JONI VIRKKUNEN

Discourses, Boundaries and Scales

Estonian Territorial Politics
in the 'New' Europe

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To my parents,
To Arts,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A twelve-year-old Swedish youth returning home from holidays in the south of England in 1914 "on a blacked out ship overloaded with Russians" asked himself, "How could people be so stupid to start a world war?" He concluded that "they simply do not understand each other's history and geography," and thereupon chose a career in geography. (Buttimer 1993, 13)

The above is an apt quote from Anne Buttimer, who in her book *Geography and the Human Spirit,* discusses the practice and the very essence of geography through biographies of senior geographers. Clearly a humanist, Buttimer understands geography as a manifestation of the human spirit, a discipline appealing to higher levels of understanding, while simultaneously seeking to address socially and globally relevant issues with responsible sensitivity. My motivation for human geography, regional studies and Estonian territorial politics is based on similar humanism and, of course, on the long-lasting interest in the changes in European political map.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when my first trips to Estonia took place, Estonia portrayed itself as an exciting Soviet republic with somewhat similar (but funnier) language to Finnish and a very strong national spirit. The Soviet Union had already passed her heyday, but the patrolling Soviet border guards with their enormous round caps and keen-eyed security checks that welcomed passengers in the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic surely reminded the tourist who holds and intend to hold the legitimate power in the state. On the streets, pro-independence demonstrations, symbolic anti-state actions and nationally coloured cultural events were the other (and then still illegal) reality. One incident after a music festival in Tallinn, however, made me to deliberate upon the character and power of Estonian nationalism. As we arrived home that night after several kilometres of walking from the city centre, my Estonian friends Arts, Erkki and Shenkenberg were jumping into the backyard pool, splashing water around and joking *"Eesti vabaks! Eesti vabaks! Eesti vabaks!"* [1]. Only a few months after this, the Soviet state had collapsed, my friends had received their independence, and the entire society was at the beginning of an extraordinary transformation. This dissertation is a product of the political and territorial elements of that extraordinary transformation.

Many friends and colleagues have supported this research through the years and I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have helped me both at work and in non-academic circles. Even though it is not possible to mention everyone here, there are some people I particularly wish to acknowledge.

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[1] *"Estonia to be freed! Estonia to be freed! Estonia to be freed!"*

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Last but not least, I want to dedicate this work to my parents Sini and Lare, as well as to my best friend Arts who passed away only a few days after the initial assessment of my research in autumn 2001. Without them I would not be here today.

In Joensuu, 5th of February 2002
Joni Virkkunen

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation *Discourses, Boundaries and Scales: Estonian Territorial Politics in the 'New' Europe* looks at the recent European transformation by exploring the construction of boundaries on various geographical scales and in multifarious social practices, in the post-Soviet Estonian context.

The study provides international relations theories and political studies with a regional studies perspective to the contested formation of post-Soviet Estonian boundaries and identities. Identities and geographical imaginations are arguably not the results of inter-state power relations or geopolitical strategies of the national political elite only. These are also negotiated in everyday contexts and local spaces of social movements, less formal or non-institutional activities, and face-to-face contacts. Naturally, boundaries remain the subjects of national and international politics as well, but it is the everyday contexts that form the local scenes within which people elaborate their strategies of survival and formulate their particular political demands.

The meaning of identity in territorial politics was clearly manifested in the way that the newly established Estonian and Russian border was celebrated as a national victory by Estonians. Despite rapid internationalisation and deep European integration efforts, the border continues to have a strong symbolic meaning to a nation that for fifty years considered itself oppressed by the Soviet Union. Many elements give rise and further transform identities and boundaries. Both *practical* policy formulations of the Estonian government (such as legislation and policy formulations) and *popular geopolitics* of media, comics, cinema and so on are as significant elements of identity-related territorial formation as the *formal* security policies of the Estonian strategic planners and institutions (such as defence plans). Estonian territorial politics continues to take place at diverse geographical scales and political spaces simultaneously.

In post-Soviet Estonia, the legal 'nationalisation' and the local manifestations of both the socio-economic transition and the Estonian-Russian border became crucial elements of everyday survival and political argumentation. These formed a new contextual frame for both international and local geopolitical discourse as well as laid a basis for a broad conceptualisation of security. It is these theoretical and empirical elements of the 'discourses, boundaries and scales' in Estonian territorial politics that are analysed in depth in this case study.

Key words: Boundaries, Discourses, Estonia, European Union, Scales, Territories

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä väitöskirja *Diskursseja, rajoja ja maantiedettä: Viron territorion politiikkaa 'uudessa' Euroopassa* tarkastelee Euroopan viimeaikaista kehitystä Neuvostoliiton jälkeisten rajojen ja Viron yhteiskunnallisten muutoksen näkökulmista. Erityistä huomiota Viron 'territorion politiikassa' kiinnitetään rajan ja yhteiskunnallisten toimintojen maantieteellisyyteen.

Tämä tutkimus tarjoaa kansainvälisten suhteiden teorioihin ja politiikan tutkimukselle aluetieteellisen tulkinnan Viron Neuvostoliiton jälkeisten rajojen muutoksesta. Raja-alueiden identiteetit ja geopoliittiset kuvitelmat eivät ole pelkästään valtioiden välisten valtasuhteiden tai kansallisen poliittisen eliitin geopoliittisten strategioiden tulosta. Vaikka identiteettiä ja geopolitiikkaa tuotetaan myös kansallisella ja kansainvälisellä tasolla, ovat ne myös jokapäiväisen elämän ympäristössä ja paikallisissa kansalaisjärjestöjen areenoilla tapahtuvan toiminnan, järjestäytyneiden ja ei-institutionalisoitujen käytäntöjen sekä henkilökohtaisten neuvottelujen tulosta. Jokapäiväisen elämän ympäristö muodostaa eräänlaisen päivittäisen politiikan näyttämön, josta paikallisten toimijoiden selviytymis-strategiat ja poliittisten vaatimusten perusta nousevat.

Identiteetin merkitys territorion politiikassa näkyy mielenkiintoisella tavalla muun muassa siinä, miten virolaiset kunnioittavat vasta muutama vuosi sitten kartalle merkittyä, joskin kahdenvälisin sopimuksin virallistamatonta, Viron ja Venäjän välistä rajaa. Viron nopeasta kansainvälistymisestä ja eurooppalaisesta yhdentymisestä huolimatta rajoilla on edelleen suuri symbolinen merkitys kansalle, joka 50 vuotta koki elävänsä Neuvosto-vallan sortamana. Voidaan silti väittää, että sekä Viron hallituksen *käytännön geopoliittiset* sanamuodot lainsäädännössä ja sektoripolitiikkojen muotoilussa että paikallisen median pilapiirrosten *populaari geopolitiikka* muovaavat identiteettiin kiinnittynyttä rajaa siinä missä maan strategisten suunnittelijoiden ja turvallisuuslaitosten *formaali geopolitiikkakin.* On siis tunnustettava, että Viron viimeaikaista rajojen muutosta ei voi tulkita suhteuttamatta sitä kansalliseen, paikalliseen sekä kansainväliseen kehitykseen. Tämä tarkoittaa sitä, että Viron territorion politiikkaa tehdään monilla maantieteen tasoilla ja politiikan näyttämöillä samanaikaisesti.

Neuvostoliiton jälkeisessä Virossa muun muassa lainsäädännön kautta tapahtuneesta 'kansallistumisesta', yhteiskunnallis-taloudellisista muutoksista sekä Viron ja Venäjän välisen rajan paikallisista ilmenemismuodoista on tullut keskeisiä jokapäiväisen selviytymisen ja poliittisten argumentaation lähteitä. Ne muodostivat uuden kontekstuaalisen kehyksen sekä kansainväliselle että paikalliselle poliittiselle puhunnalle, sekä laajan turvallisuuskäsitteen muotoutumiselle. Tämä tutkimus käsittelee näitä 'diskurssien, rajojen ja maantieteen' teoreettisia ja empiirisiä elementtejä Viron territorion politiikassa.

