

SILENCING AND AMPLIFYING ETHNICITY IN ESTONIA

An Ethnographic Account from Tallinn

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Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in the ethnically divided capital of Estonia, this article¹ suggests that the tacit norm of reciprocity and neighbourliness in Tallinn is to silence rather than amplify ethnicity. Silencing ethnicity is a continuous, context-dependent interactional process that includes linguistic strategies, as well as spatial orderings. The article discusses how residents of Tallinn negotiate and sustain distinctions between “Estonian” and “Russian” spheres by replicating particular trajectories and ways of doing things on a day-to-day basis. The ensuing separateness of Estonians and Russian-speakers is part of the local culture more than an expression of antagonism, though the two are not mutually exclusive. The article also reflects on the (im)possibilities of studying ethnic interactions at home.

Keywords: Estonia, Russians-speakers, ethnic interactions, everyday multiculturalism, ethnography

Caught Between Silenced and Amplified Ethnicity

Exploring the conditions and modes of recognition and contestation in multi-ethnic Tallinn, this article aims to contribute to a growing body of literature on the reception and performance of difference in quotidian urban life.² It also discusses meanings attached to ethnicity in a small post-Soviet nation-state with a considerably large Russian minority population as well as methodological challenges posed by tacit local rules of cohabitation, embodied by the native researcher belonging to the ethnic minority.

Between January 2010 and June 2011, I carried out ethnographic fieldwork in Tallinn for my disserta-

tion on ethnic interactions, nationalism and integration in post-Soviet Estonia (Seljamaa 2012). Eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork provided me with opportunities to interact with people representing different generations, diverse ethnic, linguistic and educational backgrounds, political views and levels of engagement in social affairs, all of which attested to the internal heterogeneity of the “Russian-speaking population” in Tallinn. The main methods for creating data were participant observation and interviewing.³ In many cases, I used interviews to complement observational data and to follow up on particular issues. I found this approach to be particularly useful for interviewing people who were accustomed to speaking on behalf of minority groups,

various institutions or the Estonian state, and consequently seemed to be giving well-rehearsed, politically correct answers that spoke little to their actual experiences and concerns. They were telling me what they expected me to hear, turning the interview into a ritual encounter that aimed to uphold a particular version of reality, while suppressing others.

One of the last interviews I conducted before returning to my university in the United States followed a similar pattern, at least to begin with. The interviewee was Maria, a Russian woman in her fifties. Maria was born and raised in Estonia and had been living in Tallinn for a long time. I interviewed her in her capacity as a representative of a Russian cultural organisation. This was our first personal encounter, though I had been to several concerts organised by her group. We communicated in Russian, starting out by talking about the association she was working for and about Russian culture in Estonia. Our topics became more personal and the tone of our conversation more dialogic towards the end of the interview. I asked Maria where in Estonia she was from, she responded, and continued by asking me about my reasons for studying ethnic interactions. Upon my mentioning the word “integration”, Maria launched into a monologue about the “indecent” amount of attention given to ethnicity and ethnic differences in contemporary Estonia, blaming it on integration policy pursued by the Estonian state:

M: Integration has political motives. Because people who lived together and never thought that they had any problems started to live separately and understood that there was a problem. [...] I was born here [in Estonia] and went to school and I never knew that there was such a thing as nationality/ethnicity [национальность – *natsionalnost*]. I found out about it only when I graduated from school. It wasn't that I didn't know. I knew what different languages sounded like [...] But in the circle where I lived, only when I graduated from school did I realise that there were Estonians, Jews, Russians [...] It was never declared. Nobody ever talked about it. It was indecent [неприлично – *neprilichno*]. [...] There was a name and there was a person.

Maria argued in the same breath that what she saw as the foregrounding and commercialisation of ethnicity was symptomatic of a general loss of ethical norms and values in contemporary Estonia. She explained it by means of two different concepts of shame in the Russian language, an inner and external sense of shame:

Russians have two such concepts [of shame]: *styd* [стыд] and *sram* [срам]. [...] *Sram* is an external concept [of shame]. For example, when you look bad in front of other people. But *styd* is an internal concept [of shame]. And when this internal concept ceased to exist, that something is *stydno* [shameful], and when [*natsionalnost*] became... a form of merchandise. *Natsionalnost* became a marketable good... [This is] madly *stydno*. What was earlier regarded as sacred, closed, no matter whether it had to do with physiology, love, something else, recognition of *natsionalnost*. It was a sacred, an inner thing. [...] It used to be that nobody pointed a finger at you, that you were a Russian or an Estonian, we'll remove you or beat you. This was indecent. But now it is a normal thing: “We are national minorities! We are this and that!” All of a sudden it became a norm [...]

In order to reiterate the defining importance of an inner sense of shame for humans, Maria concluded her statement by reverting to a children's rhyme about differences between animals and human beings, thereby equating the inability to remain silent to public defecation:

In my childhood, there was a saying: “It is good to be a cat, it is good to be a dog, I can pee where I want and I can poop where I want.” But this is really characteristic of cats, not human beings. The human being has to distinguish himself [sic!] from animals by having *styd* [an inner sense of shame] and some sort of moral criteria. He must understand that it is not decent and good to talk about certain things. (June 13, 2011)

Maria's heartfelt and eloquent monologue pinpoint-

ed the intertwined paradoxes that had puzzled me most during my fieldwork in Tallinn. Representatives of ethnic minorities were encouraged to establish “their own” cultural associations and to take up their distinctive cultures as hobbies, yet discouraged from taking agency in shaping the Estonian society as *representatives of minorities*. Moreover, I noticed that Estonia likes to present itself as a home for over a hundred ethnicities, but this has the effect of downplaying the proportion of Russians, who make up a quarter of Estonia’s population of 1.3 million. The share of Ukrainians, the second-biggest minority, is two percent and that of Belarussians, the third minority in terms of size, one percent of Estonia’s permanent residents (Estonia.eu. Estonia at a Glance).

Maria’s conviction that nationality/ethnicity should not belong to the verbal realm serves as the starting point for the following analysis of silencing and amplifying ethnicity in Tallinn. The focus of the article is on silence and silencing. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork data, I discuss linguistic and other means used by residents of Tallinn to negotiate, sidestep and neutralise ethnicity and ethnic connotations in ways that bespeak and produce mutual recognition between Estonians and Russian-speakers⁴ and facilitate daily co-existence, while maintaining their separateness. I describe this quotidian practice as *silencing ethnicity*, contrasting it with occasions when the ethnic framework is evoked and foregrounded, *amplified*. Amplifying ethnicity in daily communication may indicate conflict, but it also occurs in the context of what John Nagle (2009) has called “state-sponsored multiculturalism”. In Estonia, state-sponsored multiculturalism finds its most characteristic expression in staged performances of ethnic particularity.

