the sake of democracy itself" (Ijabs 2015, 3). Nonetheless, the exclusionary nature of the policy, and its widespread

impact, "helped to harden ethnic boundaries between groups and caused resentment" (Patsiurko and Wallace 2014, 195).

The process of "returning to Europe" meant that the status of Russian speakers and the democratic nature of Latvia's nation-building became a matter of regional politics. Involvement by European institutions such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and the European Union (EU) encouraged Latvia to seek solutions to the very large number of non-citizen permanent residents in a manner consistent with human and minority rights norms, and in accord with European legal and normative commitments (Galbreath 2006). These efforts gave real meaning to the normative order in Europe and also counterbalanced Russia's accusations of human rights abuses. Beginning in the late 1990s, this resulted in a concerted governmental effort to promote societal integration on the basis of knowledge of the Latvian language and on expressed loyalty to the state.

Nonetheless, despite considerable effort devoted to these programs, widespread language acquisition among minorities, and more than twenty years of existence as an independent state and eleven years as a member of the EU, persistent divisions exist between the majority group of Latvians and the substantial Russian-speaking population. That is, human rights and minority rights reforms, legal guarantees and bilingualism have not resolved political and social divisions in Latvia. Indeed, despite general agreement on many social and civic issues with Latvians, many Russian speakers are alienated from the Latvian state (Ijabs 2015, 6). One explanation for this persistent division is that government integration policy is only one factor to consider when assessing societal integration, which is also shaped by the inherited historical legacy of intergroup relations and by regional developments such as European integration and the relationship with Russia (Muižnieks 2010, 8). Within this context, questions about the loyalty of the Russian-speaking population have recently resurfaced given the conflict in Ukraine. There is concern about Russian policy and the potential for conflict to spread, and there is suspicion within some circles in the political and media elite as to the possibility of a fifth column in Latvia. In an effort to better understand possible disaffection within the minority community, the Latvian government sponsored a survey in the summer of 2014 in order to assess minority opinion and gauge their sense of belonging to Latvia (SKDS Survey 2014).

This survey unveiled some interesting data with both positive and cautionary implications for the prospects for societal integration in Latvia. On

the positive side, the survey found high levels of a sense of belonging to Latvia and high levels of knowledge of the Latvian language. For example, when asked about their sense of belonging to the physical territory of Latvia, 50.7 % of respondents answered "very much" while another 23.9 % responded "mostly" (SKDS Survey 2014, 10). Further, 48.3 % of all respondents and 78.3 % of 18–24-year olds reported their knowledge of the Latvian language as either "fluent" or "good" (SKDS Survey 2014, 27). These data indicate that language acquisition rates are rather good, which would seem to signal success of official societal integration programs, leading to the reasonable conclusion that language no longer serves as a barrier to social cohesion.

Yet, in the survey, the vast majority of respondents reported that they receive the bulk of their news information from Russian-language media rather than from Latvian sources (SKDS Survey 2014, 37–38). Given that most Russian-language media have close ties to their Russian counterparts, there is reasonable suspicion that these media outlets are politically driven and may serve to garner support for official Kremlin policies and positions rather than as an unbiased independent source of information. In the context of the conflict in Ukraine, these concerns have taken on additional urgency. Asked about whom they support in the Ukrainian–Russian conflict, 41 % of respondents indicated neither side, while 35.6 % indicated support for the Russians, and only 15 % support for the Ukrainians (SKDS Survey 2014, 51), quite a contrast to the official Latvian and EU position. Further, a substantial minority of 28.7 % indicate support for the Duma's decision to authorize Putin to deploy troops to Ukraine (SKDS Survey 2014, 51). The striking disparity between the Latvian government's position and these reported views may be explained by the fact that 46.07 % of respondents report finding the Russian media either "mostly" or "completely" objective, while only 9.7 % find the Russian media "not at all" objective (SKDS Survey 2014, 51).

These findings make clear that while there are clear prospects for social integration in Latvia, language acquisition is perhaps a necessary but nonetheless insufficient factor. Further, successful political and social integration is dependent upon acceptance of the persistent salience of cultural identity and upon regional factors, most importantly, Russian policy. In the next sections I explore forces that react to these factors by encouraging border-locking through securitization.

Border-Locking Dynamics: Societal Security and the Securitization of Identity Boundaries

Securitization is the process through which an issue that is not a traditional security concern is constructed as an existential threat. Articulated by the Copenhagen School as a way to explain the proliferation of perceived security threats outside the traditional politico-military sphere, this critical approach to security studies explores how security threats are the result of intersubjective discursive construction rather than existing objective material objects. The process begins when agents, usually political elites or other opinion leaders, engage in a "speech act" to construct an issue as an existential threat (Waever 1995, 55; Buzan et al. 1998, 24). If the speech act succeeds in convincing the audience of the validity of the posited threat, only then does the issue becomes securitized (Balzacq 2005); thus the audience is an important part of the discursive process of threat construction (Buzan et al. 1998, 26). Once an issue is securitized, the elites use the constructed threat as justification to legitimize extraordinary action that would not otherwise be acceptable. One might, therefore, conceive of the process as a political act, since elites determine what to frame as an existential threat, and use the public's acceptance as justification that allows them to legitimately undertake extraordinary action (Waever 1995; Williams 2003).

Securitization does not occur in isolation and is therefore better understood within the historical, social and situational context in which it occurs (Balzacq 2011; McDonald 2008; Stritzel 2011). Securitizing moves are connected to other securitizing moves in the past and the present, and are themselves relational and subjective. They are given meaning through the social context in which they occur and may constitute "interconnecting securitizations" that involve the state, the resident minority and the kin state (Buzan and Waever 2003, 409). Thus non-traditional security threats can, through securitization, be constructed through complex, contextualized intersubjective discursive processes and result in societal divisions that are not confined within a state's borders but encompass a region.

A related concept, societal security, posits identity itself as a security issue (Buzan 1983; Waever et al. 1993). In this construct, it is not the physical security of the state or the maintenance of state sovereignty that is at stake, but rather the identity of its society, the meaning of who "we" are (Waever et al. 1993, 26). Society is defined as "a clustering of institutions combined with a feeling of common identity" (Waever et al. 1993,

21), while identity, in turn, can be understood as "shared experiences of distinctive social relations and representations of social relations" (Tilly 1997, 59). Social identity theory sees identity formation and maintenance as the product of relational processes wherein groups define themselves in relation to others. That is, in-group membership is determined in relation to the out-group (Tajfel 1970, 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979, 1986), not by inherent identity traits. The process of group identity formation tends to exaggerate differences between the in-group and the out-group, and to exaggerate commonalities within the in-group, in order to justify categorization. The result is that individual identity becomes tied to the group identity, which in turn is shaped by judgments about other groups (Ross 2000).

Societal security is, therefore, the security of group identity as reflected in common language, cultural and religious practices, and group beliefs. In cases where national borders do not neatly align with societal boundaries, the prospects for societal insecurity are higher. That is, when state borders and identity borders do not match, the majority group's cultural identity may be threatened by the presence of minorities, and the minority's cultural identity may be threatened by the pressure to assimilate into the majority culture. Further, in cases where the minority comprises a sizable population, or where relations with a neighbouring kin state are tense, the potential threat to the majority's societal security could result in securitization, whereby the perceived threat to identity becomes so acute that the "other" becomes an existential threat to society. This raises the question as to whether or not minority rights will always be a threat to societal security. On the one hand, the maintenance of identity requires groups to resist assimilation in order to survive as a collective "we" (Roe 2004). Yet, on the other, it seems possible to construct a narrative of multiculturalism that could offer space for both groups to maintain their distinct identities within the common polity (Jutila 2006; Fein 2005; Melvin 1995).

The concept of identity boundaries offers a useful tool to illustrate how societal insecurity and securitization can lead to exclusionary border-locking policies. Identity boundaries are a social construct, created through the process of group differentiation as perceptual borders are drawn to distinguish "us" from "them". That is, identity boundaries are what separate the in-group from the out-group. The process of boundary construction and maintenance is inherently relational; boundaries are created and shaped through interaction with others (Tilly 2005). This allows for flexibility such that identity boundaries can change over time to recon-

stitute who legitimately belongs to the collective "we". Yet, when societal security is threatened, identity boundaries may become securitized, resulting in more narrow and fixed definitions of the legitimate collective polity, which will likely stiffen resistance to more inclusive conceptualizations.

Group identity, however, can exaggerate actual differences, and even denigrate others as justification for exclusion (Tajfel 1970, 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979, 1986). Further, these perceived intergroup differences may not be shared by the out-group. That is, negative boundary construction may not be reciprocal; the out-group may well disagree with the posited characteristics that presumably differentiate and separate them from the in-group, and may object to being excluded from the collective. In ethnically divided societies, particularly those where the majority group defines the legitimate polity in ethnic terms, the majority may construct an identity boundary based upon ethnicity, not civic identity, and may associate the minority with their ethnic kin in neighbouring states. Yet, fundamental questions of national identity, such as who legitimately belongs to the polity, are contested in divided societies. The majority may perceive the minority as part of an outside "other", yet the minority may perceive itself as an integral part of the nation, which they define in non-ethnic terms (Kachuyevski and Olesker 2014, 306).

The Regional Context: European Integration and the "Russian World"

The drawing of identity boundaries between groups in Latvian society and the securitization of group identity is not solely determined by social relations on the domestic level. These phenomena are inextricably linked to, and indeed may well be driven by, wider regional dynamics. First among these are the physical, material borders separating the European Union (EU) from the Russian Federation, which results in certain policies of exclusion and separation. Equally important are the perceptual, subjective borders that may be defined on either side in social, economic and cultural terms (Makarychev and Yatsyk 2014). From the EU side, the normative framing of the ongoing European project has in recent years taken on increasing material characteristics in the realm of policy formation and implementation in the "neighbourhood". The objective has been to broadly encourage security and stability through economic and political ties without necessarily extending formal membership.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) thus is framed as both a policy to increase security and a contribution to the wider normative European project. This is achieved through an attempt to balance two narratives: a security narrative that focuses on addressing weak governance and frozen conflicts in the east, and the resulting security threats such as organized crime, illegal migration and terrorism; and a normative narrative that focuses on good neighbourly relations, cooperation and "extending the European peace project for the purpose of avoiding the creation of new dividing lines in Europe" (Christou 2010, 415). The conceptual foundation of the ENP, therefore, is both normative and strategic in that the objectives are increased prosperity, stability and security, yet these are pursued through the proliferation of shared values, including democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights.