Avainsanat: diskurssit, Euroopan unioni, maantiede, rajat, territoriot, Viro

Discourses, Boundaries and Scales: Introduction

DISCOURSES, BOUNDARIES AND SCALES:

INTRODUCTION

Setting the Scene

> *In front of the Estonian television and radio building volunteers stood in guard. Special units of the Red Army were waiting for commands at a large weaponry factory by the outskirts of Lasnamägi. Everywhere, throughout the country, televisions and radios were switched on. Non-stop talk shows were broadcast on the radio so that the any break in programming would be immediately noted. Rumours and news were around, more rumours than news, and the situation in Moscow changed all the time. It was August 1991 and the days of military coup in the Soviet Union.* (Sarasmo 2001, translated by J. Virkkunen).

The above is a quote from an article recounting the situation in Estonia ten years ago, shortly before the formal reintroduction of the country's independence in August 1991. The transition from a socialist Soviet Estonia to a rather modish European state has been fast. Like many other formerly socialist 'East European' states, Estonia has sought to establish a firm national identity and, simultaneously, expressed a will for rapid and deep integration with global and European structures such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the European Union. For an outside observer, the Soviet coup and the strictly limited freedom of speech, as well as the chronic deficit of basic everyday goods, seem distant. Yet, the post-Soviet Estonian social and territorial changes have gone through diverse simultaneous processes in which new maps of meanings have been created, ones seemingly transformed to correspond with (or challenge) the prevailing social and territorial realities.

With 'nationalising nationalism' and intensive European integration, the Estonian territory is simultaneously closing its borders toward the former enemies in the 'East' and opening borders for increasing competition and contact with the 'West' (Lauristin 1997). The post-Soviet Estonian State is at the same time taking a moral and physical distance from Russian-speaking Soviet immigrants and the Russian Federation, elements that are conceived as the major (internal and external) threats for the recently re-introduced national independence. In the re-negotiation of the state and citizenship boundaries, the Estonian political elite chose a restitutionist interpretation of independence (Smith 1998, 1999; Aalto 2000, 2001). That was a political decision with profound influence both in the ethnic and territorial dialogue on post-Soviet Estonia. Not only did the new *jus sanguis* principle of citizenship legislation exclude some 500 000 people of Estonia's population of 1.5 million from citizenship, but also politicised the domestic inter-ethnic discourse (Lauristin & Vihalemm 1997: 101; Berg & Oras 2000: 606). Moreover, even ten years after gaining independence border treaty between the Estonian Republic and the Russian Federation has not been signed. Although the Estonian Republic recognises the practical and

political difficulties in incorporating the 2000 km2 of inter-war 'Estonian' territory within the 'new' Estonian state (see Figure 1)[1], a conscious abandonment of the inter-war borderline based on Tartu Peace Treaty (signed in 1920) would mean an acknowledgement of Soviet presence in Estonia. Yet, recognising the validity of the Tartu Peace Treaty would also result in Russia losing part of its territory, possibly transporting and resettling parts of her (and Soviet immigrant) population, as well as compensating Estonia economically for the damages caused by the Soviet occupation (Berg & Oras 2000: 611). The unsettled Russian-Estonian state border as well as the large Russian-speaking minority in Estonia is, therefore, also an element of Russia's identity-related geopolitical strategy in Europe (Malachov 1997; Joenniemi 2001). The post-Soviet Estonian border has become a concern both in domestic (local and national) and international scales of politics.
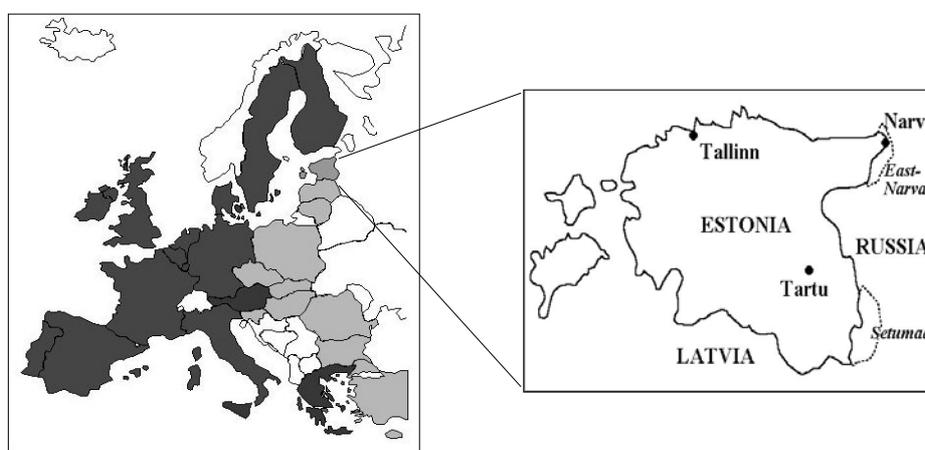
Figure 1. Estonia and the 'Eastern' applicant states for European Union membership

This research studies the Estonian territorial politics from the viewpoint of discourses, boundaries, and scales. Instead of merely looking at 'high politics' by the officials of the Estonian state, attention is also paid to civil 'non-state' speech, which is the product of a continuously changing set of social relations and cultural positions constructed through diverse, often contradictory, social discourses. These are spatial representations and practices that produce particular visions of the meaning of one's place in the world and the global system (Dijkink 1996; Agnew 1998). Thus, 'territorial politics' here refers to a much broader set of social phenomena than formal geopolitical activity, or the policing of national boundaries:

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[1] The border between Estonia and Russia is *de jure* based on the Tartu Peace Treaty signed between Estonia and Soviet Russia in 1920 (Berg & Oras 2000). Compared with the tsarist border in the 19th and early 20th century, the treaty gave Estonia several villages on the left bank of the Narva River in the north and the region around Petseri (Pechory) – Setumaa – in the south within the Estonian Republic. After annexing Estonia to the Soviet Union, Stalin restored the old tsarist borders and joined about 2000 km2 of previously Estonian territory to the Russian SFSR. Today, these form the *de facto* borders between Estonia and the Russian Federation.

boundary drawing practice that, according to Campbell (1992: 26; see also Jauhiainen 1997; Häkli & Kaplan 2002b), contextualises the territorial geopolitics with more pervasive cultural geo-politics. The research is motivated by the necessity to trace those cultural elements and to contextualise both Estonian and the larger European development. Besides political processes, a particular set of historical and cultural conditions give us an access to the spaces within which the Estonian inter-ethnic and territorial change is implemented and interpreted. However, the goal in this research is not to produce an exhaustive 'map of maps', but rather to discuss the diversity of meanings and processes that underlie the reorganisation of the Estonian territory. The development of Estonia into a 'West European' state has evidently not been solely the product of centrally co-ordinated foreign policy, but increasingly also the outcome of processes taking place at local and global geographic scales as well (see Kaplan 1999). Soviet Estonian resistance, actualised on the local level through a civil perspective and activity, characterised the Estonian springboard toward independent ethnic and territorial politics.

The study utilises a constructivist methodology that has encouraged the disciplines of political science, international relations studies, and human geography to adopt new 'localised' perspectives on post-Soviet Estonian and European development. The research also reflects the recent developments in boundary studies, and aims at providing an awareness of different spaces and scales, within which social and territorial politics take place. Here, boundaries can be viewed as elements of geopolitics that combine identity politics and territorial development within one frame of analysis. The following section sets up the main elements of boundaries as subjects of research.

Boundaries as Subjects of Research

The Penguin Dictionary of Human Geography defines *boundary* as a "line demarcating recognised limits of established political units, such as → *states* and *administrative areas*" (Goodall 1987: 45). The dictionary also acknowledges the fact that (territorial) boundaries are not natural. The dictionary appreciates the diversity of *boundary types* – physical, ethnic, historical etc. – and states that *borders,* as "districts or zones lying along each side of the boundary", and *frontiers,* as "zonal areas at the margins of the settled territory of a state," are related but not fully synonyms with boundaries. However, the outlined definition reflects a rather structural conception of space by celebrating boundaries and frontiers as outcomes of states' spatial competition and a particular stage in expansion. The definition fully ignores the wide range of social and political processes, as well as continuously changing cultural conditions within which states and boundaries are formed. After presenting an overall history and paradigms of contemporary boundary research, the social constructivist conception of boundaries will be discussed and will demonstrate the conceptual and methodological basis of this research.