The analytical distinction between silencing and amplifying ethnicity emerges from fieldwork and this article is also an auto-ethnographic reflection on my experience of studying ethnicity in my native Tallinn. I realised in hindsight how Maria’s somewhat attacking questions about my motivation for studying ethnic interactions and integration resonated with the hesitancy and anxiety I had so often experienced when trying to make contact with Rus-

sian-speakers in Tallinn or when asking them about ethnicity or matters that could be interpreted in ethnic terms. I knew – by virtue of having been brought up in Tallinn in the 1980s and 1990s – that by doing so, I was not acting in accordance with what is regarded as normal in Tallinn for an Estonian woman of my age. For example, I was aware that the questions I was asking or my very presence in particular places could be conceived of as a provocation or just odd in an alienating way. My broken Russian sufficed to conjure up my own ethnicity and that of my interlocutors. I could not help becoming the shameless animal peeing and defecating all over the place, breaching the norm that first comes the person and only later his or her ethnicity, if the latter issue has to be dealt with at all.

At the same time, it also dawned on me that my fears and sense of uneasiness, on the one hand, and the surprised and perplexed looks I was receiving in the field, on the other, pointed to a common ground, to the existence of tacit and embodied knowledge – “social habit-memory” (Connerton 1989) – shared by Tallinn’s Estonians and Russian-speakers. Polemicising with Rogers Brubaker and others who call for indirect strategies for approaching ethnicity (Brubaker et al. 2006), I argue that ethnographers often cannot avoid contributing to the construction of ethnicity in the field, not least because they cannot shed their personal (ethnic) histories. These, in turn, are inseparable from continuous interplays between larger cultural, political, economic and other factors.

I am furthermore interested in the relationships between silence and agency and, in particular, the silencing of Estonian Russian-speakers in the context of Estonian-Russian relations. Russians and the Russian language occupied a central, unmarked and ubiquitous position in the Soviet system and it is questionable whether Volga Germans, Jews, Ingrian Finns or representatives of other non-Russian groups deemed “suspicious” by the Soviet regime would agree with Maria’s claim that nationality only came to matter after the collapse of the Soviet Union (see Pihla Maria Siim in this issue). However, as I aim to show, such statements can be interpreted in

terms of damaged reciprocity between the nation-state and minorities in the aftermath of drastic social changes.

The Tallinn of Ethnic Nationalities

Tallinn occupies an exceptional position in Estonia, due to both its size and the ethnic and linguistic make-up of its population. Over 430,000 people, or nearly one third of Estonia's residents, live in the capital. It is also the only major town where the proportion of Russian-speakers (45.8 percent) is roughly equal to that of native speakers of Estonian (50.9 percent) (Kuulpak 2015: 28). While Russophones tend to live in urban areas, in most other places in Estonia they are either clearly in the minority or constitute the majority.

Estonia's current ethnic composition took shape in the course of the Soviet era (1944–1991), when several hundred thousand people from various parts of the Soviet Union moved to and through Estonia. Most of these newcomers settled in the capital, in railway towns or in the rapidly growing north-eastern industrial centres. Many came with the military. Two peaks of immigration were in the 1950s and 1970s, with the geographical scope of countries of origin broadening over time: the newcomers of the first decades were mostly from the Russian SSR and European parts of the Soviet Union, while the late 1960s saw an increase in migration from the Volga region, Caucasus and Central Asia (Sakkeus 1999: 320; cf. Pettai & Pettai 2015: 332).

There was a chronic housing shortage, addressed by erecting Soviet-style blocks of flats on the fringes of older neighbourhoods. The most notorious of these new districts, Lasnamäe, was built on a flat limestone plateau above the older parts of Tallinn. Its construction began in the late 1970s and continued until the very end of the Soviet era, by which time Estonians had come to see it as an embodiment of the Soviet Russification policy. "Stopping Lasnamäe", as a popular song of the 1980s' national movement demanded, became a metaphor for putting an end to the Soviet rule, as well as to the influx of people from other parts of the Soviet Union. Yet only in 1990 did outmigration exceed immigration

for the first time (Hallik 2010: 10). It has been estimated that between 110,000 and 113,000 individuals of "non-Estonian nationality" left Estonia between 1990 and 2008, most of them in 1992–1993 (ibid.; Estonia.eu. Citizenship).

To make sense of the term "non-Estonian" (*mitte-eestlane*), one needs to know that more often than not, the noun "Estonian" (*eestlane*) does not refer to citizenship, but ethnic descent. The Estonian language lacks a widely used and generally accepted word to signify all residents of Estonia irrespective of their ethnicity. There is the word *eestimaalane*, which stresses connection to the Estonian territory rather than blood relations yet, for the time being, it serves as a euphemism for "non-Estonian". Even the authoritative online dictionary of the Institute of Estonian Language uses the following sentence to exemplify the meaning and usage of the word *eestimaalane*: "S/he was a resident of Estonia, but not Estonian" ("*Ta oli küll eestimaalane, kuid mitte eestlane*") (EKSS). The prospect of having to detach nationality from ethnicity still seems to be inconceivable or unacceptable, something that is not to be talked about in the Estonian language.

The tendency to regard ethnicity and nationality as synonyms coincides with the Soviet nationalities policies, which treated nationality (in Estonian *rahvus*, in Russian *национальность* [*natsionalnost*]) as a category one was born into. Inherited from parents, nationality was attached to ancestral territory and language, but detached from one's actual place of birth or residency and sometimes even from one's ethnic self-identification. This particular notion of nationality as ethnicity is shared by most people in Estonia and constitutes a tacit starting point for the Estonian integration policy (Seljamaa 2013; see also Malloy 2009; Agarin & Regelman 2011; Kuutma, Seljamaa & Västriik 2012; contributions to Cordell, Agarin & Osipov 2013).