The ENP included partner countries to the East and the South of EU member states, meaning that it included interested Central and Eastern European states and also the countries along the Mediterranean basin. After the accession of Baltic, Central and Eastern European countries to the EU in 2004, the concept of the "neighbourhood" and its salience to member states clearly shifted. In 2009, under the auspices of the ENP, Poland and Sweden prompted the creation of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) as a facilitative mechanism for deeper and closer cooperation between the EU and interested Eastern European states. Multilateral cooperation includes cooperation in good governance, economic integration, energy security and social contact. Although more specific and targeted than the broader ENP, the EaP also includes normative and security aspects as it provides substantial, broad EU support for democratic and market-based reform in the east in an effort to promote mutual security through enhanced political and economic stability in the region.

In the EaP, the criteria by which democratic governance is assessed include free and fair elections, guaranteed civic rights such as freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association, an independent judiciary, available tools to battle corruption, democratic control over the military, and a strong and vibrant civil society. In addition to incentives to improve governance, economic integration has comprised an important part of the project. Association Agreements, which include Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA), are an integral part of the economic integration process. Through the creation of a free trade zone, accompanied by requirements to meet EU standards for business, finance, banking and trade, the hope was to build greater prosperity, stronger

governance, and regional interdependence, all of which would result in greater stability and security in the region.

Consistently throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s, Russia viewed expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a national security threat, yet only began to view EU expansion in the same way in the early 2000s. For example, after the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine, Moscow became increasingly concerned about the prospects of closer cooperation between Ukraine and the EU (Feklyunina 2015, 10). Concerns intensified after the creation of the EaP: "If previously the expansion of the EU's influence was not interpreted as a threat to Russia, in 2009, with the introduction of the Eastern Partnership Program, Moscow saw it as a way to isolate Russia from its neighbours" (Zevelev 2014, 5). Coming in the wake of Russia's war in Georgia and a continent-wide gas crisis, the EU effort to increase stability in the region was viewed suspiciously in Russia due to the proposed formula of cooperation on energy security and the creation of Association Agreements which would preclude membership in the Eurasian Customs Union. Indeed, the EU's ability to achieve its objectives in the east has been constrained "by a Russian security narrative that is underpinned by a Westphalian sovereign logic and governance and governmentality practices that are aimed at retaining the eastern neighbourhood within the Russian 'sphere of influence'" (Christou 2010, 424). Hence, what could be seen from one side as the spread of a normative order that would bring increased stability and prosperity to the region could be viewed from the other side as an existential threat to vital interests.

While from the EU side we see an intermingling of traditional security concerns with transnational normative rhetoric focused on shared values and liberal institutions, from the Russian side current policy appears excessively protective of Russia's sovereign state interests and seems to reject many of the norms underpinning the EU narrative. Interestingly, however, neither approach to regional security is tied to clear geographic borders: rather, they each adhere in their own way to broader ideas and norms that purportedly transcend state borders. In Russia this is reflected in current policy that seemingly resurrects nineteenth century thinking about the meaning, purpose and significance of Russia. At its core the "Russian Idea" began simply as questioning the idea of Russia itself. What is Russia? What does it mean to be Russian? More broadly, this discourse responded to the longstanding question of whether Russia is part of or separate from European civilization by arguing that Russia comprises

a unique culture that unites Eastern and Western traditions (Berdyaev 1947). The resulting debate continues up to the current day and can be organized around two fundamental questions about Russian identity. The first deals with Russia's relationship with Europe. Is Russia part of Europe, with whom it shares not only a continent, but also Christian values and long historical experience? Or is Russia inherently Eurasian and, if so, does this mean Russia is both European and Asian, or is Russia separate and distinct from both? The second deals with Russia's national character. Is Russia a nation-state, an empire or a multinational federation? (Laruelle 2014, 315)

Russia's current state-driven national identity project draws upon these perspectives to develop a concept of Russia as a distinct civilization that transcends Russia's current territorial borders to constitute a wider "Russian World" (Zevelev 2014, 5). This term may best be understood as "an updated version of the ancient perception of a shared civilizational space" (Laruelle 2015, 3). Although its use dates back to medieval accounts of ancient Rus', in the nineteenth century other terms such as the "Russian idea" discussed above were more favoured (Laruelle 2015, 3). Resurrected in the post-Soviet period, the "Russian World" concept revived the philosophical approach to Russian identity (Laruelle 2015, 4) and reflected a primarily intellectual discussion and debate about Russia's place in the world and the meaning of the Soviet past. The concept, however, gained concrete policy import in 2001, when President Vladimir Putin, speaking to the First World Congress of Compatriots, referred to a "Russian World" that extends far beyond Russia's geographic and even ethnic boundaries (Putin 2001; Laruelle 2015, 6).

In 2007 President Putin further incorporated the concept into official discourse in his yearly address to the Federal Assembly by referring to the Russian language as a "language of the historical brotherhood of nations, truly a language of international communication" that is associated with "the living space of a multimillion Russian world that is, of course, significantly wider that Russia itself" (Putin 2007; Feklyunina 2015, 11) This increased the visibility of the concept in foreign policy and marshalled consensus about four key points in an otherwise often inconsistent narrative (Feklyunina 2015, 11). The first point asserted that the "Russian World" is "a *naturally existing* civilisational community" (Feklyunina 2015, 11). This point emphasized the cultural rather than ethnic basis of collective identity, with the Russian language and Orthodox Christianity as primary markers. The second point emphasized the "common past" of

the "Russian World" and cast the current separation into sovereign independent states as a negative aberration that resulted in the division of a spiritually unified people (Feklyunina 2015, 12). The third point posited, despite the focus elsewhere on the multinational and multiethnic character of the "Russian World", a hierarchy within the civilization that placed Russia in a privileged position. Accordingly, "Russia was imagined as the heart of the community: belonging to the 'Russian World' implied identification with Russia rather than with the Rus" (Feklyunina 2015, 12). Finally, "although sharing with Europe its Christian roots, the "Russian World" was imagined as distinct from—and superior to—it in the way in which it retained those Christian values that were seen as lost elsewhere" (Feklyunina 2015, 12).

This concept has particular salience for analyzing Russian policy in the "near abroad", which, since the fall of the Soviet Union, has in Russia been consistently framed as not truly foreign and not fully sovereign. Rather it constitutes a special zone of influence for Russia, who sees the rights of Russian-speaking "compatriots" as a vital interest, as articulated in its Foreign Policy Concept. Point thirty-nine of the Concept articulates several objectives in this regard, including "protecting the rights and legitimate interests of compatriots living abroad", as well as "supporting consolidation of organizations of compatriots to enable them to effectively uphold their rights in the countries of residence while preserving the cultural and ethnic identity" and, finally, "facilitating the learning and wider use of the Russian language" (Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2013). Maintaining organized cultural ties is therefore paired with an institutionalized structure for political action, clearly tying soft power with a broader effort to maintain influence in the region.

Since Putin's return to the presidency, the "Russian World" concept has taken on greater significance, as has his frequently invoked characterization of Russians as a "divided people" (Putin 2014a; Zevelev 2014, 4). These two constructs evolved from a political movement in the 1990s that sought protection for Russian minorities in the "near abroad", and also potentially the modification of post-Soviet borders to incorporate Belarus and much of Ukraine, among other territories, into the Russian Federation (Laruelle 2015, 7).

This potential is clearly illustrated in official statements following the annexation of Crimea, wherein President Putin identifies the "Russian World" in broad cultural terms: "When I speak of Russians and Russian-speaking citizens I am referring to those people who consider themselves

part of the broad Russian community, they may not necessarily be ethnic Russians, but they consider themselves Russian people." (Putin 2014b) And, justifying Russian action in Crimea, his characterization of Russia and Ukraine as "not simply close neighbours but, as I have said many times already, we are one people. Kiev is the mother of Russian cities. Ancient Rus is our common source" (Putin 2014a). By pointing to culture and historic ties to justify Russian actions in Ukraine, President Putin has essentially politicized cultural identity and has thus contributed to tension throughout the region.

Securitization of Identity Boundaries in Latvia

Despite the fact that Latvia is not an unambiguous part of the *core* "Russian World" as articulated by Russian officials, the rather inconsistent definition of the concept, the expansive reach of the definition of "compatriots", and demographics in Latvia have collectively served to exacerbate identity boundaries. The ongoing crisis in Ukraine, and the clear connection to the above Russian policies, has securitized already divisive issues including historical memory, language preference, access to media in one's preferred language and the question of who is a legitimate member of the Latvian polity.

As outlined above, identity boundaries are an intersubjective social construct created to distinguish "us" from "them" in order to provide the basis for group identity. Yet, group identity can also exaggerate difference and even denigrate others as justification for exclusion. The boundaries, most importantly, may not be the same for each group. That is, groups may not see the boundary in the same terms: they may not agree on how groups are separated. In divided societies, where the national identity, which identifies who is a legitimate part of the collective "we", is itself contested, the majority may see the minority as part of an outside "other" even if the minority does not share this perception.

In the Latvian case, for example, the Russian-speaking population may perceive of itself as distinct from both Russians in Russia as well as from Latvians, yet be treated by the Latvian majority as one large group—"Russians". That is, the Russian-speaking population in Latvia might construct an identity boundary that differentiates their group from the Latvian majority, but also clearly separates them from Russians in Russia, while the Latvian majority perceives the Russian-speaking minority essentially as the "other". In previous research, my colleague and I define this

hypothetical scenario as a "besieged regime", where the majority does not accept the minority as fully loyal to the state, and may act to marginalize the minority's ability to present a threat to the ethnically defined national identity (Kachuyevski and Olesker 2014, 308). The resulting divisions over national identity can result in discrimination and disaffection which, through exclusion, could result in a hardening of the identity boundary separating the two major parts of Latvian society, essentially locking the perceptual border between the two groups.