Classical Border Concepts
and the Challenge of Critical Geopolitics

Boundaries have been in the very centre of political geography since the last part of the 19th century. During the early years of 'boundary studies', boundaries were subjects of an anarchic view of state sovereignty that represented a convergence of the rising positivism, nationalism, and Darwinian politico-geographical thought (Paasi 1999b: 12). This was the period of rising modernist ideology and strong nation state system, in which only 'natural' borders – borders untouched by human creation and 'artificial' production – were presented as real and permanent (Rykiel 1995; Paasi 1999b). Boundary was inward-oriented, pointing to a line of inclusion and exclusion (related the rise of nationalism) while frontier was more outward-oriented zone of contact (manifested itself in colonies that functioned for the service of power) (Taylor 1994a: 163-164). This imperial vision of boundaries was rejected only after the First World War as the political reflection of the bewildering landscape of blood, sky, and death that led millions of young men to their deaths (O'Tuathail 1996: 110).

Despite the new centrally institutionalised state borders, the inter-war period between the World Wars has still been regarded as 'the golden era of geopolitics' (O'Tuathail 1996). The newly formalised nation state system and 'unfair' peace treaty intensified and politicised the contemporary political map of Europe. Boundaries became the centres of an increasing anti-Versailles atmosphere and, significantly, allowed the German geopolitical project to recover Germany's position in Europe (Herb 1989; 1997). The rise of Haushofer's *Geopolitics* (1927), Nazi ideology and the outbreak of Second World War became an unpleasant reality. The Second World War and the political abuse of geopolitical terminology almost completely excluded both geopolitics and the boundary concept from political geography. The issues were widely replaced by a desire to gain deeper understanding of territory and sovereignty (Paasi 1999b:13-14). An increasing attention to social theory, however, forecasted a change from boundary conflict approach and rather technical boundary type classification approach to more sophisticated analysis (Newman & Paasi 1998: 189). The new approach strove to understand the mechanisms and meanings of world systems and state territoriality in which boundary lines and were artefacts are associated with two forms of border related activities: smuggling and diplomacy (see Johnston 1978; Knight 1982, 1985; Sack 1986; Taylor 1994b, 1995; Agnew 1994). Jouni Häkli and David Kaplan (2002b; see Minghi 1963, 1991), however, underline that several significant, but relatively neglected, studies on boundaries was conducted by nationalist historians. This was despite the fact that the period from the late 1950s to the late 1980s could be characterised with relatively stabile international borders (van Houtum 2000a: 58). Also, Häkli and Kaplan give credit for Fredrik Barth (1969), an anthropologist who for first time explicitly theorised the connection between collective identification and boundaries.

The renaissance of 'boundary studies' took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the progressing European integration made the profoundly shaking European political map an extraordinary subject of research. In the 'new Europe', boundaries were apparently disappearing in the process of globalisation and European

integration (de-territorialisation) and, simultaneously, reappearing when the 'East European' states turned to 'nationalising nationalism' (re-territorialisation) (Paasi 1999b: 14-17). In the academic social science, the post-modern paradigm had already began to break disciplinary boundaries between 'academic tribes and territories' as well as to increase an awareness of different disciplinary perspectives. Where as cultural studies, political science and international relation discourse discovered the importance of space and place in the formation of (state) territories, political geographers and geopolitics discourse became increasingly inspired by the diversity of cultural and social meanings, as well as the 'non-foundational' socially constructed character of (state) boundaries (Campbell 1992; Moisio & Harle 1999; Murphy 1999). In consequence, boundaries became identified as cultural and symbolic manifestations of the state territoriality. They became conceived as products of particular social processes and institutionalisation, products of politics, which has its roots deep in local culture and history (*space of places*), as well as in the world characterised by increasing world trade and international financial flows (*space of flows*) (Castells 1997). (see Agnew 1993; Newman & Paasi 1998: 187; Anderson & O'Dowd 1999: 594). In contrast to the 'classical geopolitical' view, the social constructivist approach to states and boundaries, the basis to this research, is well acknowledged by so-called 'critical geopolitics'.

      'Critical geopolitics' rose from a perceived need to challenge the 'classical geopolitics' by problematising and pluralising both 'geo' and 'politics'. Theorists such as Simon Dalby and Geroild O'Tuathail (1998: 3; see also Dalby 1991; Agnew & O'Tuathail 1992; Dodds & Sidaway 1994; Dijkink 1996; Häkli 1998a) suggest that the critical study of geopolitics[2] must be grounded in particular cultural mythologies of the state, conceptual and imaginary processes that make boundaries and territories meaningful. This is significant because the new approach widens the scope and substance of boundary politics: no longer are states and territories conceived of as subjects of international politics only, but also elements of diverse boundary drawing practices that characterise the everyday life of the state, and its people (Falah & Newman 1995; Paasi 1999a). In contrast to earlier (boundary) studies, this anticipated a change in which state boundaries are no longer treated as static lines or the subject of 'high politics' of the state only. Rather, they are discursively formed elements of politics and counter politics, as well as culturally and historically demarcated processes at local and national and international scales (Agnew 1993; Dijkink 1996; Routledge 1996). Yet, boundaries are at once gateways and barriers to the 'outside world', protective and imprisoning, areas of opportunity and/or insecurity, zones of contact and/or conflict, of co-operation and/or competition (Anderson & O'Dowd 1999: 595).

      In contemporary European political map, the dialectic character of boundaries is evident. In 'boundary studies' that has been a driving force for the inter-disciplinary dialogue

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[2] In this context, 'critical' does not refer to the Frankfurt School of social sciences – Jürgen Habermas as the leading figure (see Ashley 1987; Fay 1987; Moisio 1999) – but to social constructivist notion according to which territories, boundaries, and consciousness are socially constructed. Closely related to 'critical geopolitics' are 'critical security studies' (see Buzan 1991, 1998; Campbell 1992; Krause & Williams 1997).

combining diversity of socio-cultural, economic and political elements of boundaries. In addition to countless articles in international journals of social science and boundary studies, several interesting edited volumes on diversity and transformation of boundaries has been published as well (see O'Dowd & Wilson 1996; Shapiro & Alker 1996; Eskelinen, Liikanen & Oksa 1999; Ahponen & Jukarainen 2000; van der Velde & van Houtum 2000; Bucken-Knapp & Schack 2001; Joenniemi & Viktorova 2001; Häkli & Kaplan 2002a). The content of these volumes illustrates well the scope and extent of approaches contemporary territorial transformation is studied. Henk van Houtum (2000a, 2000b; see also Paasi 1999b; Jukarainen 2000) identifies three dominant and influential debates in the studies of borders and border regions: 'Borders and flows', 'Border regions and cross-border cooperation', and 'People and the constructions of borders.

The so-called 'flow approach', dominated by regional economics and economic geographers, focuses on the flow, be it of goods, labour, or capital (see Martinez 1994; Bazegski & Laine 2000; Barjak & Heimpold 2001; Janssen 2001). The European union structural funding for cross-border development, INTERREG in particular, as well as the recent cross-border institutionalisation have been the motivator for the so-called 'cross-border co-operation approaches' (see Zotti 1996; Häkli 1998b; Scott 1999, 2000; Antikainen & Vartiainen 2000; Cronberg 2000, Eskelinen 2000; Berg 2001: O'Dowd 2001; Gramch 2001). The border is seen as an element of larger European spatial politics, as a wide element of regional development that may both benefit and challenge the future regional development with active involvement and co-operation. In a sense, regions are 'agents' or 'active spaces', which endorse the institutionalisation of cross-border co-operation (van Houtum 2000b: 5). This cross-border approach views Europe from the viewpoint of 'the economics of co-operation', 'the policy of co-operation'. Yet, as acknowledged that European space experiences a process of re-territorialisation, the de-territorialisation debate and 'borderless Europe' provides useful but nevertheless insufficient means for understanding the grounds *behind* social and political boundaries. For this reason, the third debate on construction of borders and diversity of border processes is appealing (Paasi 1996; Dalby & O'Tuathail 1998; Aalto 2001). Borders are seen as elements of socio-spatial identity and identity politics, which transforms the focus from physical borders to the diversity of meanings and people. Borders are interpreted as necessary constitutents of social and individual life and are, therefore, studied in terms of their relevance rather than their barrier effect. (van Houtum 2000a: 68). Borders are, as expressed in this research on Estonian territorial development, not only identity-related elements of territorial politics but also social and political constructs (see Berg 1999; Brednikova 1999, 2000; Jauhiainen 1999; Virkkunen 2001, 2002).