For nearly two decades, the Estonian integration policy has propagated the idea of a multicultural Estonia and emphasised the importance of providing various ethnicities/nationalities living in Estonia with opportunities to preserve and develop "their own" cultures (Seljamaa 2013). Devising a national

strategy for integrating minorities and the Russian-speaking population in particular was one of the preconditions for Estonia's accession into the European Union and NATO, not least because West European states feared the spread of inter-ethnic violence from Yugoslavia across post-communist Europe (see e.g. Cordell 2013). The number of non-profit associations representing minorities rocketed only after the Estonian state started to allocate funds to projects proposed by cultural associations of national minorities, which in turn depended significantly on the availability of resources allocated by the European Union and other foreign sponsors. As of March 2016, Russians had 98 such organisations, Ukrainians 31 and Belarusians 18, but there were also multiple associations representing Greeks, Koreans, Angolans and others, whose numbers are miniscule (Etnoweb.ee). Maria's criticism that post-Soviet Estonia was suffering from an overexposure to nationality ("We are national minorities! We are this and that!") could be interpreted as a commentary on this system that confines the agency of minority actors to artistic performances of ethno-cultural distinctiveness and turns ethnicity into a merchandise.

(Un)tellable Narratives and Lack of Agency

The emic nationality/ethnicity category reinforces groupist thinking and narratives that pose challenges for scholars such as myself who are anxious to avoid conflating the study and practice of nationalism (cf. Brubaker 1996). It has been common in Estonia to conceive of the Soviet era in terms of rupture and trauma, and to describe the restoration of independence as a return from abnormality to normality – meaning the West.⁵ Conceptualising the Soviet era, a period of over 40 decades, in terms of rupture and trauma has framed Estonians as passive victims of the occupation regime, while framing as untellable experiences and events that contradict this nationalist narrative of victimhood.

The category of an Estonian communist, for example, is recognised, but excluded as something that should not have happened (cf. Shuman 2005: 19). The ethnologist Ene Kõresaar (2005) has extensively studied life stories written by Estonians born be-

tween the world wars. She describes how she and her colleagues were bewildered and alienated by a life story that was submitted to them in 1994 because it treated the establishment of Soviet power not in negative, but in positive terms: not as a rupture but as a new beginning. Kõresaar's argument that such "Soviet biographies" should be regarded "as part of Estonians' collective memory" (ibid.: 150) points to tensions between different ideas about what should or should not be talked about, as well as to the role of scholars as creators, supporters and breakers of silences that shape national(ist) narratives.

Repertoires of cultural analysts discussing Estonians' relationship to the Soviet regime and the Soviet era have broadened gradually to include topics such as Estonians' collaboration with and accommodation to the Soviet power and way of life, as well as other issues that cast doubt on the possibility of a total rupture and the feasibility of rupture as an analytic category (e.g. Annus 2012; Jaago 2014; Jõesalu 2005; Kapper 2016; Laanes 2009).⁶ "Carving conventional 'periods' out of their historical surroundings is an artificial act and, as such, far from inevitable" (Zerubavel 2003: 95).

Soviet-era settlers, however, remain an understudied – untold – subject. Discourse on them appears to be predetermined by the rupture metaphor, which confines Soviet-era newcomers to Estonia and ethnic Estonians to mutually exclusive, yet mutually constitutive subject positions of perpetrators and victims. Within this framework, it is rather difficult *not* to treat Soviet-era settlers as henchmen of the Soviet occupation regime and Estonians as the injured party entitled to a privileged position. There is a recurrent pattern in public discourse of tying together ethnicity, rootedness, and agency in ways that question the right of Soviet-era settlers and their descendants to participate in the shaping of the Estonian society.

In October 2014, Estonia's long-term Minister of Finance reluctantly stepped down after having characterised the Minister of Education and Research as "a son of a settler" (*sisserändaja poeg*) who had no knowledge of what Estonia had been through and who consequently "should use utmost caution"

when drawing conclusions about its current problems. The education minister, whose father is Russian and moved to Estonia towards the end of the Soviet era, had argued that Estonia's high emigration and poverty rates could not be blamed on Soviet power and the backwardness it had brought to the country (ERR Uudised). The finance minister's comments confirm Liisa Malkki's (1992) observation that uprootedness is often seen to result in and to be manifested in unacceptable behaviour and a lack of moral values, especially in the context of the nation-state. Some other examples following this pattern will be discussed below.

The (Im)possibility of Transcending Ethnicity

The episode involving ministers demonstrates that while "(c)ategorization is ubiquitous; ethnic categorization is not" (Brubaker et al. 2006: 237). Rogers Brubaker and his various co-authors have proposed the idea of "ethnicity as cognition". Rather than treating ethnicity as a "thing *in* the world" and talking about "ethnic groups", they propose approaching it as "a perspective *on* the world" and exploring when, where and how ethnicity becomes a salient or significant category for making sense of the world (Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatov 2004: 32; Brubaker et al. 2006: 169).

The book by Brubaker, Feischmidt, Fox and Grancea (2006) on nationalist politics and everyday ethnicity in the Hungarian/Romanian town of Kolozsvár/Cluj in Transylvania is the outcome of long-term quantitative and qualitative research, including open-ended and targeted interviews, group discussions and ethnographic discussions. The authors have described their approach as an indirect research strategy that avoided "asking directly about ethnicity, or signalling a special interest in ethnicity" (Brubaker et al. 2006: 15). Because ethnicity is always only one among many "interpretative frames", "(e)thnicized ways of experiencing and interpreting the social world can only be studied alongside a range of alternative, non-ethnicized ways of seeing and being" (ibid.).

The idea – or ideal – of avoiding contributions to the reproduction of ethnicity comes across as a dubi-

ous or hypocritical starting point to the extent that it implies that scholars are capable of detaching themselves from the flow of reification and essentialism that is everyday life (cf. Herzfeld 2005: 26). Brubaker and his colleagues do not reflect upon the successfulness or implications of their indirect research strategy: whether it enabled them – collectively as well as individually – to minimise their contribution to the (re)production and reification of identity in the field and at what cost. I wish they had done so because following their lead in Tallinn turned out to be easier said than done. For an ethnographer working at home, there seemed to be no way of avoiding contributions to the emergence and construction of ethnicity in the field.

When I first began fieldwork, I thought rather naively that being from Tallinn would make things easier for me. For example, in addition to knowing my way around, I would be familiar with local communicative practices and other norms of behaviour and would not have to learn them the hard way. Little did I know that in order to learn anything new in and about Tallinn, I had to become aware of what had been instilled in me over the decades, and go beyond ethnic and other borders I had been socialised to reproduce. Fieldwork took me, literally, to places I knew to be "Russian" by virtue of having been born and raised in Tallinn in an Estonian family. People I encountered in these places tended to see me as Estonian and sometimes demanded an explanation for my presence.