Conflicting historical memories, language preferences and differing conceptualizations of who constitutes the legitimate polity represent critical identity markers that separate Russian speakers from Latvians and significantly contribute to societal insecurity in Latvia. Indeed, the integration policy of the Latvian government states that the "Latvian constituent nation and national minorities form the Latvian people. Latvian identity—the Latvian language, culture and social memory—unifies the Latvian people. It is the common foundation connecting all the people of Latvia" (Cultural Ministry of the Republic of Latvia 2011, 8), yet identifies "conflicting social memory based on the Soviet ideological interpretation of the occupation of Latvia, Latvia's fate in the World War II and life under the Soviet regime" (Cultural Ministry of the Republic of Latvia 2011, 11) as a major challenge to social cohesion in Latvia. In the context of Moscow's "Russian World" project and the Ukraine crisis, securitization of these issues makes it very difficult to reconcile the incompatible positions held by each side because these issues are not only highly salient to group identity, they now constitute a central core of what it means to be "us". While a thorough treatment of these three issues is beyond the scope of this chapter, a brief discussion serves to illustrate how they have impacted identity boundaries and contributed to divisions in Latvian society.

The historical memory of WWII and the Soviet period has high salience for both Latvians and Russian speakers, as evidenced by commemoration practices and public discourse. Yet, despite the official position that identities are not exclusive, but rather complementary (Cultural Ministry of the Republic of Latvia 2011, 13), the historical narratives so critical to group identity are nearly mutually exclusive to the extent that one group's narrative renders the narrative of the other illegitimate. While efforts to establish a clear historical record in Latvia have resulted in more diverse views on WWII experience (Onken 2007, 34), nonetheless there are two dominant and oppositional narratives that shape general group under-

standing of historical experience. For example, from the Latvian perspective the Soviet Union was a hostile invading force and the entire Soviet period constitutes an occupation characterized by deportations, tyranny and forced "Russification". Accordingly, a substantial number of Latvians believe that those who think that the Soviet Union liberated Latvia from fascism during WWII simply cannot be considered Latvian patriots (Cultural Ministry of the Republic of Latvia 2011, 30).

In contrast, the dominant Russian narrative, with which many Russian speakers agree (Cheskin 2013, 290), casts the Soviet role in WWII in a much more positive light, wherein the role of the heroic Red Army in liberating Latvia and defeating fascism deserves respect and honour. Further, this view stresses that occupation is not an accurate framing of the Soviet period since Latvia was incorporated into the governing structures of the USSR. Accordingly, the Soviet period is better understood as an annexation, removing from Soviet-era immigrants the stigma of "occupiers" found in nationalist discourse.

Yet, "Russian speakers and the Russian language are seen as a threat to Latvia's core values, language and integrity; they are also perceived as remnants of occupation and as disloyal to the Latvian state" (Cheskin 2013, 288). Further, "a different understanding of the events of WWII manifested by a considerable part of the society jeopardizes not only the Latvian national identity but also its geopolitical identity or affiliation to the Western world" (Cultural Ministry of the Republic of Latvia 2011, 30). Hence, negative historical experience with Russia contributes to negative boundary construction in contemporary Latvia, illustrating that "no thorough analysis of domestic debates and policies that involve questions of historical interpretation can ignore the impact of outside actors" (Onken 2007, 24). Accordingly, Putin's invitation to Baltic presidents to attend the 60th anniversary 9 May celebrations in Moscow in 2005 "*de facto* meant 'being asked to celebrate the invasion, occupation and demographic decimation of their lands by Stalin's Red Army and Sovietisation policies'" (Onken 2007, 33), since participation in the commemoration would imply acceptance of the Russian narrative.

In addition, language preference, despite widespread bilingualism, maintains its salience as an important identity marker. Indeed, the mere existence of "Russian speakers" as a demographic group attests to the importance of language in creating and maintaining identity boundaries. Conflicts over language accordingly centre on the status of Russian and its use in education and in the public sphere. Minority rights norms

assert the right of minorities to education in their mother tongue, but European practice also recognizes the right of the state to promote the state language. To this end, the Latvian government sought to increase knowledge of the Latvian language among minorities through education reforms. Beginning in 2004, all minority language schools were required to move from a monolingual system to a system of bilingual education that included at least 60 % instruction in Latvian (Cheskin 2013, 300). This led to concerns about the quality of education for Russian-speaking students as standards were seen as rather poor in minority language schools (Patsiurko and Wallace 2014, 196), and subsequently led to widespread protests in Riga and other major cities.

Knowledge of the state language is seen by Latvians as an important indicator of loyalty to the Latvian state and as a necessary precondition for societal integration, as stated clearly by official policy positions: "the Latvian language and cultural space create the foundation for national identity" (Cultural Ministry of the Republic of Latvia 2011, 19). Yet, at the same time the ability to retain their culture, which is centred on the Russian language, is equally important to Russian speakers. Thus, language fundamentally illustrates the identity boundaries separating Latvians from Russian speakers. For Latvians, Russians should assimilate into Latvian culture and communicate in Latvian in all public spheres of life. To this end, the government notes that "even though Latvian language skills have increased significantly in the past twenty years, a number of trends still indicate that the use of the Latvian language in the public sphere is not showing equal achievements" due to widespread use of the Russian language in large cities, especially in the service sector and in private business (Cultural Ministry of the Republic of Latvia 2011, 21).

For Russians, however, integration is distinct from assimilation and should be based upon an acceptance of the multiethnic and multicultural character of contemporary Latvia. This framing is, however, threatening to Latvian societal security, as demonstrated by the highly emotional and highly divergent positions taken on the 2012 referendum on recognizing Russian as a second official state language. While Russian speakers involved in organizing the referendum pointed to "Latvian ethnic 'totalitarianism' that wants to deprive Russian families of their children", Latvians saw the "fact that the majority of Russophones do not recognize Latvian as the only state language in Latvia … as a sign of the disintegration of Latvian society that might jeopardize the very existence of independent, democratic Latvia" (Ijabs 2015, 11).

A final area of difference concerns the question of who legitimately can claim membership in the Latvian polity. From the Latvian perspective, only citizens can fully stake such a claim, although non-citizens do have rights as members of Latvian society. After the restoration of independence in 1991, citizenship was automatically granted only to those residents of Soviet Latvia who could establish a legal link to the interwar independent Latvia. The reasoning behind this decision is a critical component of Latvian identity and is tied to group historical memory and to official policy on language: when the Soviet Union collapsed the official Latvian policy was based upon the legal reasoning that the Soviet period was one of occupation, in which case the Latvian republic never ceased to exist and only citizens of that republic and their descendants could legitimately claim citizenship (Ijabs 2015, 4). Essentially, Latvians constituted the "core nation". All others, namely those who immigrated to Latvia during the Soviet period, would need to apply for naturalization, even if they were born in Latvia or had lived there for many years.

This issue had, and to a certain extent continues to have, the greatest impact on the possibility for intergroup conflict and indeed reflected the construction of a hard identity boundary by the majority to exclude the minority from the new polity; that is, the conflict over citizenship was "a contest over the (re)construction of boundaries in society" (Eglitis 2002, 65). European involvement eventually balanced the right of Latvia to set its own citizenship policy against the rights of the nearly thirty percent of the population who did not initially qualify for citizenship and thus found themselves without citizenship in any country. Latvia "assumed dubious leadership in Europe on the number of 'non-citizens' without citizenship status", a group that reached 365,000 in number (Patsiurko and Wallace 2014, 188). Pressure and set conditions for integration into European institutions resulted over the next decade in a relaxing of naturalization requirements (Galbreath 2006), but the process of exclusion generated enormous grievances in the Russian-speaking community (Herd and Löfgren 2001, 281), which is reflected in continuing isolation from the state (Ijabs 2015, 6).

Is Desecuritization Possible?

While these differing perceptions of group belonging could contribute to societal tension, indeed even regional conflict in this case, there are opportunities for desecuritization if the majority and minority can move toward

a less contested, perhaps even shared understanding of national identity (Kachuyevski and Olesker 2014, 312). In the Latvian case, ample research establishes that the Russian-speaking minority does indeed possess a complex, nuanced identity in which they identify culturally with Russia but also identify territorially and civically with Latvia (Cheskin 2013; Cheskin 2015; SKDS Survey 2014). Further, they tend to identify as a group based upon language, which removes a direct connection between language and ethnicity as "identification with language became one way of escaping narrow ethnic labels" (Patsiurko and Wallace 2014, 198). Finally, improved knowledge of Latvian, particularly after the 2004 school reforms, indicates that language is no longer a barrier to societal integration (SKDS Survey 2014).

These factors all point to the possibility for desecuritization in Latvia. Yet, the brief above discussion of contested historical memory, conflicting views on what status the Russian language should have in contemporary Latvia, and grievances over exclusionary citizenship policies serve as cautionary points and indicate that identity boundaries may need to be renegotiated in order for desecuritization to be sustained. Indeed, despite linguistic assimilation, shared civic values and similar socio-economic statuses, Russian speakers do not fully feel a part of Latvian society as they do not feel accepted by the majority into the dominant concept of "us." Sustained desecuritization and true societal integration will need to reconcile group narratives on these three issues. This will require great effort, given that current narratives imbed each group's identity in positions that deny the fundamental legitimacy of the other's narrative.

Within the current security environment, there are certain to be additional pressures given Russian policy, but it is important to distinguish Latvian Russian speakers from Russian policy, as research shows they themselves do. Relaxed policy on supporting Russian language media and a reconciliation of historical memory would go a long way to build upon the sense of belonging to Latvia that Russian speakers already have and, in fact, would limit the ability of Russia to play a negative role in Latvian society. Alternatively, more directed steps to act against Russian influence by limiting access to media and controlling the use of the Russian language are likely to result in increased disaffection and feelings of discrimination among Russian speakers. Fully integrating Russian speakers into Latvian society, therefore, is the best option to unlock perceptual borders inside Latvia, but may also improve regional relations.