In this border research context, the new 'critical' approach emphasising more sociological, socio-psychological and discursive elements of boundaries, corresponds better with the actual needs of this research (Anderson M 1996: 3). Only by appreciating the historical and cultural meanings as well as the diversity of spaces and scales of Estonian territorial politics, it is possible to conduct a successful study on recent 'nationalisation' and European integration debates in Estonia. Also, only a thorough understanding of the social meanings of the local socio-economic and political realities give us some competence to interpret the way non-Estonian 'self'

is subjectively perceived, institutionalised and managed (Aalto 2001). Therefore, placing attention to theoretical and methodological issues of boundary-making discourse will permit a glance at the ways states and loyalties of the past meet contemporary socio-political realities, conceptual threats and expectations of the future. The Estonian 'nationalisation' as well as the enlargement of European economic and military structures promote welfare and stability, but in the context of fast social change, also create serious moments of insecurity.

The Discursive Methodology of Critical Geopolitics

The basic methodological assumption of 'critical geopolitics' is related with the fact that social life and geopolitics are the products of social construction, discursive practices at diverse geographic scales (Dalby 1991; Agnew & O'Tuathail 1992; Dalby & O'Tuathail 1998). This reflects the recent academic discourse according to which different realities co-exist, and also are equally important in forming and reforming the geographical world (see Eyles 1988; Barnes & Duncan 1992a). Yet, post-modern attitude in social construction approach not only raises the value of diversity and subjective element in the formation of the geographical world, but also gives a common ground for a diversity of approaches in 'boundary studies' (Aalto 2001).

The social constructivist approach forms the basic methodological conditions of this research, and offers an access to numerous simultaneous (and often contradictory) discourses on Estonian territory. According to the constructivist approach, Estonian social reality cannot be explained by grand theories or simplistic social modelling, but rather may be better understood by analysing different co-existing realities and, particularly, power relations between those realities (Eyles 1988; Anderson & Gale 1992). The approach does not conceptualise the Estonian territorial reality as independent from human activity but, rather, as social construction that is continuously modified along with peoples' attempts to understand and alter the social world (Berger & Luckmann 1992; Jokinen, Juhila & Suoninen 1993). Therefore, the focus of this research is directed away from one 'objective' territorial reality – reality *per se* – to language and other social representations manifesting and modifying Estonian territory. The Estonian territory is communicated in textual language or pictures (such as photographs, maps and paintings) and (re)presented in diverse social discourses or views of 'facts'.

Discourse is the very central concept in the social constructivist approach to borders and territories. It actualises the site of representation itself represented in a sign (Mels 1997: 8). Discourse points to, "all the ways in which we communicate with one another, to that vast network of signs, symbols, and practices through which we make our world(s) meaningful to ourselves and to others" (Gregory 1994a: 11). Discourse is not, "the language expression of an individual in isolation but rather the common ground that makes it possible not only to speak, but also to make or write a speech to which others can respond, and thereby creating the basis for the extended conversation that is discourse" (Mels 1997: 8). Discourses not only help us to understand and interpret the surrounding reality, but also make us to categorise things in order to make them meaningful and linguistically transferable (*ibid.*; Häkli 1999: 135). Going even

further, Jouni Häkli (1998a: 338; see Gregory 1994a) talks about 'deep space' while explaining the non-essentialist character of spatial understanding. He characterises 'deep space' as an element of relativity of terrestrial space, the "space of everyday life in all its scales from the global to the local and the architectual in which different layers of life and social landscape are sedimented onto and into each other". As social facts in specific time-space reality, those discourses mediate our subjective interpretations. They reflect as well as construct the society around us.

In the 'post-Soviet' Estonian territorial politics, discourse refers to pre-Soviet and Soviet conceptualisations as much as to recent post-Soviet reflections of 'nationalisation', socio-economic transitions, political debates and power hierarchies (Lagerspetz 1996; Jauhiainen 1998; Berg & Oras 2000; Feldman 2001a, 2001b; Virkkunen 2001). The Estonian space is not an outcome of spatial isolation, but rather of reflective interaction of competing discourses of social and territorial institutionalisation. Despite gaining the most column space in Estonian public speech, the Estonian 'nationalising' discourse is not the only approach to post-Soviet Estonian territory (Aalto 2001; Virkkunen 2001). Neither is the Estonian geopolitics a product of Estonian political elite only. Rather, the legal and institutional as well as symbolic elements of Estonian territory are being formed in diverse spaces and scales of politics, both in domestic (Estonian and non-Estonian) and international argumentation. Hence, neither the Estonian or non-Estonian discourses nor my 'scholarly informed' interpretation of those can be detached from their social roots. Both the representation and interpretation of Estonian space are, therefore, contextually formed and informed.

Like in post-modern social science, contextuality, relativity and diversity of space are central to critical geopolitics. Unlike the *realist* (or objectivist) approach, critical geopolitics does not regard reality as independent and universal, or texts as neutral tools for communication to be used in describing 'outside reality' as it is (Dalby 1991; Dalby & O'Tuathail 1998). However, neither does 'ultra-relativm' provide critical geopolitics satisfactory means. While some elements of anti-foundationalism, anti-universalism (no generalisations) and anti-objectivism (claim that reality exists only through our conceptions) may be useful in analysing geopolitical discourses, a clear-cut exclusion of theoretical conceptualiations and material world would not only ignore social interactivity and politics, but would also leave the analysis somewhat floating. In his interesting but polemic book *Return of the Diabolic Positivism* Pertti Töttö (2000) underlines that, especially when speaking in terms of research methods, a rhetoric distinction to positivist and anti-positivist approaches are not only wrong, but also misleading. In real life both may provide useful elements for research. For this purpose, Pirjo Jukarainen (2000, see Figure 1) introduces the so-called *contextual relativist* approach to correspond these challenges related with the arbitrary distinction between 'subject' and 'object', as well as 'material' and 'social construction'.

By utilising an example of two imaginary persons – David and Annie – the figure 2 below creatively illustrates the primary difference between 'scientific' realist approach, radical relativist approach and contextual relativist reasoning. Jukarainen's figure represents the *contextual relativist* approach and illustrates David and Annie in their individual social contexts (Jukarainen 2000; see Jokinen, Juhila & Suominen 1993: 18). The contextual relativist approach, somewhat