Occasions such as this one seemed to offer glimpses into Tallinners' social habit-memory, which is acquired by "living with people who habitually behave in a certain manner" (Connerton 1989: 30). Paul Connerton describes social habits as "legitimizing performances" because their meaning "rests upon others' conventional expectations such that it must be interpretable as a socially legitimate (or illegitimate) performance" (ibid.: 35). I had to go against the grain of what was habitual.

My Estonian Tallinn

Estonia inherited from the Soviet regime a linguistically segregated educational system, with Estonian- and Russian-language kindergartens and schools

operating in different facilities and teaching different curricula. Growing up in Tallinn in the 1980s, I went to an Estonian kindergarten, and later to an Estonian school, and had hardly any contacts with Russian-speakers. We lived in an older part of Tallinn, which, unlike Lasnamäe, was not an area used to accommodate the steady stream of settlers from other parts of the Soviet Union. Some of our neighbours were Russian, but we did not interact, though this was probably for class reasons rather than due to ethnicity. My parents socialised mostly with Estonian artists and intellectuals, many of whom were part of the Soviet counter-culture.

I went to the same school and studied with more or less the same people for 11 years. As far as I know, only one of my classmates came from a mixed family, but her father lived in Russia much of the time and she socialised with Estonians despite being fluent in Russian. Most of us had a much more complicated relationship to the Russian language. Like so many other Estonians of my generation, I started learning Russian in kindergarten and continued in school but never put it into practice – apart from the sentence *Ya ne govoryu po-russki* or “I don’t speak Russian.” I have distinct memories of rehearsing and using this phrase in the late 1980s in self-defence against Russian-speaking salespeople. Once a university student, I enrolled in yet another mandatory Russian course for beginners – and in another course in graduate school in the United States, but this time voluntarily.

Leaving aside differences between the Estonian and Russian languages and teaching methods (we learned to quote Pushkin by heart without having acquired the very basics of grammar first), our generation’s slow progress in learning Russian must have reflected a broader state of mind in the Estonian society in the late 1980s and 1990s as well as the circumstances which made it possible for Estonians and Russian-speakers to live side by side with little or no interaction. For example, the art school I attended in the mid-1990s had separate Estonian- and Russian-language groups and we never communicated, even though we shared some of the teachers. Our separateness seemed to be a matter of habit and

custom and could not be explained by language alone.

Towards the end of the 1990s, while taking English classes in a language school in Tallinn, I came across Russophone teenagers who were fluent in Estonian due to attending Estonian-language schools but whose parents spoke very little or no Estonian. By that time, an increasing number of Russian-language families had recognised the instrumental value of Estonian and had adopted the strategy of educating their offspring in Estonian (Vihalemm 1999). The percentage of Estonians who claim a command of Russian, however, is steadily falling (Tammaru 2016). Children growing up in Tallinn today, as well as their parents, have very different opportunities and challenges: my currently two-year-old daughter has the option of joining a language immersion kindergarten where Russian-speakers are taught Estonian and Estonian-speakers Russian. This is a huge change, though most kindergartens continue to use either Estonian or Russian.

In the course of my fieldwork, I encountered people of my age or older whose childhood, youth and much of their adulthood in Tallinn had been as Russian-centred as mine had been Estonian-centred. Some of them spoke very little or no Estonian despite having lived in Estonia their entire life or at least for decades. However, I also got to know many younger people who were fluent in both languages, often due to having attended Estonian-language schools. Thus, the experience of living side by side without much interaction is neither universal nor idiosyncratic. A lot of negotiation and planning takes place in Tallinn every day to maintain a co-existence that does not foreground ethnicity as a source of conflict.

To the extent that ethnographic knowledge is produced in the process of sharing time and conversation between the ethnographer and her interlocutors (Fabian 1990), it is inevitably shaped by individuals’ subjective choices. In the words of James Fernandez, ethnography’s “emphasis on extensive and enduring participatory and open ended interaction and extended life type consultation means that not all informants can be listened to and many must, in effect remain silent in the ensuing ethnographic account”

(Fernandez 2006: 162). He continues: “While we must assume the realist position that events, beliefs, entities, and so on exist independently of ourselves, we must also assume that we can not know them directly but must construe them” (ibid.).

For me, Lasnamäe with its up to 70 percent Russophone population (Kuulpak 2015: 25) seemed like an obvious starting point for an ethnographic study on ethnic interactions in post-Soviet Estonia. I began fieldwork by focusing on daily happenings and markers on ethnicity in this district and establishing contact with a circle of friends living there. At the same time, I started observing the performances and activities of various cultural associations of national minorities and interviewing their more active members. From fall 2010 until the end of my fieldwork in June 2011, I volunteered for and socialised with one particular organisation that united politically and socially active Russophone youths of diverse ethnic backgrounds. In addition, I participated in academic and other conferences and seminars that dealt with integration, cultural diversity and nationalism, as well as in events and ceremonies organised on the occasion of various official and vernacular holidays (e.g. Independence Day parades, Victory Day [May 9] and Shrovetide celebrations, Christmas and New Year concerts, Easter services in Orthodox churches, events organised on the occasion of the Day of Nationalities and Native Language Day, various annual festivals). Long-term systematic involvement in and exposure to these different public, semi-public and private venues of inter- and intra-ethnic interactions helped me to recognise certain recurring situations, arguments and patterns of behaviour.

Verbally Silenced Ethnicity

Language serves as the most obvious, visible and audible marker of ethnicity in Tallinn. Though Estonian is the sole official language, in reality Tallinn is bilingual and there are even neighbourhoods where Russian is the default language. While one is supposed to be able to use Estonian in all businesses and organisations, in practice the common language needs to be negotiated and agreed upon on a case-by-case basis. This holds particularly true for

interactions that take place in residential areas with a significant Russian-speaking population, such as Lasnamäe.