Note

1. The term "Russian speakers" refers to those nationalities living in former Soviet republics who speak Russian as their main language of social communication. They may or may not be ethnic Russians.

References

Balzacq, Thierry. 2005. The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context. *European Journal of International Relations* 11: 171–201.

———. 2011. *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*. London: Routledge.

Berdyaev, Nikolai. 1947. *The Russian Idea*. London: Geoffrey Bles.

Buzan, Barry. 1983. *People, States, Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*. Brighton, Sussex: Weatsheaf Books.

Buzan, Barry, and Ole Waever. 2003. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buzan, Barry, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Cheskin, Ammon. 2013. Exploring Russian-Speaking Identity from Below: The Case of Latvia. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 44: 287–312.

———. 2015. Identity and Integration of Russian Speakers in the Baltic States: A Framework for Analysis. *Ethnopolitics* 14: 72–93.

Christou, George. 2010. European Union Security Logics to the East: The European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. *European Security* 19: 413–430.

Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. 2013. Accessed 27 February 2016. http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/122186.

Culture Ministry of the Republic of Latvia. 2011. *Guidelines for National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Politics (2012–2018)*. Riga.

Eglitis, Daina Stukuls. 2002. *Imagining the Nation: History, Modernity, and Revolution in Latvia*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Fein, Lisa C. 2005. Symbolic Boundaries and National Borders: The Construction of an Estonian Russian Identity. *Nationalities Papers* 33: 333–344.

Feklyunina, Valentina. 2015. Soft Power and Identity: Russia, Ukraine and the 'Russian World(s)'. *European Journal of International Relations*. doi:10.1177/1354066115601200.

Galbreath, David J. 2006. European Integration Through Democratic Conditionality: Latvia in the Context of Minority Rights. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 14: 69–87.

Herd, Graeme P., and Joan Löfgren. 2001. 'Societal Security', the Baltic States and EU Integration. *Cooperation and Conflict* 36: 273–296.

Ijabs, Ivars. 2015. After the Referendum: Militant Democracy and Nation-Building in Latvia. *East European Politics & Societies*. doi:10.1177/0888325415593630.

Jutila, Matti. 2006. Desecuritizing Minority Rights: Against Determinism. *Security Dialogue* 37: 167–185.

Kachuyevski, Angela, and Ronnie Olesker. 2014. Divided Societies and Identity Boundaries: A Conflict Analysis Framework. *International Journal of Conflict Management* 25: 304–321.

Laitin, David. 1998. *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Laruelle, Marlène. 2014. The 'Russian Idea' on the Small Screen: Staging National Identity on Russia's TV. *Demokratizatsiya* 22: 313–333.

———. 2015. *The "Russian World": Russia's Soft Power and Geopolitical Imagination*. Washington, DC: Center on Global Interests.

Makarychev, Andrey, and Alexandra Yatsyk. 2014. (Un)locking Political Borders. *Problems of Post-Communism* 61: 34–45.

McDonald, Michael. 2008. Securitization and the Construction of Security. *European Journal of International Relations* 14: 563–587.

Melvin, Neil. 1995. *Russians beyond Russia: The Politics of National Identity*. London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Muižnieks, Nils, ed. 2010. *How Integrated Is Latvian Society? An Audit of Achievements, Failures and Challenges*. Riga: University of Latvia Press.

Onken, Eva-Clarita. 2007. The Baltic States and Moscow's 9 May Commemoration: Analysing Memory Politics in Europe. *Europe-Asia Studies* 59: 23–46.

Patsiurko, Natalka, and Claire Wallace. 2014. Citizenship, Europe and Ethnic Boundary Making among Russian Minorities in Latvia and Lithuania. *Migration Letters* 11: 187–205.

Putin, Vladimir. 2001. Address of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin to the Congress of Compatriots. October 11. http://old.nasledie.ru/politvnt/19_44/article.php?art=24.

———. 2007. Address to the Federal Assembly. April 26. http://archive.kremlin.ru/appears/2007/04/26/1156_type63372type63374type82634_125339.shtml.

———. 2014a. Address by President of the Russian Federation. March 18. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

———. 2014b. Conference of Russian Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives. July 1. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46131.

Roe, Paul. 2004. Securitization and Minority Rights: Conditions of Desecuritization. *Security Dialogue* 35: 279–294.

Ross, Marc Howard. 2000. *Psychocultural Interpretations and Dramas: Identity Dynamics in Ethnic Conflict*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Los Angeles, California, March.

SKDS Survey. 2014. *Piederības sajūta Latvijai*. http://providus.lv/article_files/2682/original/atskaite_piederiba_08_2014.pdf?1409734400 (accessed January 30, 2016).

Smith, Graham. 1996. The Ethnic Democracy Thesis and the Citizenship Question in Estonia and Latvia. *Nationalities Papers* 24: 199–216.

Stritzel, Holger. 2011. Security, the Translation. *Security Dialogue* 42: 343–355.

Tajfel, Henri. 1970. Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination. *Scientific American* 223: 96–102.

———. 1981. *Social Identity and Group Behavior*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tajfel, Henri, and John Turner. 1979. An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict. In *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, eds. William G. Austin and StevenWorchel, 33–48. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishers.

———. 1986. The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior. In *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, eds. Steven Worchel and William G. Austin, 7–24. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Tilly, Charles. 1997. Contentious Politics and Social Change. *African Studies* 56: 51–65.

———. 2005. *Identities, Boundaries, and Social Ties*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Waever, Ole. 1995. Securitization and Desecuritization. In *On Security*, ed. Ronnie Lipschultz, 46–86. New York: Columbia University Press.

Waever, Ole, Barry Buzan, Pierre Lemaitre, and Morton Kelstrup. 1993. *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*. London: St. Martin's Press.

Williams, Michael. 2003. Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics. *International Studies Quarterly* 47: 511–531.

Zevelev, Igor. 2014. The Russian World Boundaries: Russia's National Identity Transformation and New Foreign Policy Doctrine. *Russia in Global Affairs* 7. http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The-Russian-World-Boundaries-16707.

CHAPTER 11

(Re)drawing Boundaries: Russia and the Baltic States

Elizaveta Gaufman

Introduction

The three Baltic countries—Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia—share a difficult history with Russia. Once a part of the Russian Empire and Prussia, they also enjoyed a period of independence and were later integrated within the Soviet Union. These sutures turned out to be rather unstable, as the Soviet Union disintegrated, following which the three republics sought independence. By becoming members of the EU and joining NATO, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have drawn a geopolitical and a cultural boundary with Russia that has been reified both from the Russian and the European sides. In other words, the new identities not only help delimit the representations of self, but also construct national interest (cf. Hopf 2012), essential for foreign policy.

Despite the EU's self-perception as a "normative power" (Manners 2002; Diez 2005), which strives to remove boundaries from within, it inadvertently creates boundaries to the outside. Following the Baltic countries' accession to the EU and especially to NATO, these countries are predominantly viewed in Russia as part of the Other (Lehti et al. 2008) and adherents to "Gayropa" values (Riabova and Riabov 2015). Thus, the othering of Baltic countries is not only carried out in geopolitical terms

E. Gaufman (✉)
University of Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6_11

but also in biopolitical terms, often employing the narratives of deviant sexuality and Russia's "sexual sovereignty" (Riabova and Riabov 2013; Makarychev and Medvedev 2015). An important point of contention lies in the commemoration of the Great Patriotic War, where Baltic states insist on "Soviet occupation" as opposed to the Russian narrative of liberation from fascism. The latter issue became especially prominent after the Bronze Soldier controversy in Estonia (2007), and has been extrapolated to the other Baltic states as well. Russian media often discuss Latvian former SS legionaries (RIA Novosti 2015) and the general tendency within Baltic states to question the Russian narrative of the Great Patriotic War.

The notion of boundaries was one of the central concepts in Yuri Lotman's *Universe of the Mind. A Semiotic Theory of Culture* (1990). Lotman, himself a resident of the Estonian university city of Tartu in the Soviet Union's Western borderland, argued that a boundary cannot be visualized by means of the concrete imagination. A boundary represents a space of multiple collision points between internal and external spaces that also act as translation filters for the actors that adapt them to a given semiotic sphere. Thus, a semiotic boundary is a crucial mechanism that allows for the interaction of non-semiotic and extra-semiotic spaces (Lotman 1990, 131–138).

The issue of translation taken up by Lotman has great relevance to the Baltic countries. All three are essentially bilingual due to the large ethnic Russian or Russian-speaking minorities (Ehin 2001), even though the Russian language has not been recognized as an official second state language in Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia. During the Soviet era, not learning Russian was a way of cultural resistance in the Baltics, but in post-Soviet time the situation has reversed: Estonians resent the fact that most ethnic Russians haven't been able to learn enough Estonian to communicate (Melchior 2015). The issue of the Russian language has had political consequences for Latvia, where Russian non-citizens comprise about 14 % of the population (Roxburgh 2005). Thus, the issue of language has always been a constitutive issue in identity-building and identity performance that spills over to mass media and popular culture.

Lotman's idea of semiotic boundary is a very useful concept to describe the suture that the Baltic Sea Region represents. Through the notion of boundary it is possible to show collisions and intertwining of key discourses that define the semiosphere(s). Discourses constitute boundaries, and boundaries define the semiotic space. Borders are supposed to define semiospheres, but it is very problematic, as Baltic countries and Russia used to belong to the same semiosphere, and the new political identities

require redefinition of cultural space as well. By means of semiotic analysis it is possible to go beyond discourse analysis and focus on cultural manifestations of identity constructs that are reinforced by the general public (cf. Mogil'ner 1999). Baltic states in this regard, despite their belonging to the EU and NATO, remain a quintessential semiotic borderland between Russia and the West, not only because of their literal bilingual characters (cf. Lotman 1990, 136), but also because of their former belonging to the Russian Empire and Soviet Union. Thus, Baltic states also represent a space where the border between Russia and the West is constructed by both sides and through different notions.