narrower than the (strict) *relativist* approach, credits David's and Annie's interpretations as two independent realities. Relativists draw their authority from an anti-*realist* critique of 'scientific' data analysis, general laws in social science and full denial of universal reality. For relativists, the reality is not the material world but, rather, the way David and Annie interpret it. However, as the (strict) relativist view denies the objective existence of the material world and endorses the 'crisis of representation'[3], it is criticised of not leading to insight concerning a praxis that can contest the present state of social inequality.
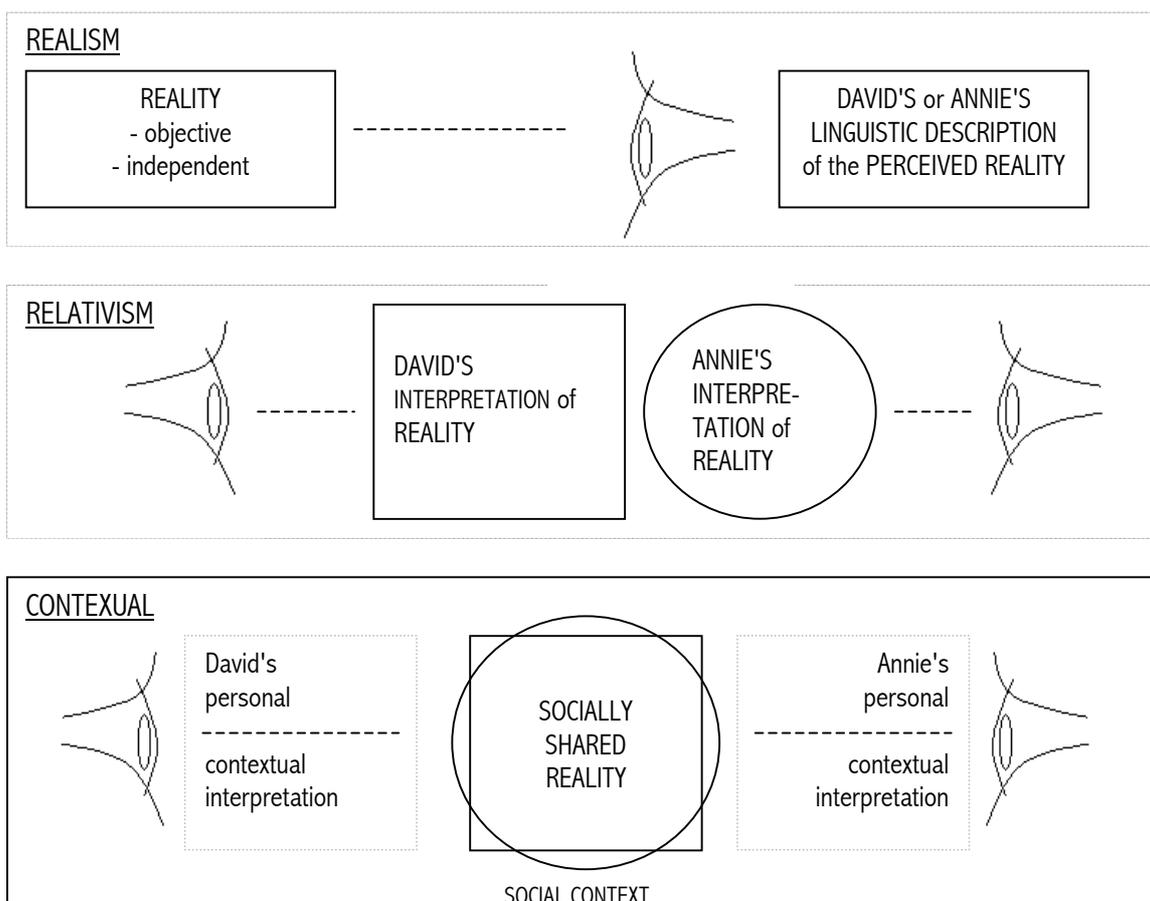
Figure 2. Different conceptions of reality (modified from Jukarainen 2000)

Jukarainen's contextual relativist approach – based on critical realist methodological doubt, therefore, addresses simultaneously the conceptual and material elements of reality. This enables better understanding (not realist explanation) of particular realities and denies the scientific

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[3] The 'crisis of representation' stems from the fact that people can neither transcend their human subjectivity nor the limits of language. Language both enables and constrains our knowledge of the world. The crisis concerns the question of how we can ever adequately represent people, societies and places, when our own language are culturally, personally and otherwise positioned (Mels 1997: 6).

possibility of neutrality. Subjective interpretations or representations cannot be understood as independent of social and material reality. They are contextually *situated*, written as well as interpreted from certain viewpoints in particular subjectively conceived places. Therefore, only explicit acknowledgement of contextual environment and subjectivity guarantees a less 'objectivist' and thus socially sensitive research.

If we look at Estonian territorial discourse from contextual relativist point of view, we may find that our conceptualisation of 'Estonia' is formed over a long period through history. Our – as well as Dave's and Annie's individual – conceptualisation is the product of diverse institutional and non-institutional discourses and socialisation, of the way we in our socially shared everyday environment conceive the territory we call 'Estonia'. In other words, Estonia is the outcome of our interpretations and manners of speaking and writing, understanding, expressing, and presenting 'the map' in certain contexts. However, Estonia is also a very concrete politically institutionalised reality with guarded borderlines and recently 'nationalised' legislation. Yet, as Häkli (1994: 13), referring to Rorty (1982), concludes: "Objects [Estonian territory and her boundaries] themselves do not have the ability to verify our beliefs, even when we approach them by means of unobscured cognition, strict methodology or transparent language". Objects and conceptualisations are inseparable aspects of social spatiality constituted in and through materiality, social relations and meaning. It is through these that the methodological commitment of critical geopolitics brought identities and territories as well as their boundary related practices at different scales to the focus.

Identities, Territories and Scales in Geopolitics

The constructivist methodology based on *contextual relativism* implies a clear analytical frame for my 'critical geopolitics' approach to Estonian territorial politics. This sets the basis for the choice of methods as well as the set of questions to be investigated. Besides linguistic (and other) representations of ethnic and territorial boundaries, the constructivist methodology directs attention to manifold social and political processes behind the prevailing (ethnic and territorial) boundaries (Agnew & O'Tuathail 1992). In my research, therefore, the post-Soviet Estonian territory is not studied as static and 'naturalised' manifested in the processes of dominant foreign policy discourses but, rather, as product of diverse hegemonic and public, non-hegemonic and less public social discourses. The Estonian 'geo' in our conceptual and territorial map is produced in diverse spaces and scales of politics.

When describing the relation between 'imaginative geography' and a state's foreign policy, Gertjan Dijkink (1996:11) argues that "it has even been asserted that foreign policy is a way to redress domestic order rather than react to objective changes in the international system". Foreign policy is about *geopolitical visions* and "any idea concerning the relation between one's own and other places, involving feelings of (in)security or (dis)advantage (and/or) invoking ideas about a collective mission or foreign policy strategy." In other words, Dijkink establishes a firm link between subjective feelings of (in)security and (dis)advantage, and domestic and foreign policy

formulations. He confirms the fact that the formation of territories and boundaries does not only take place at diverse 'vertical scales' of (local-national-global) geopolitics, but also at different 'horizontal scales' (sites) of politics (see Dalby & O'Tuathail 1998). They are as much about European institutional politics, related with structural operations and citizens' identity-related resistance, as they are about the elite's nation building and state making (Agnew 1993; Routledge 1996; Pile 1997).

For constructivist human geography and geopolitics, the scale concept from physical geography, remote sensing and GIS methodologies is relevant only to a certain extent. The notions of cartographic scale (distance on the map versus distance on the earth), operational scale (level at which relevant processes operate) and geographical scale (spatial extent of a phenomenon or a study) do not express themselves the way they are produced and reproduced (Marston 2000: 220). Rather, For the purposes of this research, scale could be related with the diversity of political and territorial political contexts within which actors interaction and, significantly, negotiate alliances and bargains for political power (Cox 1996, 1998; Häkli & Kaplan 2002b). Anssi Paasi (1999a: 8-13), for example, uses scale in the discussion of national identity advocated by Michael Billig (1995; see also Anderson 1991): 'banal nationalism'. In this, nationalism is about national imagination and national identity, daily habits and routines as well as ways of talking about nationhood. Accordingly, nationalism is an outcome of the process of producing meanings, signs and values that are constantly flagged in, for example, the media through routine symbols and habits of language, the political rhetoric of governments or the sport pages (Moisio 1998; Tervo 1999). In a way, territorial identities form a continuum from personal and local to larger scales (Falah & Newman 1995: 691; Paasi 1999a: 12), which incorporates a diversity of micro and macro elements of nationalism into the analysis. In this case, identities and spatial conceptualisations have different content in different environments and those conceptualisations change from one situation to another. As boundaries of national territory may be staked out with cultural markers and as economics is not a sufficient basis for a lasting class alliance, culture on its own is not sufficient basis for territorial delimitation (Anderson 1988). This, however, depends on the way the those 'secondary' sources of conflict are symbolically presented and utilised in divers social contexts and political purposes (Gurr 1993).

One of the most important influences in the 1980s 'new' culturally sensitive geopolitics was Michel Foucault's and Jacques Derrida's theories of the power/knowledge nexus in discourse, and the practice of textual deconstruction (Foucault 1980). It has been suggested that forms of power/knowledge are geopolitical and that our knowledge of the world as well as of subjects, objects, rituals and boundaries, are spatialised in certain textual processes. This approach gave a wide base for a diversity of power-related studies dealing with, among others, (geo)political narratives, spatial metaphors, genealogies and archeologies of knowledge. However, Foucault's sensitivity was especially significant because of his attempts to think and write critically about geopolitics (Dodds & Sidaway 1994). Knowledge was conceptualised not as type of consciousness, mode of perception or ideology, but as an outcome of tactics and strategies, implementations, distributions and demarcation and control. Besides Foucault, some roots of 'the

critical' in geopolitics can be traced from the social critique of feminist and anti-colonial social theorists.