In urban decor, the co-existence of official rules and vernacular practices is manifested in bilingual signs, among other markers. Looking for visual cues for ethnicity in Lasnamäe, I was particularly intrigued by signs on the doors of small shops and kiosks that combined typed Estonian-language information and handwritten Russian-language information. Estonian-language information about opening hours had been typed, printed out and displayed, as required by the Estonian Language Act. However, this formal presentation in Estonian had been complemented by means of handwritten information in Russian, so that next to the typed *avatud* stood the handwritten *открыто*, both of which mean “open”. To the extent that information about opening hours can be comprehended without translation even by those who cannot read the Latin alphabet, the use and display of the Cyrillic script must have conveyed in this context messages of another kind, such as support or preference for the Russian language in an officially Estonian-language environment. The juxtaposition of typed Estonian and handwritten Russian seemed to stress the official status of the former language, on the one hand, and protest against the expulsion of the latter from the public sphere, on the other. As such, it made visible gaps between language policy and practice, between ideals and lived reality (Cook 2006).

Sales clerks in Tallinn supermarkets seemed to be fine-tuned to various non-verbalised cues for customers’ linguistic identities. It sometimes happened that when I had Russian-language newspapers in my shopping basket, the cashier would address me in Russian. I observed on countless occasions how customers and sales clerks switched back and forth between Estonian and Russian. An Estonian customer would start out in Estonian, but switch to Russian when the salesperson’s response was not quick or clear enough; however, the clerks would not necessarily follow the customer’s lead but would continue in Estonian. Consequently, it was not uncommon for Estonian customers to speak Russian and

Russian-speaking clerks to respond in Estonian. At other times, Russian-speaking clerks and customers would speak Estonian among themselves.

The sociologist Triin Vihalemm has argued that Estonians' strategy of switching over to Russian serves the purpose of retaining the "symbolic divergence with regard to Estonian – not letting 'others' speak 'our language'" (Vihalemm 2007: 490; cf. Vihalemm 1999: 26). While this could be the case in certain contexts, ethnographic research in contemporary Tallinn suggests that switching over to Russian can also serve as a means of accommodating the other person and steering clear of evoking ethnicity as a potential source of conflict. This is more of a pragmatic choice and display of neighbourliness rather than a symbolic performance of distinctive identity. In fact, the potential for ethnicity-based tensions and conflicts appears to be greater when, for example, the salesperson is not capable of providing service in Estonian and the customer sticks to Estonian, demanding that the salesperson follow the law and speak the state language.

Approaching potential interviewees and interacting with fieldwork partners involved similar intricate linguistic negotiations. The first couple of months were particularly confusing as I did not know when I was expected to use Estonian and under what circumstances I was to choose Russian. While I did not want people to think or feel that I was being provocative or treating them condescendingly, I could not shed my broken Russian or the baggage of the minority–majority relationship. Whenever possible, I let my interlocutors determine the language of communication. Even so, the fear of making a phone call or writing an email and not knowing whether to use Russian or Estonian was at times paralyzing, since choosing the "wrong" language could shut down the line of communication. I suspect that some of my emails went unanswered because I had written them in Estonian. At other times, I would receive a written response that had been composed in careful Estonian and with as few words as possible, as if to minimise the chance of grammatical and spelling mistakes and the ensuing risk of losing face. But at times my efforts to speak Russian were dismissed. I

remember calling a Russian actress I wanted to interview and she interrupted me rather impatiently, demanding in fluent Estonian that I switch to Estonian.

Ethnicity could be furthermore silenced and prevented from becoming a problem by means of using Estonian and Russian in parallel. This was particularly evident in settings that brought together people who lived or worked side by side and in all likelihood were interested in reaching a mutual understanding. Every block of flats in Estonia must belong to a non-profit association uniting apartment owners of one or several buildings. Since all of the capital's districts and neighbourhoods are mixed to some degree, apartment associations constitute an important venue of inter-ethnic communication. The association I belong to in Tallinn sends me bilingual messages and our meetings have sometimes lasted longer because everything has been translated from Estonian into Russian and vice versa. I found the same strategy being used in the predominantly Russian-speaking district of Lasnamäe when on a couple of occasions my friends would kindly take me to the meetings of their apartment associations. Using both Estonian and Russian served as a means of taking ethnicity off the agenda and creating a neutral space accessible to all participants.

The same seemed to hold true in more public settings. On one particular occasion, the municipal government of the Lasnamäe district organised an information day for representatives of local apartment associations. While Estonian and Russian were used alternatively most of the time, one of the invited speakers spoke only in Estonian. Several audience members protested immediately. It was clear from their comments that they knew Estonian well enough to be able to follow the presenter. However, they insisted on using both Estonian and Russian. It was by virtue of not deciding for one language or the other that the situation could have been kept neutral and the ethnic connotations of language downplayed. Similar scenes played out at concerts and other events at the Lasnamäe cultural centre, which, as a rule, are bilingual and very often cater to a predominantly Russian-speaking audience.

Russian voices would call out for a translation into Russian, only to be hushed by other Russian voices. Occasions on which communication broke down or was damaged because the tacit expectation of bilingualism was not met illustrate how bilingualism can be a means of achieving mutual recognition.

The situation was different when there were more than two languages to contend with. This was not uncommon at concerts and other events organised by cultural associations of non-Russian national minorities that would use their native language alongside Estonian, that is the state language, and sometimes also Russian. For example, I saw disappointed faces at a Ukrainian concert whose programme alternated between Ukrainian-, Estonian- and English-language performances and speeches, while excluding Russian. Unlike the semi-private meetings of apartment associations, concerts of this kind belong to the public sphere. Organised by cultural associations of national minorities, they are designed to perform the distinctiveness of particular ethnic groups within the context of the democratic, multicultural Estonian nation-state and to reinforce mutual loyalty between minorities and the state.

Spatially Embodied Ethnicity

While language serves as an important means for silencing, amplifying and negotiating ethnicity in Tallinn, it rarely stands alone. Linguistic segregation becomes physical once it is mapped onto districts and buildings and people's daily routes, and it becomes structural once it is linked to greater or lesser mobility. The ability to travel and work abroad is tied to citizenship, which again depends on one's knowledge of the Estonian language. When Estonia restored its independence in 1991, it did not grant Estonian citizenship to Soviet-era settlers and their descendants, at the time roughly a third of the 1.5 million population. In order to be naturalised, these people had to pass a language exam, but most of them had little or no knowledge of the new state language.

Estonian citizenship policies have been said to have had "clear ethno-political motives [...] as well as stark ethno-political consequences": they addressed the dramatic decrease in Estonians' share

of the population and cut the majority of Russian-speaking residents "out of the political system" (Pet-tai & Pettai 2015: 132). Their way back in has been slow and as of today, 6.1 percent of all permanent residents in Estonia remain stateless (Estonia.eu. Citizenship). Unlike citizens of Estonia and other member-states of the European Union, they cannot work in the European country of their choice, but are confined to Estonia and its restricted labour market. Several of my fieldwork partners in Lasnamäe belonged to this category of "people with undetermined citizenship" (ibid.). They were men, spoke hardly any Estonian, had not travelled widely and held manual jobs, meaning that their employment depended heavily on the health of the economy.