This chapter takes Lotman's notion of semiotic boundary and explores its empirical applicability on major ruptures between Russia and the Baltic states that have been brought to the fore throughout the Ukraine crisis. Lotman's boundary has been created by means of three types of discourses: geopolitical, memorial and biopolitical. These discourses constitute the differing semiotic spaces of Russia and the Baltic countries. The reason this chapter focuses on these three specific boundaries is because these three issues have been identified as pivotal in Russia's post-Soviet identity (Laruelle 2014; Zhurzhenko 2014; Gudkov 2005; Sharafutdinova 2014), and due to the suture in the relations with the Baltics they have been internalized and redefined in the Baltic space. In one way or another, all these boundaries are related to the national identities of the countries in question and are manifested not only in their foreign policy but also and primarily on the grassroots and popular culture level. This chapter explores the period between 2014 and 2015, i.e., the aftermath of the events in Ukraine, and analyzes mainstream mass media through Integrum World Wide software, social media and the influence of collective memory on redrawn boundaries.

Geopolitical Boundary[1]

An obvious and visualized geopolitical boundary, from a realist perspective, separates Russia from the Baltic states. If during the Soviet era Baltic countries were a part of the space behind the Iron Curtain, they are now independent states, actively disavowing this belonging. However, a geopolitical border is not only based on customs or military bloc alliances, it is also based on the way these features are perceived and represented in their respective countries. A geopolitical boundary in this respect consists in the perception of the actors as being members of opposing blocs and the inherited Cold War antagonistic rhetoric that comes with it.

As President Putin remarked, the collapse of the Soviet Union was "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe" of the twentieth century. For the Baltic countries it was hardly a catastrophe: it was the long sought after independence from the Soviet Union, which induced a drift towards Western European and Atlantic institutions. However, when the three Baltic states joined NATO in 2004, there was almost no reaction from the Russian leadership. Putin categorized it as "not a big deal"—a far cry from his reaction to Ukraine's bid to join NATO in 2008 or signing association agreement in 2013–2014.

Despite the initial seemingly neutral reaction to Baltic NATO membership, by joining the organization Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania became geopolitical Others and, as a result, were subjected to a particular rhetoric and attitude associated with this perception. For instance, the narrative of "encirclement" or "enemy at the gates", terms borrowed from Cold War rhetoric, were employed by the Russian Foreign Ministry and pro-government mass media (Meduza 21 July 2015). This argument was even more obvious in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis, when NATO stationed additional troops in the Baltic countries at the latters' request (Barnes 2015).

Baltic countries framed Russia as a threat (Jæger 2000) even before joining NATO, perpetuating the discourse of Russian Otherness and European Sameness. This securitizing narrative primarily harks back to the 1939–1940 Soviet occupation and the perceived threat of another Russian invasion in the wake of renewed independence (Kostadinova 2000). Mass media in Baltic states was concerned with a possible Russian invasion even more so after the military activity in the Donbas region (Mälksoo 2014). After tracking Russian mass media discourse on Baltic countries on Integrum World Wide, it is possible to observe a notable spike in its frequency in June 2015 corresponding to the discussion on additional NATO troops in the Baltic countries. In the following, I analyze how the increase of NATO troops in the Baltics was covered by Russia's most popular media outlets.

According to the Levada sociological service, Channels One (*Pervyi Kanal*) and Two (*Rossiya*) are the primary source of information for 96 % of Russian citizens (Volkov and Goncharov 2014). Russia's Channel One, the most accessible source of information for Russian citizens, reacted to the NATO troops in a news segment called "Estonians are being consistently scared by war" (Pervyi Kanal 2015), in which the newscaster emphasized that 70 % of Estonians did not believe in the Russian threat, but NATO and the USA were goading the country and its corrupt elite into military exercises and bunkers to protect itself from the war with

Russia. Thus, Estonians as a nation were not framed as enemies of Russia, but Estonia's political affiliation with NATO countries was what created the rupture in relations between the countries.

LifeNews is a Russian media outlet that caters to an audience interested in more boulevard-type news often disregarding journalistic ethics and hunting down celebrities for a scoop. In the light of NATO troops stationed in the Baltics, LifeNews came out with the headline: "The USA is preparing a foothold [*platzdarm*] for NATO troops at Russian borders" (LifeNews 2015). The "*platzdarm*" that LifeNews referred to is situated in Poland and the Baltic countries, thus it constructed the Baltics as enemy territory that conspired with the US. Nevertheless, the LifeNews article is a typical example of anti-American rhetoric that spills over to American allies in Europe, making the Baltic countries appear as enemies by proxy.

Komsomolskaya Pravda, a newspaper with a highest circulation in Russia, despite also belonging to a class of newspaper that could be characterized as "boulevard", where xenophobic and pro-government points of view are frequently expressed,[2] came out with a much "softer" headline and article. It quoted Foreign Minister Lavrov saying that NATO's deployment of extra troops in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania was a violation of an agreement between NATO and Russia, claiming "NATO itself is creating a public opinion that it is then reacting to" (Komsomolskaya Pravda, 9 July 2015). In all three cases, one notices that Baltic countries were not seen as separate geopolitical actors, but construed as "minions" of the bigger entity—the West, or its embodiment as NATO.

The Russia Today channel, despite its audience being much more "highbrow", displays a similar use of rhetoric, putting forward the headline, "Russia is reacting to NATO provocations at its borders" (Russia Today 2015a). The slightly more sophisticated turn on a similar piece of news consists in the absence of the US in the headline, concentrating on NATO as an enemy agent. Yet, the Baltic countries play essentially the same role of enemy co-conspirators. At the same time, Russia Today emphasizes the reactive nature of Russian activity, it being a mere answer to the hostility from the West. Russia Today has been chosen as an example because according to journalistic investigations (Delovoy Peterburg 2014; RFERL 2015), there is a special "troll army",[3] i.e., a team of fake Internet bloggers who are hired to promote pro-Kremlin discourse utilize Russia Today and Pervyi Kanal discursive constructions. After the leak of the "bot manuals", even a regular Internet user was able to track identical comments that pol-

luted social networks (Gunitsky 2015) with Channel One or Russia Today rhetoric as an example to follow.

This view of Baltic countries being proxies of NATO or the US threat is very much related to Russia's understanding of itself as a "subaltern empire" (cf. Morozov, 2015b; Etkind 2011). While Russia does not regard Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia as its "hinterland", it projects a colonialist perspective on relations within NATO and between the US and its allies. The problem of Soviet colonialism in the Baltics (Annus 2012) was highlighted in a number of occasions and is still a relevant issue in Russian foreign policy, especially given the nervous reaction from Baltic countries regarding Russian actions in the post-Soviet space.

However, it is the Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic states that has been singled out as Russia's geopolitical asset (Ehin and Berg 2013; Jurkynas 2014), especially given that ethnic Russians are more susceptible to the rhetoric in Russian mass media accessible in the Baltic countries. According to Russian legislation on "compatriots", all former Soviet citizens are eligible for Russian citizenship. This encompassing definition of compatriots might seem purely declarative, but in fact it was employed during the war in Georgia and as a justification for the annexation of Crimea. Russian speakers, or people who used to own Soviet passports, were issued Russian passports in South Ossetia and Abkhazia before and after the 2008 war (Sakwa 2012). In a meeting with military officers in November 2011, then President Medvedev insisted that the war in Georgia was an "absolutely necessary action to save large numbers of our citizens" from the Georgian threat (Sakwa 2012).

This issue was been taken up in the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation that states, under the rubric "The use of Armed Forces and other troops during immediate threat of aggression and war", that Russian armed forces could be used "to ensure the protection of [Russian] citizens, outside the Russian Federation in accordance with the generally recognized principles and norms of international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation" (Voennaya Doktrina Rossiskoy Federatsii 2014), which makes the post-Soviet countries with large Russian minorities especially anxious (cf. the media coverage of the Ukrainian crisis in Estonia in Mälksoo 2014).

Memorial Boundary

Another group of discourses that are very useful for creating a semiotic boundary that is particularly relevant for the Baltic space is the commemoration of World War II. It could be considered as constitutive for geo-

political reasoning that affirms the Baltic Otherness, but the memorial boundary is hardly visible in American–Russian antagonism or Russia–EU antagonism. Fascism is not only considered synonymous with an existential threat, or a main historical Other, but fighting it is equated with adopting a higher moral ground, and not only in Russia. The narrative of a fascist existential threat is inextricably linked to the memory of World War II, which is remembered differently in Russia than it is in the rest of the world. The "Great Patriotic War"—as it is known, commemorates not just the defeat of fascism, but also the survival of the nation in the face of extinction. It is also the most important heroic and unifying event in recent Russian history and is now actively used in nation-building efforts (Gudkov 2005; Kucherenko 2011). Hitler and Nazi Germany represent an almost universal symbol for an existential threat in the Russian collective memory, and they are often used as a way to indicate who is "on the wrong side of history", thus representing the quintessential example of "usable past". Negative enemy association with Baltic countries could in part stem from the Soviet era tradition of casting Baltic actors as villains in movies, especially as Nazis (Nazis and Blondes 2008).

According to Integrum World Wide, the fascism discourse spiked particularly high around the Ukraine crisis (cf. Gaufman 2015). Even though in most cases fascism discourse has been connected to the situation in Ukraine, Baltic countries have also been framed in a similar conjunction by the media. One of the major points of contention is the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and its secret protocol that divided Eastern Europe and the Baltic region in particular into "spheres of influence". The Soviet Union consistently denied the existence of the protocol up until the Glasnost era, when parts of it were declassified and published. The official Russian justification for it is still related to "creation of a buffer zone" between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The Baltic countries, however, viewed the 1939–1940 advance of Soviet troops as occupation, especially given the subsequent political repressions and deportations to Gulag (Grinkevičiūtė 2002; Avižienis 2006).

After Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, Nazi forces were in a certain respect greeted in Lithuania as liberators and even the "final solution" found a lot of support (Friedman 1994; Benz and Neiss 1999).[4] Levels of collaboration with Nazi military and civilian forces were high, leading to the creation of special battalions from local citizens. Dieckmann (2002) notes that, in occupied Lithuania there were only 660 German officials and 20,000 Lithuanian subordinates.

After World War II, the Baltic states ended up as part of the Soviet Union, and were forced to follow the party line: a number of monuments to concentration camps and mass execution places were created in all three countries. As Etkind notes (2013), Soviet commemoration of World War II did not specifically include the commemoration of the Holocaust, and the erected monuments were dedicated to Soviet citizens, civilians or soldiers, neglecting the specific targets of the final solution. This kind of remembrance might have contributed to the dichotomous perception in the Baltic states that the two sides in WWII included the Soviet occupiers and the people who fought against them, i.e., making the Nazi forces perceived to an extent by some as a force for good (Stone 2004).

A journalistic investigation by Daniel Brook (2015) shows that Lithuania is struggling to balance its fight for independence and Nazi collaboration narratives. In striving to create a continuity of independence narrative, "memory entrepreneurs" (Mink and Neumayer 2007) in Lithuania have come to identify Nazi collaborators as "fighters against Soviet occupation" (Stone 2004). "Soviet occupation" is obviously an unacceptable narrative for Russia that concentrates on the struggle against fascism and not the annexation that preceded it. For example, the "Museum of Genocide" in Vilnius is explicitly about human rights abuses during the Soviet era, which is characterized as a "genocide", while the Holocaust is viewed as a "repression against Jewish and other populations of Lithuania" and is not the main part of the museum's exhibit (Brook 2015).

One example of such a contention is the memorial complex of Paneriai (Ponary/Ponarach). This place outside of Vilnius was an execution spot and mass grave for mostly Jewish citizens of Lithuania. Today the memorial complex includes not only a monument to the victims of the Holocaust and Poles, but also to a monument to Lithuanian SS collaborators, who were also executed at the same spot after refusing to further cooperate with the Wehrmacht. The so-called "double genocide" narrative, where communist deportations are equated with the Holocaust, and Nazi collaborators are regarded exclusively as fighters for independence (Stevick 2012), would be unthinkable for the overwhelming majority of Russians, and this kind of rupture is probably the most difficult to suture. There are, however, some signs of change: thousands of people gathered in the Lithuanian village of Moletai (Malat) to commemorate the massacre of the local Jewish community by the March of the Living, with mayor of Moletai acknowledging the role of local Lithuanians in the Holocaust as well as numerous attempts to save the Jews (Meduza 2016).

Russia Today's documentary "Renaissance" discusses the rebirth of fascism in Europe[5] by juxtaposing testimonials from the Salaspils concentration camp in Latvia and memories of a former member of SS troops—Mr. Lacis (Russia Today 2015b). Even though the documentary is supposed to be mainly about Latvia, apart from featuring archive footage from the Salaspils concentration camp, it shows footage of neo-Nazi demonstrations in the UK, Svoboda and Right Sector's marches in Kyiv, as well as videos of the Azov Batallion.[6] The documentary finishes with the shot of a man who puts on a uniform with Nazi insignia and leaves his apartment. The historian's monologue comments on how Goebbels' would "rejoice in his grave" after hearing that Nazis nowadays regurgitate his propaganda about "Russian barbarians", against which Europe is supposed to protect itself.

Even though the documentary raises an important issue of airbrushing Latvian collaboration with Nazi troops, its main message still consists in the fallacy of "Western" Ukraine storytelling, which supposedly disregards the role of neo-Nazi groups during Euromaidan and the military conflict in Donbas. Especially gripping is the footage of Salaspils survivors watching the clips of the Ukrainian far right nationalist party, Right Sector and Azov batallion members, telling the journalist that people never learn from history. The documentary fails to mention similar tendencies in Russia—the infamous "Russian marches" each year on November 4th also bring together big crowds of Hitler admirers (Verkhovsky 2014). Thus, the countries that are shown to be fascist-friendly are primarily Latvia,[7] Ukraine and the UK. This restricts the problem of neo-Nazi groups to "Western" Europe and neglects the same tendencies in Russia proper.

The Bronze Solider controversy in 2007 is actually the reason Estonia emerged on the enemy image radar. Estonian authorities decided to remove Alyosha, a bronze statue in the centre of Tallinn that commemorated the Soviet soldiers who fought against Nazi troops in World War II. The statue was widely seen as a symbol for Soviet occupation by many Estonians. After the statue was relocated to a military cemetery, there were several waves of protest, both in Estonia and in Russia (Hackmann and Lehti 2013). This event already showed how important the Great Patriotic War narrative is for Russians. Demonstrations in front of the Estonian embassy organized by the pro-Kremlin movement "Nashi", an attack on the Estonian ambassador in Moscow and, finally, a cyber attack on the Estonian government showed a high degree of popular outrage in which the role of the Russian government was seen as encouraging, if not

sponsoring, the protests(Lenta.ru 2007). Moreover, Russia stopped the oil supply to Estonia for a brief period of time and a number of Russian companies refused to buy Estonian products (Delfi 2007).

Even though the Estonian government was branded as "fascist" by pro-Kremlin movements (Lassila 2014), representations of Estonia were far from the existential threat narrative. Integrum World Wide data shows that mention of Estonia never reached the frequency of threats like terrorism, migration or the West. Moreover, the Estonian threat did not seem to feature a specific personification, which also could have contributed to the relative failure of the threat narrative. At the same time, the situation around the Bronze Soldier could be seen in retrospect as an antecedent to Russia's reaction to the events in Ukraine in 2014.

The head of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Ephraim Zuroff, repeatedly made statements about the lack of prosecution efforts in Baltic countries vis-à-vis Nazi collaborators. At the same time, after independence there were a number of trials that featured former Red Army soldiers accused and sentenced for war crimes. The case of Vassily Kononov, formerly a Red Army partisan, is particularly telling in this regard, as he was sentenced in Latvia for war crimes he committed against Latvian civilians. At the same time, surviving Nazi collaborators are not prosecuted for their role in the Holocaust (Wiesenthal Centre 2005).

In sum, the attempt of the Baltic countries to build an identity that was explicitly non-Soviet resulted in an account that runs against one of Russia's crucial foundational narratives The Russian frame of liberation of Eastern Europe from fascism was also supposed to seal Russia's identity as a great power (Zhurzhenko 2007), and the Baltic states' counter-frame undermined this argument. At the same time, the "double genocide" narrative in the Baltic states (Budryté 2004; Stevick 2012) confirmed the Russian framing of Baltic states as (historical) Others.

Biopolitical Boundary

Biopolitical discourses intended to define another boundary between Russia and the Baltic countries are probably the most problematic ones in the Baltic–Russian context. According to a number of experts (Riabova and Riabov 2013, 2015; Sharafutdinova 2014; Makarychev and Medvedev 2015), such topics as sexuality and reproduction have become the main signifiers of otherness in Russian–European relations. However, given that Baltic countries share a very similar understanding of sexuality with Russia,

biopolitical "similarity" between policies in the EU and Baltic countries seems to be under question.

By becoming members of the EU, the Baltic countries also became part of what previously was the source of "pestilent influence". Collective memory of Russia's spiritual superiority over other (Western) countries can be traced all the way back to the Middle Ages. The perception of the dangerous "Latin", i.e., Western, influence on Russia's mores has been pointed out in a number of works (Morozov 2009; Nefyodov 2010; Tselikovsky 2014). The famous Russian émigré philosopher Berdyaev noted in "The Sources and Sense of Russian Communism" (1937(1990)) that the reason that remnants of the Russian Empire were easily adapted to the communist belief system was because it was founded on the existing narratives of the "special Russian way" and prophecies anticipating "Moscow as the Third Rome". The Soviet regime, despite its explicit atheist policies, still managed to galvanize the whole cultural narrative as well: representations of the West were usually built on its consumerist nature, which suggested that Russians had more to offer than plain desire for material objects.

The expression itself,"*tletvornoe vliyanie zapada*"(Western pestilent influence), is a term that was used, albeit in a tongue-in-cheek manner, in a Soviet blockbuster comedy "The Diamond Hand" (Brilliantovaya ruka) (1969). This all-time favorite, frequently shown on Russian TV, especially on New Year's Day or other holidays, follows the story of a simple Soviet citizen who gets accidentally entangled in a ploy by smugglers who are trying to get precious stones into the Soviet Union, by taking a cruise on (presumably) the Mediterranean Sea. The protagonist, more of an archetypical schlimazel, helps to bring the smugglers to justice in the movie despite his clumsiness. In the movie, the phrase "Western pestilent influence" was used by Upravdom (the head of the house committee), who mostly spied on the inhabitants of the apartment block where the family of the protagonist lives. As a demonstration of this pestilence, she lists going to restaurants, excessive drinking, having a mistress and practical jokes.

The Ukrainian crisis managed to penetrate the discussion on "cultural bonds" as well—a Putinite term that quickly came to signify all sorts of "traditions," from Orthodoxy to a ban on homosexuality, and from a proposed ban on abortion to "respect of host traditions". Euromaidan for many pro-Russian commentators became synonymous with not only fascism, but also other Western "evils". It is unsurprising that social networks reflected the intensified references to "Gayropa"—according to the definition by Riabova and Riabov, this term was adopted for the "desig-

nation of European gender deviance and Europe as a whole and even to refer to European values and European democracy" (2013). Although the term "Gayropa" is frequently encountered on social networks, which is to be expected in an informal setting, its appearance in the official media, according to Integrum World Wide, gained traction in late 2014, especially after the Eurovision Song Contest in May 2014.

A similar intensification of the mention of "Gayropa" in the media was noticeable during the trial of Pussy Riot—another symbol of "liberasty" for people who are concerned with "traditional" values. Other important spikes in "Gayropa"'s frequency are related to the military campaign in Ukraine and to the May–June 2015 American Supreme Court ruling on gay marriage. It is ironic, that despite the fact that the gay marriage was legalized on a federal level in the United States, it was still the Gayropa meme that spiked. While the US is discursively often connected to a geopolitical threat, Europe (and the EU in particular) is seen as a biopolitical threat to Russia, with the Baltic states being a part of the said (bio)political bloc.