The multifaceted post-modern attitude and the rising cultural diversity in social sciences encouraged feminist and anti-colonial writers to new radical approaches (Dodds & Sidaway 1994; Duncan & Ley 1993). The world and mainstream social sciences were increasingly seen as dominated by Western white-coloured straight male discourses and an unequal distribution of power. The prevailing conceptual space was criticised for not giving room for knowledge as encounter, as 'one of the regions of my care', besides the European male representation and unequal superior attitude. The modern national knowledge, based on Enlightenment, and rationality was profoundly gendered by patriarchal presuppositions and unequal distribution of power (Duncan & Ley 1993: 5). Therefore, Duncan and Ley (*ibid*.: 6) argue, one should seek to avoid a tendency toward reification Euro-centric and patriarchal elements into research as well as to take 'the Other' seriously. The latter refers not only to Edward Said's 'imaginary geographies' of the (Western myth of) 'Orient' (Said 1994, 1995), but also to diverse non-dominant discourses reflecting the perspectives of third world, non-white, non-European, non-Christian, female, gay, physically or mentally disabled and so on. It is from this post-modern cultural pluralist attitude that many of the contemporary political geography and critical geopolitics approaches arise.

Post-modern cultural pluralism and the acknowledgement of knowledge as one of the central elements of territorial organisation, have brought interesting elements to political geography. States, regions and territories are increasingly conceptualised through a process of socialisation – spatial socialisation (Paasi 1996). As individual members of the nation, people become socialised within the territorial unity of the nation. Space becomes conceptualised through a common national story, territorialised into a national consciousness. In his classical theory of territoriality, Rober Sack (1983) stressed that the constructions of territories and boundaries are not questions of instinctive behaviour, but rather questions of *power* and *control* over an area or space. Territories require efforts to establish and maintain, unlike other places, and are results of *strategies* to affect, influence and control. Yet, territory expresses internal cohesion and external differentiation: territories are 'nationalised' and delimited in relation to other territories (Häkli & Kaplan 2002b).

The strategic importance of the formation – or institutionalisation – of territories in the current state context is not related only with changes in technological development but also with power and rhetoric. The question is about who has the power and resources to define the dominant ethnic-national and territorial discourses, in what way 'the Other' is being presented in non-linear contested discourses that need "to be negotiated between different factions within the nation as well as vis-à-vis other nations" (Herb 1999: 21; see also Harle 1998). The question is in what way our geopolitical imagination ('us' / 'the Other' distinction) is being formed to correspond (or to challenge) the contemporary political map. Our multifaceted spatial imagination may correspond and overlap with the dominant identity defined by the state, but it may also compete with it. Interesting cases of such asymmetrical identities are, for instance, related to sub-state nationalism, and blurred borderland and diaspora identities (Kaplan 1994; 1999). The

Figure 3 below illustrates some sites within which our geopolitical imagination as well as geopolitical map of the world is formed. The formation of that imagination may involve conscious nation building and state making as well as diverse processes of civic engagement and counter hegemonic policies.

The below figure (Figure 3) illustrates well the diversity of representations that the multi-scale approach to territories and boundaries implies. As the 'critical geopolitics' viewpoint to boundaries presumes, identities (geopolitical imagination) and territories (geopolitical map of the world) are intertwined aspects of geopolitics. Therefore, geopolitical representations of self and other (representing identity) are central elements of the political spatialisation of boundaries and dangers, as well as of the world geopolitical map. This suggests that the analysis of state borders and identities *per se*, or the representational manifestations of these, do not necessarily contribute a thorough perspective to boundary studies. Rather, there is an increasing need to go beyond such representations and to challenge the origins and the power relations prevailing in particular boundary discourses.
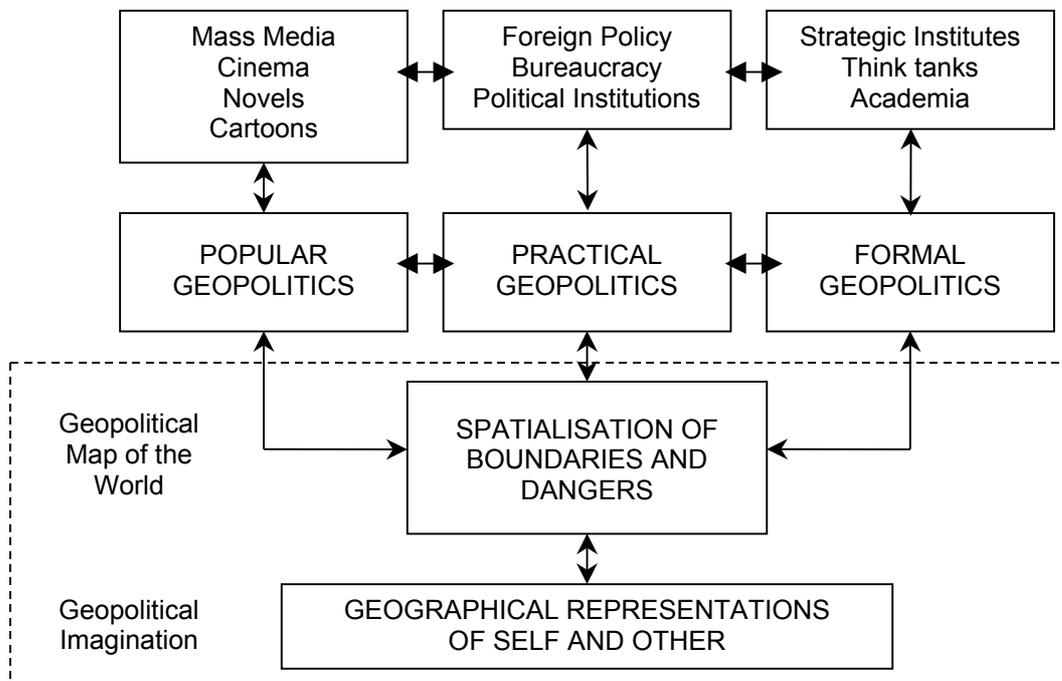
Figure 3. A critical theory of geopolitics as a set of representational practices (modified from Dalby & O'Tuathail 1998: 5)

Challenging the prevailing origins and power relations necessitates directing attention toward both the conceptual and material diversity, and diverse boundary-drawing practices in identity and territorial politics (Campbell 1992: 26; Dijkink 1996: 5; O'Tuathail 1998: 3). These incorporate both the strategic geopolitical planning of the state (formal geopolitics) and the diverse indirectly geopolitical practices of social development – social policy, regional policy, industrial policy and so on – as contextual basis of identity politics (practical policy formulations).

In addition, social and political imagery from mass media, cinema, novels and cartoons 'popularise' geopolitical visions (popular geopolitics).

Despite the different sites of production, distribution, and conception of these three forms of geopolitics, none of the geopolitical 'scales' acts independently (Dalby & O'Tuathail 1998: 4-5). As the state's culturally and socially situated *practical policy formulations* – including social policy and integration policy and so on – cannot fully be set apart from, for example, the socio-political message of newspaper commentaries and ironic political satire in television. *Formal geopolitical bodies* – including strategic institutes, think-tanks and so on – cannot create geopolitical operation plans fully detached from the general attitude represented in the media and the public at large. In this sense, the critical geopolitics' view on geopolitics widens the scope of 'the political' from state to non-state scales. Figures 4 and 5 below exemplify one form of non-state territorial discourse, that of popular caricatures in newspapers. Particularly in the post-Soviet Estonian context these caricatures not only reflect the on-going ethnic and territorial debate but also engage in Estonian ethnic and territorial discourses.