Lasnamäe being a residential district, its shops and businesses cater mainly to local residents, whose preferences are guided by their linguistic preferences, among other factors. I once went to get a haircut at a small beauty salon on the ground floor of a tall block of flats. When I sat down in the salon chair and tried to make myself understandable in my broken Russian, the hairdresser asked me, her voice filled with sincere surprise: *Как вы сюда попали?* – "How did you get here?" The hairdresser's question conjured up the invisible, practice-based borders that divide Tallinn into Estonian and Russian places and zones and categorise Lasnamäe as a Russian space. Tallinners sustain these distinctions by replicating particular trajectories and ways of doing things on a day-to-day basis. "The word *routine* is actually the diminutive of route, a small path," as Billy Ehn and Orvar Löfgren point out (Ehn & Löfgren 2010: 81). Ethnicity, like class, "happens on many levels" when "insignificant routines become an effective tool" of reproduction (ibid.: 211; cf. Connerton 1989). In asking me about my choice of hair salon, the hairdresser was also observing and commenting upon these routines. She pointed out to me that I was transgressing and it was our shared acknowledgement of my being in the "wrong" place that enabled her to demand an explanation, even if in a friendly manner, for she was clearly amused by the whole episode.

One time, on February 24, 2010, the Independence

Day of the Republic of Estonia, I was invited to the home of Alla, Andrey and their five-year-old daughter, along with Kostya, one of my key fieldwork partners from Lasnamäe. Both Kostya and Andrey spoke very little Estonian, were stateless and did manual labour. I had first met them at a concert of a Russian punk band in Tallinn in January 2010. I was with a friend of mine and we caught the attention of Kostya and Andrey because, as Andrey put it, “Spleen is no Alla Pugacheva, whom Estonians would go to see,” Pugacheva being a popular Soviet and Russian musical performer, whose concert in Tallinn in February 2010 was sold out and covered widely in Estonian-language media.

Upon our arrival to their home, Alla and Andrey joked that I was probably armed with secret recording devices. They returned to this joke and brought it to a conclusion towards the end of the evening when I was getting ready to leave, telling me that they had been the ones who had recorded our conversation. In the course of the evening, discussion had turned to politics and Andrey had asked me rather bluntly if I supported the Estonian Reform Party. Andrey was not the first or last Russian-speaker to ask me about my/Estonians’ relationship to the Reform Party. In fact, many of them seemed to believe that *all* Estonians voted for the Reform Party and supported Ansip.

Andrus Ansip, at the time of my fieldwork the leader of the liberal Reform Party and Estonian prime minister, had played a key role in the Bronze Soldier crisis. In April 2007, the Estonian government decided to relocate from down-town Tallinn a Soviet-era World War II monument popularly known as “the Bronze Soldier”.⁷ Erected in 1947, the monument re-emerged in the mid-2000s as the site of Russian-speakers’ newly discovered Victory Day celebrations. Observed on May 9, Victory Day celebrates the Soviet/Russian victory over fascism in World War II. Many Estonians, at the same time, had come to regard the monument and activities surrounding it as an anti-Estonian provocation and embodiment of the continuation of Soviet occupation. The polarisation peaked one day in April 2007, when the government began the exhumation of the remains of Red Army soldiers buried on the site of

the monument. A large number of Russian-speakers gathered spontaneously at the monument to protest against this action. Later the same evening, this peaceful demonstration spilled over into a violent conflict between the protesters and the police, and gave rise to a wave of looting and acts of vandalism in down-town Tallinn. The statue was consequently relocated to a more secluded part of the capital. Estonian officials and authorities later claimed that the protests had been orchestrated from Moscow, but these charges could not be proven in court. However, this act of externalisation was significant in that it deprived Estonian Russian-speakers of agency, framing them as fifth columnists working for Russia, and Estonians, once again, as victims of Russian aggression (cf. Kaiser 2012).

Andrey had taken part in the demonstration at the Bronze Soldier and was among the more than a thousand persons arrested (Poleshchuk 2009: 9) by the police. While he was telling me about his ordeal, his wife Alla said that she had always been loyal to the Estonian state but wished that Estonians would let go of the past. Most obviously, the Bronze Soldier conflict revolved around “correct” interpretations of the past. By relocating the monument, the government erased from the centre of Tallinn commemorative practices that contradicted Estonia’s official history, the insistence on having been occupied rather than liberated by the Soviet Union. Moreover, by means of locating the source of conflict in Russia, Estonian authorities denied the existence of “multiple pasts” (Zerubavel 2003) within the Estonian society and frictions between them.

Yet, April 2007 was not the only topic of conversation that evening at Andrey’s and Alla’s place. The TV was on and we watched a little bit of the live broadcast from the Independence Day reception hosted by the Estonian president and his wife. Watching this reception appears to be *the* ritual observed by most Estonians on the evening of Independence Day. Though Kostya and Andrey were participating in this ritual, they also seemed to be observing Independence Day from a distance. Kostya asked me how Estonians greeted each other on Independence Day and whether there was a particular wish or phrase

used on this occasion. Andrey wanted to know if Estonia's foreign-born president Toomas Hendrik Ilves spoke bad Estonian. While these questions reflected Kostya's and Andrey's distance from the general life of Estonia, their lives were very much grounded in Tallinn and their criticism of the Estonian government sprang from their personal experiences and feelings. They had not been "brainwashed by Russian propaganda," to cite an argument often used by Estonians to dismiss the dissatisfaction of local Russian-speakers.

All of us transgressed our individual boundaries that evening. Alla and Andrey did it by inviting me into their home, and I would not have been sitting in Andrey's and Alla's living room had it not been for my research project. Together we opened up a space where we could discuss conflict-prone topics that focused on ethnicity and relations between Estonians and Russians in Estonia. Their questions – like my own – drew attention to the separateness of Estonians and Russians in Tallinn and, more broadly, to the lack of reciprocity between the state and Russian-speaking residents of Estonia. In this context, our ethnic identities were amplified. Our communication functioned as a magnifying glass, enabling us to scrutinise ourselves, each other and the society we were all part of.