"Gayropa" is only one of the terms used to refer to gender roles in the world of politics. Ukraine is then represented by Russian commentators in the form of a woman (or a female prostitute) or a homosexual man, but in any case not in the form of a "real man". Thus, commentators constructed the "submission" of Ukraine to the West/EU/US through the sexual act and subsequent emasculation of Ukraine itself. As Riabova and Riabov note, a negative assessment of Europe helps to achieve a positive self-identity because emasculation of Others constitutes remasculinization of Russia (2013).

The narrative of European deviancy, often connected to homosexuality (a very common Other image) (cf. Riabova and Riabov 2011) is not unique to events in the Ukraine. On social networks even before Euromaidan, there were numerous posters, offering a choice between heteronormal and "deviant" representations of sexuality. The latter ones operated with synonymy of homosexuality and drug abuse, or homosexuality with pedophilia (Gaufman 2014). Moreover, homosexuality was also put in a Huntington-esque "clash of civilizations" context, with Russia being "on the right side of history".

The Eurovision Song Contest of 2014 added to the personification of homosexuality with its winner. Conchita Wurst was even often described as "eto" in Russian, which suggested she did not have a soul.[8] Thus, the personification of the "homosexual threat" caters also to the discus-

sion of the Russian identity as opposed to the European, i.e., a corrupt one. Moreover, in the comments surrounding song contest words like "Gayropa" and claims that Europe was trying to propagate "this" (i.e., homosexuality) in Russia were also ample. At the same time, in the Baltics only Lithuania gave Conchita Wurst a high score (10 out of 12), while Estonia gave 4, Latvia 6 and Russia 5. The voting could be considered somewhat representative, as the votes in all four countries are 50 % based on the television viewers' opinion (Eurovision tv 2014). Thus, on the face of it, there does not seem to be an overwhelming acceptance of non-heteronormal sexuality in the Baltic space as well.

Biopolitical discourses show how increasingly difficult it is to create a semiotic boundary between Russia and the Baltic countries: neither Latvia nor Lithuania nor Estonia is associated with gay rights protection in Russian popular opinion. "Gayropa" seems to be just an umbrella derogatory term for the Other. The attitude towards homosexuality seems to be one of the contention points intended to define allegiance to a certain camp of "cultural values". It is also notable that the EU has conditioned protection against discrimination, including LGBT rights, but overall negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians remain common (Davydova 2012; Pelz 2014). Thus, conversely, Baltic countries seem to share the conservative views on sexuality widespread in conservative circles in Eastern and Western Europe as well (Kovats and Poim 2015).

Conclusion

Baltic countries and Russia are struggling to construct a belonging to different semiospheres by (re)drawing discursive boundaries. However, given that they used to be a part of the same semiosphere, this effort has proven to be a challenging task. That is why Russia and the Baltic countries recoalesce through their discursive struggles to a single semiosphere. The fact that the above mentioned discursive boundaries even exist shows that the collective memory of the existing semiosphere pulls Russia and the Baltics together. As Morozov notes (2015a), Russia defines itself in European terms and European terminology, so EU and the Baltic states assumed the image of "false" Europe (see also Ehin and Berg 2013; Makarychev 2008). This categorization by no means makes the Russian position European in a normative sense, but the "falsity" is theorized *inter alia* in a normative way through at least three types of boundaries: geopolitical, memorial and biopolitical. Thus, despite the fact that the Baltic countries used be part

of the Russian state, after the break-up of the Soviet Union both sides are trying to deepen and to a certain extent redraw identity boundaries.

The geopolitical boundary in this respect is in a lot of ways a vestige of the Cold War era, the difference consisting in extending the enemy territory to the Baltic countries. What is remarkable in this respect is that all the Baltics are denied agency and autonomy: in this narrative Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are seen as proxies, obeying the main enemy—the United States or its other "face" of NATO. The Baltic countries, on the contrary, are striving to affirm their geopolitically Western status based on the narrative of a Russian threat to their independence. The Ukraine crisis contributed to the mounting fears in the Baltic states of instrumentalizing Russian minorities in order to stage a new Russian invasion.

The memorial boundary is also rooted in collective memory and the traumatic post-memory of the Great Patriotic War (Gudkov 2005; Rutten et al. 2013). Even though the division between "fascists" and "non-fascists" is not new and not unique to Russia, this rupture is also fed by the Baltics' striving to redefine themselves in the post-Soviet space. This includes competing narratives of "occupation" versus "liberation", where Baltic countries commemorate and honour Nazi collaborators because they fought against the Red Army that occupied their countries in 1939–1940.

The biopolitical boundary is an equally old rupture that has been moving geographically but has always included the notion of a "Western", non-spiritual world in opposition to the Russian and spiritual one. As Russia considers itself a "real" Europe, the meme "Gayropa" has become quite handy. The notion of homosexuality as a signifier for false values is not really confirmed by media representations of the Baltics: "Gayropa" is another attempt to establish the subordinate role of Europe and the Baltics in particular in international relations. This set of discourses shows, however, that this semiotic boundary does not run as deep as the others and that perception of sexuality on a grassroots level in the Baltics is quite similar to the Russian one.

On the whole, the types of discourses that are supposed to constitute boundaries in this chapter single out the Baltic region not only as a liminal area (Neumann 2012) between the EU and Russia, but also as a quintessential suture. By reinforcing the boundaries in between on both sides, the actors end up inscribing the Other identity as an indispensable part of their own Self. Thus, by redrawing boundaries both Russia and the Baltics affirm the existence of "traces of externality" that were left behind after the fall of the Soviet Union. By trying to erase substantial differences

and form "a consistent, naturalized, organic whole" within the EU, these boundaries have an additional meaning of sutured closure for the Baltics, but not necessarily for Russia.

Notes

1. For more on geopolitical ruptures, see Makarychev and Linsenmeier, this volume.
2. Komsomolskaya Pravda became particularly infamous among members of the Russian liberal opposition when one of its columnists, Ulyana Skoibeda, lamented in her piece about the fact that the ancestors of today's liberals should have been made into lampshades—referring to the practices of some concentration camps and the Jewish origins of the politician she was criticizing (Lenta.ru 15 May 2013).
3. An Internet troll is an internet user who tries to provoke his counterparts into an emotional reaction and/or promotes a specific point of view that is supposed to elicit a specific reaction in the audience (see also Zvereva 2011).
4. Estonia, for instance, was the first country in Europe to be declared "*Judenfrei*"—"Jew-free" (Weiss-Wendt 1998).
5. See the documentary here: http://rtd.rt.com/films/renaissanse/#part-1.
6. The neo-Nazi militant Ukrainian group that fought on the Ukrainian government's side against the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk republics.
7. There were also clips of Estonian far right demonstrations.
8. All Russian nouns are divided into animate ("soul-having") and inanimate ("non-soul-having"). With the neutral demonstrative pronoun "eto" the author of the poster reduces a person to the status of an inanimate object.

References

Annus, Epp.2012. The Problem of Soviet Colonialism in the Baltics. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 43(1): 21–45.

Avižienis, Jura. 2006. Learning to Curse in Russian: Mimicry in Siberian Exile. In *Baltic Postcolonialism*, ed. Violeta Kelertas, 187–197. Amsterdam, NY: Rodophi.

Barnes, Julian. 2015. NATO Looks at Stationing More Troops along Eastern Flank. *The Wall Street Journal*, October 28. http://www.wsj.com/articles/nato-looks-at-stationing-more-troops-along-eastern-flank-1446050987.

Benz, Wolfgang, and Marion Neiss, eds.1999. *Judenmord in Litauen: Studien und Dokumente*. Berlin: Metropol.

Berdyaev, Nikolai.1990. *Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma*. Moskva: Nauka.

Brook, Daniel. 2015. Double Genocide. *Slate*, July 26. http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history/2015/07/lithuania_and_nazis_the_country_wants_to_forget_its_collaborationist_past.html.

Budryté, Dovile.2004. 'We Call It Genocide': Soviet Deportations and Repressions in the Memory of Lithuanians. In *The Genocidal Temptation: Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Rwanda, and Beyond*, ed. Robert Frey, 79–101. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Davydova, Darja.2012. Baltic Pride 2010: Articulating Sexual Difference and Heteronormative Nationalism in Contemporary Lithuania. *Sextures* 2(2): 32–46.

Delfi. 2007. Bronzovaya noch' oboshlas' v sotni millionov. *Delfi*, July 10. http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/estonia/bronzovaya-noch-oboshlas-v-sotni-millionov?id=16391233.

Delovoy Peterburg. 2014. Trolli iz Ol'gino pereekhali v novyi chetyrekhetazhnyi ofis na Savushkina. *Dp.ru*, October 28. http://www.dp.ru/a/2014/10/27/Borotsja_s_omerzeniem_mo/.

Dieckmann, Christoph. 2002. Die Zivilverwaltung in Litauen. In *Täter im Vernichtungskrieg. Der Überfall auf die Sowjetunion und der Völkermord an den Juden*, ed. Wolf Kaiser. Berlin: Propyläen.

Diez, Thomas. 2005. Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering Normative Power Europe. *Millennium-Journal of International Studies* 33(3): 613–636.

Ehin, Piret. 2001. Determinants of Public Support for EU Membership: Data from the Baltic Countries. *European Journal of Political Research* 40(1): 31–56.

Ehin, Piret, and Eiki Berg, eds. 2013. *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Etkind, A. 2011. *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Etkind, Alexander. 2013. *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Eurovision.tv. 2014. Eurovision Song Contest 2014 Grand Final. *European Broadcasting Union*, May 10. http://www.eurovision.tv/page/history/by-year/contest?event=1893#Scoreboard.