Figure 4. "I'm here just with a pencil... if you don't like the border, you may immediately sweep it over..." (Postimees 2000)

Figure 5. "…and if you're not a good kid, the migration officials will come and take your citizenship!" (Postimees 2000)

In view of the caricatures above, as well as the (geo)political role of oppositional films (Rose 1994) and novels (Sharp 1996; Jauhiainen 1999), it becomes evident that a diversity of approaches and research strategies is needed in order to make sense of such manifold political practices of territorial politics. Research needs to be designed, and boundary representations interpreted, in their own terms to reflect both the content and the narrative logic of particular discourses, as well as the context from which the discourses arise (see Jokinen, Juhila & Suoninen 1993: 29-41). In this, the contextual relativist criticism approach addressed in this chapter reveals that 'objective' social study is not possible. The researcher's interpretation is tied to his or her personal history and memories, as well as their subjective conceptualisation (*ibid.*: 23-24; Häkli 1999: 139). The practical and moral difficulties related with methods and research strategies in 'critical geopolitics' will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Objectives

This study reflects the 'critical' notion of territorial politics based on social constructionist thinking. The overall aims have been set on two levels, both reflecting and engaging the methodological and theoretical scheme outlined above. First, the *theoretical goal* of this research is to present an interpretation and argumentation of the contemporary Estonian change and to provide new knowledge of the forms and scales of ethnic-territorial politics in one of the states experiencing the fast 'post-socialist' transition in Europe. Second, the research places the discussion of Estonian development in a Soviet and post-Soviet Estonian context, and aims at providing some *empirical* reflection of the diversity of discourses shaping the Estonian territorial politics. The latter will help in contextualising the theoretical considerations and in promoting a more culturally and contextually sensitive notion of boundaries in social research and political practise.

Theoretical and Empirical Aims

In order to analyse the Estonian transformation from the viewpoint of discourses, boundaries and scales, it is essential to understand both the cultural processes and the contextual embeddedness of the space we call 'Estonia'. Among such considerations are the causes and consequences of the (local and state level) nationalist and ethno-linguistic movements as well as the general socio-political concerns that, over the past decade, have both stabilised and 'popularised' the movements. This popularisation has brought about many sensitive situations that may undermine European stability and the coming enlargement of the European Union.

Such nationalist and ethno-linguistic movements are significant aspects of ethnic[4] and territorial politics in which boundaries are being manifested and, simultaneously, produced. Especially in the formerly socialist 'East European' states such as Estonia, both ethnic and territorial concerns have – besides democratic political system and economic welfare – appeared as the most central elements of social and territorial transformation. Ethnic and territorial boundaries have become essential markers of national identification while, at the same time, these boundaries have turned into blurred lines through the processes of globalisation and European integration.

Boundaries undermine diverse imagined and real threats, as well as security conceptions (O'Tuathail & Dalby 1998; Viktorova 2001). This study engages with boundaries as social constructs and analyses those boundaries by focusing on Estonian and Northeast Estonian developments in particular. The Estonian and Northeast Estonian example illustrates well the ambivalent 'post-socialist' realities in which both historical and contemporary, as well as imagined

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[4] Ethnic politics is here understood widely as an aspect of identity politics, a less politicised cultural identity that may still politicise or de-politicise in social and political processes (see Virkkunen 1998: 23-24).

and concrete aspects of political realities become actualised at different geographic scales (Virkkunen 2001). Estonia is simultaneously 'nationalising' its territory by 'closing' its borders to correspond with Estonian national identity, and arguing for deep integration with European economic and defence structures. At the same time, Estonian ethnic and territorial politics has several contradictory, but inter-linked, elements that demonstrate well the way those different realities are being transformed to correspond with the prevailing post-Soviet realities.

From this point of departure, the theoretical and empirical question that this research seeks to address can be formulated a follows:

°   How do the different forms and scales of political discourse (see above & Figure 2) express themselves in the on-going spatialisation of Estonian boundaries and security?

Practical Aims

The dissertation seeks to entagle the interrelationships between discourses, boundaries, and scales in Estonian territorial politics, utilising diverse source material from post-Soviet Estonian politics. The main focus is not on the linguistic and symbolic representations related with Estonian state building but, rather, on discourses and counter-discourses at other non-state scales: civil society and the European Union in particular. It is argued that much of the Estonian territorial politics takes place through the media, Estonian and non-Estonian political organisations and social movements, and the institutions of international bodies such as the European Commission. The analysis of these often contradictory discourses –formal, practical and popular – also contextualises and expands our understanding of the rather modernist state centred (or EU-centred) research on European national and territorial development. A clear emphasis is placed on the conceptual and material aspects of Estonian territorial politics.

Particular attention is paid to the historical (Chapter 3) and social (Chapter 4, 5 and 6) roots of inter-ethnic and inter-state relations. It is acknowledged that discourses may support or challenge – promote or provoke – the contemporary state structures (as well as those of the European Union). An in-depth understanding of the origin and nature of these political relations intertwines the research with the diversity of political manifestations in Estonia, as well as with the culturally and socially marked processes behind political realities and argumentation. These often sensitive matters may not necessarily be explicit or easily accessible due to the prevailing 'social neutralities' and power structures. 'Sustainable' ethnic and territorial structures keep identity conflicts and ethnic-territorial boundaries de-politicised, and one of the main objectives of this dissertation is to provide social science and administration a 'critical' notion of territorial politics. An understanding of the role and effect of the prevailing power relations, contextually and politically sensitive matters in identity politics, and diverse forms and scales of political argumentation is very central for the formulation of social and territorial policy. This aspiration of emancipating the rather state centred ethnic and territorial politics from short-term political play and unilateral nationalist design can be

identified throughout the dissertation. That practical ambition not only sets the heart of the argumentation but also of the methods applied.

Methods

This study utilises a diversity of methods and research materials. The purpose of this section is to summarise the underlining logic in research strategies adopted in this dissertation. After outlining the logic behind the qualitative methods used, I will describe the array of materials utilised in this study. I will also characterise the ways in which these materials were analysed.

Why Qualitative Method in Boundary Studies?

In his discussion of the methodology of human geography, Jouni Häkli (1999:14-15) illustrates well the role of qualitative and quantitative methods by describing a scholarly dispute between two social scientists representing two alternative research orientations. The dispute is centred on a recently published statistical study of unemployment in different parts of Finland. As a supporter of quantitative methods, researcher 'Quanty' considers the statistical form of analysis more useful and relevant in the analysis of the unemployment problem in Finland. Qualitatively -oriented researcher 'Qualy' claims that statistical information describes the causes and consequences of Finnish unemployment all too superficially without reaching its wider structural and global characteristics, and even neglecting people's everyday problems and survival strategies. Researcher Qualy believes that researcher Quanty's approach is unable to capture the focal points of the unemployment problem.

  The example of the two researchers' analytic positions illustrates the important role that methodological commitments play in social research. The choice of research methods is not an isolated phase in the research process but, rather, a wider issue closely linked with the choice of a methodological paradigm, research questions to be answered as well as the overall aspiration of the study (Denzin & Lincoln 1994: 199-202). For this research, the choice of qualitative methods is a logical outcome of the social constructivist methodology. The qualitative approach corresponds well with the aim of deconstructing and interpreting particular social developments (Eyles 1988: 2). However, any decision to operate with a qualitative approach does not necessarily mean that quantitative research is deemed improper or invalid for social research. In fact, a quantitative approach, such as the statistical scheme of the researcher Quanty in the above example, is said to complement 'soft' research strategies that are oriented toward a greater understanding of particular social problems (Alasuutari 1994: 23). There are several 'grey areas' and similarities in qualitative and quantitative research, which in fact blurs the ideal division of the two categories of everyday research.

  In a text book of methods, the two researchers' position is often viewed as ideal. Quanty approaches unemployment through 'hard' natural science and methods such as surveys or

statistical analyses. He may approach the unemployment problem through a large-scale questionnaire or unemployment and health statistics. For him, such 'scientific' straight-forward analyses are interesting and easily approachable through a three-stage research scheme, a process in which data collection, preparation and presentation compose the three detached faces of investigation. Researcher Qualy, then, would conduct a much smaller number of theory informed interviews or choose a set of textual (or other) representations for analysis, but still keep the study plan open for new significant impulses relevant for theory. For him, the research is a process, an ever-going circle of investigation that does not necessarily aim at answering a particular problem, but at forming a greater understanding of the subject matter and resolving 'the enigma' as Pertti Alasuutari calls it (Alasuutari 1994; see also Eyles 1988; Denzin & Lincoln 1994).