On other occasions, I observed how Kostya and some other fieldwork partners of mine engaged in strategic acts of deconstructing my Estonian-ness. Thus, silencing ethnicity can also work by means of de-essentialisation. Several interviewees attached special significance to the fact that I was writing my dissertation for a foreign university: the Atlantic Ocean seemed to create a neutral space where my interlocutors could be critical of the Estonian state without being confrontational with me. Others asked me about my grandparents and focused on my Finnish roots. The fact that both of my grandfathers had fought in World War II, in the Red Army, was similarly emphasised. While I had little or no emotional connection to most of these pieces of information, the people I socialised and worked with in the field used these details to (re-)define me, at least for the purposes of the given situation, to make me

less of an Estonian. At one time, Kostya introduced me to a friend of his as somebody whose grandfather had fought in the Red Army. To my relief, his friend responded rather dryly "these things happen."

Indecently Loud Ethnicity

This article has so far focused on means of down-playing and negotiating ethnicity as well as on ways of giving it silent recognition. I will now proceed to explore the other end of the continuum: instances in which a person is defined through his or her ethnicity alone: "She is an Estonian. He is Jewish." Pondering Maria's claim that it is indecent to talk about ethnicity, I was reminded of another interviewee, Anna, who made a similar point by telling a story about her extended family. Like Maria, Anna was in her forties–fifties and lived in Tallinn. She was descended from Estonians and Estonian Russians, that is Russians who had been living in Estonia before World War II, and was fluent in Estonian. However, she sympathised very strongly with her Russian ancestors and heritage. She had raised her children in the same vein, while her cousins and their children had grown up identifying as Estonians. According to Anna, they formed a close-knit extended family until the attitudes of her Estonian relatives' began to change in the context of Estonians' national re-awakening in the late 1980s:

Anna: But they changed so much, really to the point of becoming unrecognisable; it was truly astonishing. I'll give an example of a radical transformation of this kind, a crazy example, I would say. My older son was four or five years old, I think. It was the very end of the old era and the beginning of the new era. Right then. And one could already feel it. We were again all together at Granny's place, Estonians and Russians. And my boy, he speaks Estonian, maybe not that perfectly, and he has a little accent, but he speaks Estonian. But of course, we grew up more in Russian culture. My cousin's family was also there and his son was a little older than mine. Estonian. And I saw that my child was sitting in the sandbox alone and was looking somehow sad and yet there was this

other boy, a little older, but nevertheless. So I went to him and said:

“Listen, Mart, please go and play with him a little bit. He is eager and very active; he wants to communicate and he likes to communicate, so please go to him.”

And Mart looked at me and he was... he was around ten or eleven years old at the time. He said: “Now then...”

No, he was even younger, eight or something.

“Now then, why should I play with this little Russian?”

An eight-year old boy. I was about to... my mouth almost dropped open. I couldn't... I didn't know what to say. Actually I just said to him that

“Mart, why do you say such a thing? It doesn't matter who he is, we are all relatives and what difference does it make if he speaks Estonian a little bit, not as perfectly as you do, but he will teach you a little bit of Russian. Come on!”

“No, I don't want to.”

But then I went to his dad, to my cousin, who is a very highly educated, well-known person in Estonia. And I said:

“Excuse me but what was this about. A child cannot make up such things.”

“Did he really say such a thing?”

“Swear to God.”

“You must have gone crazy. He said such a thing? He couldn't have said such a thing.”

“How come when he did say it?”

I said... I tried to make it clear to him that he must have heard it at home.

“What's going on in your home; there's something wrong.”

“Listen, don't be dramatic; don't take it like this.”

Something along the lines of “*Sama dura* [in Russian: you are the stupid one here]. Don't make a big deal out of this.”

But I already regarded it with alarm. (July 8, 2010)

In this story, one child rejects another one on the basis of ethnicity, which in turn is defined in linguistic terms. The interaction of the boys, that are relatives, shows that in the process of Soviet Union's disinte-

gration, language became thicker than blood in Estonia. As such, this narrative shows the sinister side of the Baltic Singing Revolutions, nonviolent mass protests that began in 1987 and led to the restoration of independence, and contradicts the romanticised notion of Estonians as a “gentle nation singing of love” (cf. Šmidchens 2014).

Anna returned to the topic of inter-ethnic families later, stressing that mixed couples were under immense political pressure in the 1990s. Moreover, she used her extended family and what had happened to it as a model for describing societal changes in post-Soviet Estonia and relationships between Russians and Estonians:

Anna: The point of this whole thing [of the Soviet state] fell apart but the point of this thing was indeed wonderful. Each of us existed in our own culture and also together. This was an ideal model. They can say about this Soviet time whatever they want but this is the way it was; this is the way it was. I cannot see how we could have been Russifying those Estonians of ours. For instance, in giving the example of our family, I am talking about all these cousins of mine [...]. They studied in Estonian schools during the Soviet era, and they received an excellent education from the University of Tartu. I don't know that anything was wrong with them. They were Estonians. They were Estonians and nobody was Russifying them. (July 8, 2010)

Anna's personal experiences and reasoning attest to conclusions reached by Uku Lember in his study on Estonian-Russian mixed families. Between 2009 and 2011 Lember conducted around 90 interviews with parents born in 1930–1950 and with children born in 1950–1970. He found, contrary to his expectation, that Soviet-era mixed families were not fraught with cultural and social conflicts. People “lived in a situation where they did not sense in their lives tensions between [Estonian and Russian] cultural worlds” (Lember 2015). Moreover, members of mixed families downplayed friction and used various means to contain, conceptualise and channel ethno-cultural

differences (e.g. taking up cooking, folk singing and folk dance). Only in the late 1980s did some of them feel a need to take a clearer stand on political and social issues and to place family relations in the broader societal context. Silence, the absence of perceived problems, could turn into silencing, avoidance of conflicting issues, while an open discussion could lead to estrangement and divorce (ibid.; Lember 2016).

Damaged Reciprocity: The Case of Russian-Language Education

Anna and Maria both described the Soviet system as one characterised by mutual respect and perfect reciprocity between different ethnicities. The current undesirable state of affairs, on the other hand, was blamed on politics. This mode of thinking recalls Michael Herzfeld's concept "structural nostalgia" or the "idea of a time when state intervention was unnecessary for the conduct of a decent social life" (Herzfeld 2005: 147). One of the crucial features of structural nostalgia is that "the object of this rhetorical longing [...] takes the form of a damaged reciprocity": the allegedly decayed virtue longed for "always entails some measure of mutuality, a mutuality that has been, perhaps, irreversibly ruptured by the self-interest of modern times" (ibid.: 149).