Friedman, Karen. 1994. *German/Lithuanian Collaboration in the Final Solution, 1941–1944*. PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Gaufman, Elizaveta. 2014. Nationalists' Old New Enemies: Sexual Deviation as an Existential Threat to Russia. In *Rossiya—Ne Ukraina. Sovremennye Aspekty Natsionalisma*, ed. Alexander Verkhovsky, 140–156. Moscow: Sova-Center.

———.2015. World War II 2.0: Digital Memory of Fascism in Russia. *Journal of Regional Security* 10(1): 17–36.

Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia. 2002. *A Stolen Youth, a Stolen Homeland: Memoirs*. Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla.

Gudkov, Lev. 2005. The Fetters of Victory: How the War Provides Russia with Its Identity. *Osteuropa Web Special*, http://www.osteuropa.dgoonline.org/hefte/international/eurozine-en/the-fetters-of-victory/.

Gunitsky, Slava.2015. Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability. *Perspectives on Politics* 13(1): 42–54.

Hackmann, Jorg, and Marko Lehti.2013. *Contested and Shared Places of Memory: History and Politics in North Eastern Europe*. New York: Routledge.

Hopf, Ted.2012. *Reconstructing the Cold War: The Early Years, 1945–1958*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jæger, Øyvind.2000. Securitizing Russia: Discursive Practices of the Baltic States. *Peace and Conflict Studies* 7(2): 18–36.

Jurkynas, Mindaugas.2014. Security Concerns of the Baltic States in the Twenty-First Century. In *Small States and International Security: Europe and Beyond*, eds. Clive Archer, Alyson J.K. Bailes, and Anders Wivel, 113–132. New York: Routledge.

Komsomolskaya, Pravda. 2015. Lavrov: Razmeshcheniye sil NATO u granits Rossii ne sootvetstvuyet dogovorennosti. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, July 9. http://www.kp.ru/online/news/2104390/.

Kostadinova, Tatiana.2000. East European Public Support for NATO Membership: Fears and Aspirations. *Journal of Peace Research* 37(2): 235–249.

Kovats, Eszter, and Maari Poim. 2015. *Gender as Symbolic Glue*. FEPS in cooperation with FES.

Kucherenko, O. 2011. That'll Teach'em to Love Their Motherland!: Russian Youth Revisit the Battles of World War II. *The Journal of Power Institutions in Post-Soviet Societies* 12.

Laruelle, Marlene.2014. The 'Russian Idea' on the Small Screen: Staging National Identity on Russia's TV. *Demokratizatsiya* 22(2): 313–333.

Lassila, Jussi. 2014. *The Quest for an Ideal Youth in Putin's Russia II: The Search for Distinctive Conformism in the Political Communication of Nashi, 2005–2009*. Vol. 115. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lehti, Marko, Matti Jutila, and Markku Jokisipilä.2008. Never-Ending Second World War: Public Performances of National Dignity and the Drama of the Bronze Soldier. *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39(4): 393–418.

Lenta.ru. 2007. Glava MID Estonii predlozhil YES vvesti sanktsii protiv Rossii. *Lenta.ru*, May 2. http://lenta.ru/news/2007/05/02/counter/.

———. 2013. ‘Komsomol’skaya pravda’ udalila passazh pro abazhury iz liberalov. *Lenta.ru*, May 15. http://lenta.ru/news/2013/05/15/skoybeda/.
LifeNews. 2015. SSHA gotovyat platsdarm dlya voysk NATO u granits Rossii. *LifeNews*, January 28. http://lifenews.ru/news/149072.
Lotman, Yuriy. 1990. *Universe of the Mind. A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. London: I. B. Tauris.
Makarychev, Andrey.2008. Russia’s Search for International Identity through the Sovereign Democracy Concept. *The International Spectator* 43(2): 49–62.
Makarychev, Andrey, and Sergei Medvedev.2015. Biopolitics and Power in Putin’s Russia. *Problems of Post-Communism* 62(1): 45–54.
Mälksoo, Maria. 2014. The Ukrainian Crisis as Reflected in the Estonian Media. In *The Ukrainian Crisis in the European Media and the Public Sphere*, March 24. http://www.imre-kertesz-kolleg.uni-jena.de/index.php?id=572&l=0.
Manners, Ian.2002. Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms? *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 40(2): 235–258.
Meduza. 2015. Sovetskaya gazeta ili rossiyskaya? Otgadayte po tsitate, kogda eto napisano: Seychas ili polveka nazad. *Meduza*, July 21. https://meduza.io/quiz/sovetskayagazeta-ili-rossiyskaya?share=3.
Meduza. 2016. Obnovleniye pamyati. V litovskom Moletaye proshla masshtabnaya aktsiya pamyati zhertv kholokosta. Reportazh «Meduzy». Meduza, August 30. https://meduza.io/feature/2016/08/30/obnovlenie-pamyati
Melchior, Inge. 2015. *Guardians of Living History: The Persistence of the Past in Post-Soviet Estonia*. PhD Thesis, Vrij Universiteit van Amsterdam.
Mink, George, and Laure Neumayer.2007. *L’Europe et ses passés douloureux*. Paris: La Découverte.
Mogil’ner, Marina. 1999. *Mifologiya ‘podpol’nogo cheloveka’: Radikal’nyy mikrokosm v Rossii nachala XX veka kak predmet semioticheskogo analiza*. Vol. 16. Moscow: Novoye Literaturnoe obozrenie.
Morozov, Viatcheslav. 2009. *Rossiya I Drugie. Identichnost I Granitsy Politicheskogo Soobshestva*. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie.
———. 2015a. Presentation at Platform Ukraine Seminar. University of Tartu, April 5–6.
———.2015b. *Russia’s Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Nazis and Blondes. 2008. Director Arbo Tammiksaar, Estonia/Latvia, 2008, colour, video, 58.
Nefyodov, Sergei.2010. Nachalo rossiyskoy modernizatsii i mentalitet XVII veka. *Istoricheskaya psikhologiya i sotsiologiya istorii* 3(1): 48–62.
Neumann, Iver.2012. Introduction to the Forum on Liminality. *Review of International Studies* 38(2): 473–479.
Pelz, Michael. 2014. *Europeanization, Party Systems, and LGBT Rights: The Cases of Estonia, Latvia, Montenegro, and Serbia*. Paper presented at the IPSA World Congress, Montreal, QC, July 21.

RFERL. 2015. Russian Trolls' Vast Library of Insulting Images. *RFERL*, April 4. http://www.rferl.org/content/russian-trolls-vast-insult-cartoon-database/26938435.html.

RIA Novosti. 2015. Latvia: Zasada dlya patriotov. *RIA Novosti*, December 15. http://ria.ru/accents/20151215/1342471379.html.

Riabova, Tatiana, and Oleg Riabov.2011. The Real Man of Politics in Russia (On Gender Discourse as a Resource for the Authority). *Social Sciences* 42(3): 58–74.

———.2013. 'Geyropa'—Gendernoe izmerenie obraza Yevropy v praktikah politicheskoi mobilizacii. *Zhenshina v rossiiskom obshestve* 3(68): 31–39.

———.2015. 'Gayromaidan': Gendered Aspects of the Hegemonic Russian Media Discourse on the Ukrainian Crisis. *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 1(1): 83–109.

Roxburgh, Angus. 2005. Latvian lessons irk Russians. *BBC News*, March 29. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4380437.stm.

Russia Today. 2015a. Eksperty: Moskva vynuzhdena reagirovat' na provokatsii NATO u rossiyskikh granits. *Russia Today*, June 17. https://russian.rt.com/article/97995.

———. 2015b. Renaissance [Documentary Film]. *Russia Today*. https://rtd.rt.com/films/renaissanse/.

Rutten, Ellen, Julie Fedor, and Vera Zvereva, eds.2013. *Memory, Conflict and New Media. Web Wars in Post-Socialist States*. New York: Routledge.

Sakwa, Richard.2012. Conspiracy Narratives as a Mode of Engagement in International Politics: The Case of the 2008 Russo-Georgian War. *The Russian Review* 71(4): 581–609.

Sharafutdinova, Gulnaz.2014. The Pussy Riot Affair and Putin's Démarche from Sovereign Democracy to Sovereign Morality. *Nationalities Papers* 42(4): 615–621.

Stevick, Deborah. 2012. The Holocaust in the Contemporary Baltic States: International Relations, Politics, and Education. *Holocaust. Studii şi cercetări* (5): 87–103.

Stone, Dan.2004. *Historiography of Holocaust*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tselikovsky, Alexey.2014. Mifotvorchestvo v Rossiyskoy Politicheskoy Kul'ture. *Vestnik Chelyabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 17(346): 137–140.

Verkhovsky, Alexander. 2014. *Rossiya—Ne Ukraina. Sovremennye aspekty natsionalisma*. Moskva: Sova Tsentr.

Voennaya Doktrina Rossiskoy Federatsii. 2014. http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47334.

Volkov, Dmitry, and Stepan Goncharov. 2014. Rossiiski Media-Landshaft: Televidenie, Press, Internet. *Analiticheskii Tsentr Yuriia Levady*. http://www.levada.ru/17-06-2014/rossiiskii-media-landshaft-televidenie-pressa-internet.

Weiss-Wendt, Anton.1998. The Soviet Occupation of Estonia in 1940–41 and the Jews. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12(2): 308–325.

Wiesenthal Centre. 2005. Updates on the Center's 'Operation: Last Chance' Campaign To Bring Nazi War Criminals To Justice. *Wiesenthal Centre*. http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lsKWLbPJLnF&b=4442249&ct=5852385&printmode=1.

Zhurzhenko, Tatiana. 2007. The Geopolitics of Memory. *Eurozine*, May 10.

———. 2014. A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis. *Die Friedens-Warte*, 89.

Zvereva, V.V. 2012. *Setevye razgovory: kul' turnye kommunikacii v Runete*. Bergen: Department of Foreign Languages, University of Bergen.

Index

Note: Page numbers with "n" denote notes.

A. Makarychev, A. Yatsyk (eds.), *Borders in the Baltic Sea Region*,
DOI 10.1057/978-1-352-00014-6