The rhetoric of nostalgia obscures inequalities inherent in mutual relationships. As was suggested at the outset, Russian was the unmarked, default and taken-for-granted category in the Soviet Union, which may explain why back then Maria and Anna never experienced ethnicity as an issue. The regime change of 1991 along with its Estonian-centred nationalising citizenship and language policies pushed Russians and Russian-speakers into a marginal position that did not satisfy my interviewees. Maria's and Anna's reliance on the structural nostalgia model suggests that they felt themselves to be objects rather than subjects of politics and were looking for a more reciprocal relationship with the Estonian state.

For example, both women were concerned about the future of Russian-language education in Estonia. This was a hot topic in Estonia at the time of my fieldwork, since starting in fall 2011 Russian-

language secondary schools (grades 10–12) were required to teach at least 60 percent of the curriculum in Estonian (see Estonia.eu. Russian-language schools' transition). Similarly to several other Russian-speakers I interviewed, Maria and Anna felt an urge to discuss this topic, bringing it up on their own initiative. They pointed out that partial Estonian-language instruction would have a detrimental effect on the Russian skills of young Russians, who in their estimation already did not know how to "speak Russian beautifully." Both women were furthermore concerned about the prospect of not being able to speak Russian to their grandchildren, about weakening ties between family members and, more broadly, about the continuation of Russian culture in Estonia.

Several younger interlocutors of Slavic descent – individuals leading active and successful lives in the dominant Estonian society – expressed similar fears. However, I also encountered parents who spoke very little or no Estonian, but were proud to have sent their children to Estonian-language schools. Estonian-born Anna referred to such people as *sovetskiye* or "Soviets", emphasising their immigrant background and her own moral superiority. Her argument that the blind loyalty of Soviet-era settlers made it difficult for "Estonian Russians", that is Russians whose roots are in Estonia, to negotiate with Estonian authorities, followed the same pattern of reasoning that links uprootedness to unacceptable behaviour (Malkki 1992).

Significantly, from the perspective of silence and silencing, the existential fears expressed by critics of the school reform were missing from treatments of this topic in Estonian-language media. While the problematics of Russian-language schools did receive quite a lot of media attention at the time of my fieldwork, it tended to be discussed in terms of human resources and figures: sufficiency of qualified teaching personnel and adequate materials or lack thereof, shrinking numbers of students and the average age of teachers, scores on national examinations and language tests, feasibility of deadlines, and availability of funding.

Moreover, the Estonian Security Police (KaPo)

discouraged open public debates about the school reform by presenting it as an urgent matter of national security that “should not be exposed to the normal haggling of politics but should be dealt with decisively by top leaders” (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998: 24). Thus KaPo claimed in its 2011 annual report that the “preservation of the Russian-language education system” in Estonia would be in the interests of Russia’s “so-called compatriots policy” that misleads Russians and Russian citizens in Estonia “in order to influence the sovereign decisions” of the Estonian state (Kaitsepolitseiamet 2012: 9, 10). As in the case of the April 2007 crisis sparked by the relocation of the Bronze Soldier monument, local Russian-speakers were deprived of agency by means of treating them as executors of hostile plans originating in the Russian Federation.

Conclusion

In Maria’s view, it was indecent to talk about ethnicity and yet it was beyond her capacity to control the amplification of ethnicity in public discourse and, in the case of school reform, what could be regarded as government intervention in family relations and intimate spaces. As an employee of a minority organisation, she was a cog in the very same integration system that was turning ethnic identities into merchandise. Examples discussed in this article point furthermore to a recurrent pattern of silencing Estonian Russian-speakers by means of ignoring their ability to act on their own initiative: criticisms of the school reform or government’s handling of the Bronze Soldier case are sidestepped and discouraged by means of framing the critics as fifth columnists working for Russia. In this framework Estonians become, once again, victims of Russian aggression.

Ethnicity as a marketable good is a matter of national policy that serves the interests of minority activists, politicians, officials and possibly also scholars. Silencing ethnicity, on the other hand, is a local strategy of co-existence and survival that emerges from sharing urban space and daily transactions. Since language serves as an important marker of ethnic identity in Estonia, it is not surprising that residents of Tallinn have developed various strategies to

avoid making a fuss about somebody’s choice of language. Yet silencing ethnicity also operates through tacitly recognised notions of Russian, Estonian and shared spaces in the capital. It is based on knowledge that is bodily, experience-based, gendered, spatial and rarely verbalised. Borders and trajectories Tallinners inscribe on urban space through their daily choices and habitual ways of doing things are only put into words and only become visible when they are violated. One has to be prepared to step back, negotiate and re-negotiate. The existence of such tacit shared understandings points to integration and cooperation outside the realm of state-funded multiculturalism and it was in this sphere that I felt ashamed to be studying ethnicity and integration.

Notes

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- 2 For example, Turam (2015); Valluvan (2016); Werbner (2013); Wise & Welayutham (2009, 2014).
- 3 In total, I conducted approximately forty interviews, some of which were group interviews; the interviews were in Estonian, Russian or in both languages. While the interviews included a relatively wide range of the population in terms of age, ethnicity, linguistic and educational backgrounds, political views and levels of engagement in social affairs, the analysis presented here does not make claims to representativeness, nor is selection bias a major concern in ethnographic studies.
- 4 Not all Russian-speakers identify as ethnic Russians. In this article, I use the term ‘Russian-speaker’ to refer to Russian native speakers irrespective of ethnic self-identification and ‘Russian’, ‘Ukrainian’ etc. to discuss ethnic identities. ‘Estonian’ is also used as an ethnonym.
- 5 Kõresaar (2005) analyses the rupture metaphor and Rausing (2004) the concept of normalcy; Lauristin and Vihalemm (1997) and Aarelaid-Tart (2006) employ the concepts of return and trauma, respectively.
- 6 Popular culture has likewise seen an increase in willingness to address these previously shunned complexities. Several recent films (e.g. the dramas *Purge* [2012] and *The Fencer* [2015], and the action war drama *1944* [2015]) show Estonians fighting in the Red Army and striving for self-fulfilment by means of taking advantage of ruthless Stalinist methods.

- 7 Literature on what happened in Tallinn in April 2007 is large, including Lehti, Jutila & Jokisipilä (2008), Kaiser (2012) and Poleshchuk (2009).

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