Unlike for researcher Quanty, researcher Qualy does not find the clue to resolve his 'enigma' necessarily from the large number of observations but through a single or a few sequential episodes, combining and evaluating observations from one particular theoretical-methodological perspective. Even though the fundamental difference between the two approaches is related with this position in relation to 'scientific objectivism' and the research material, neither researcher Qualy nor Quanty can escape their subjectivity in research. The research always reflects our personal histories and worldviews, our own cultural background, social position and language (Häkli 1999:157-158; Juhila 1999: 208; Töttö 2000: 204-211). By this I do not refer solely to the subjectively conducted questionnaires or statistical categories of researcher Quanty, but also to the 'crisis of representation' that researcher Qualy faces when he writes about his findings on the reasons of unemployment (Barnes & Duncan 1992a: 2; Mels 1997: 6). As his language is culturally, personally and otherwise positioned, his own language is, ironically, set to represent the unemployed.

In critical geopolitics, the above 'crisis of representation' and the subjective-objective dilemma, as well as the wide 'critical' perspective, set certain challenges for analysis. As a Finnish researcher in Estonia and working with Estonians, I need to acknowledge my 'outsider' perspective and, simultaneously, the theory informed subjective choices in research. As an outsider, how can I study Estonian boundaries and territorial politics? What choices should I make to succeed in the research, how should I use the 'critical geopolitics' frame and yet not make the study entirely too general? These were significant questions with great implications for the practical research strategy and research design. Simply finding laws, explanations and regularities from large quantitative data only would have failed to tap the wide scope of social, cultural, and other processes at play behind the Estonian territorial politics, thereby rendering pure statistical correlation analysis completely inappropriate for my study. My study does not assume the prior existence of reality 'out there' in the empirical world. Rather, the particular relations between Estonian and non-Estonian identity politics, Estonian territorial formation and the scales of politics require a theoretically and empirically informed interpretation. This interpretation must seek to entangle the diversity of concerns related with the *subjective* identification and meaning and the *'objective'* facts of the Estonian cultural, socio-economic and political transformation. Yet, within the vast subjective and factual objective realm, certain focusing was necessary.

In consequence, I have gathered a number of contrasting source materials from different geographic scales of politics, ranging from everyday fears to social movement mobilisation, from political advertisements to ethnic and territorial images published through a news agency. These diverse forms and scales of discourses are approached in their full social and political complexity and through different conceptual contexts. Arguably, such a strategy provides this study with a qualitative understanding of the post-Soviet Estonian territory that quantitative analysis could not have provided. The research, thus, becomes a combination of theory inspired interviews, informal discussions, participant observation and media analyses. These methods possess a complementary character and an ability to grasp the different aspects of the current national and territorial realities -- the scales of politics through which identities and territories are continuously formed and reformed. The research material used in this dissertation will now be described into more detail.

Description of the Research Material

Much of the discussion in this dissertation relies on second-hand written materials such as earlier research on the issue, my continuous newspaper scanning (the Estonian newspapers Postimees and Eesti Päevaleht in particular) and, especially, the diverse non-formal information collected during my extensive field work in Estonia. The importance of countless interviews and informal discussions with friends, acquaintances and colleagues both in Estonia and Finland cannot be stressed enough, any more than that of the empirical research conducted in co-operation with other scholars. To concretise these research process related materials, the following types of empirical data were utilised for my dissertation (see Table 1): in-depth interviews, legislation and policy documents, newspaper editorials and opinion letters, newscasts, political advertisements, and surveys of social movement structures.

These materials help in understanding Estonian state-centred (ethnic and territorial) boundary politics. The goal is to contest the 'official' Estonian territorial politics from diverse non-state viewpoints and to illustrate the existence of manifold attitudes toward the post-Soviet development. The various 'scales' of Estonian territorial politics – Estonian and non-Estonian; formal, practical and popular; international, national and local – give this research a ground through which Estonian (ethnic and territorial) boundaries can be understood. The problematic character of the secondary source material (such as books) used throughout this study will be discussed in the following section, and I will here content myself with outlining the reasoning behind selecting the primary textual material for the latter sections of this study.

1. In-depth interviews of Estonian Soviet-era political activists (Chapter 3)
2. Estonian legislation and policy documents (Chapters 4, 5 and 6)
3. Agenda 2000 and Regular Reports of the European Commission (Chapter 4, 5, 6)
4. Editorials and opinion letters of a local Russian-language newspaper (Chapter 4)
5. Ethnic and territorial images of an Estonian news agency (Chapter 5)
6. Political advertisements of Russian-speaking parties (Chapter 5)
7. Social mobilisation and Social Movements (Chapter 5)

Table 1. Primary Empirical Data utilised in this Dissertation

For the section dealing with the Soviet-Estonian history (Chapter 3), nine political and tens of social movement activists were interviewed in regard to their personal political history and (anti-) Soviet political activism. The aim of these interviews was to reach a general understanding of the social mobilisation of Estonians and their 'spaces of resistance' during the Soviet period. Because of the strictly monopolised political system of the Soviet state, this approach opened an interesting access to the prevailing non-hegemonic civic activity in (mainly underground) Soviet political space as well as made the different forms and scales of political practice very concrete. Interviews with *National Front* (Rahvarinne) leaders, members of *Estonian Heritage Society* (Eesti Muinsuskaitse Selts) and the Organisation of Deportees and Displaced Persons *'MEMENTO'* constituted the bulk of the interviews. A majority of the approximately one to two hour interviews[5] took place either in the homes or the workplaces of the interviewees. The latter were chosen by using the so-called 'snow-ball method' (Valentine 1997: 116-117) or through the contacts of an Estonian colleague.

The interviews, centred on the personal political history of the activists, were of and in formal discussion character rather than a strictly structured hearing, greatly enhancing the quality of the gained material. An atmosphere in which participants could openly describe the personally significant moments of their Soviet Estonian history was created. In a way, each participant constituted an individual case study. It became evident that family background and personal experiences as well as informal contacts and social circles were significant sources and spaces of resistance in Soviet Estonian politics. Therefore, it was around those issues that the interviews were focused. A majority of the discussions were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants, and later transcribed and used to support (or to contradict) other source materials. While the interviews do not make up the bulk of the research material of the Chapter 3, they serve as an important contextualising element with which the overall Soviet Estonian spaces of resistance were interpreted. On a personal level, the interviews have become focal points for my appreciation of different scales and spaces of political practice. It was precisely because of those

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[5] All interviews were conducted during the summer of 1997, the National Front interviews together with Ilkka Liikanen from the Karelian Institute (University of Joensuu, Finland), others by the author.

'non-formal' politics and spaces of resistance that the entire Soviet Union collapsed and the post-Cold War political map began to take shape in Europe.

In a way, this dissertation is a reflection on post-Soviet Estonian ethnic and territorial nationalisation. As Estonian political activists celebrated the victory over an old enemy, the Soviet Union, they simultaneously began to realise new bounding practices in the internationally recognised Estonian territory. The fundamental materials in this dissertation (in Chapters 4, 5 and 6) are the legal and policy documents that define this territory as particularly 'Estonian': the constitution; the law of citizenship; the alien law, the law of language, and the laws of parliamentary election and political parties. These constitute the formal state definitions of the Estonian territory, and the ways in which it is recognised as the territory of Estonian Republic, and who are considered the natural members of this sovereign territorially defined entity. In order to promote and support this formal definition, a number of boundary related policies were also put into effect: the Estonian Association Agreement [with the European Union], the State programme *Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007* and the Estonian Regional Development Strategy, to name a few.

The European Union documents Agenda 2000 and the Regular Reports were chosen because of their significance in the Estonian accession process. These are not independent documents, but very closely linked with other elements of the EU's decision making. Therefore, the papers could be studied only by combining them with, for instance, the European Council declarations from Copenhagen (1993), Maastricht (1992), Amsterdam (1999) and Nice (2000). These are policy documents with a clear impact on Estonian ethnic and territorial politics. At the same time they are 'from above' European elements in the post-Soviet Estonian politics, matters that may or may not function as an international factor in 'desecuritysising' the post-Soviet Estonian boundaries. European Union enlargement is not a self-evident process but a development with a diversity of interests and perspectives. In addition to the obvious 'desecuritysation' goal of EU enlargement, the process has become the subject of territorial politics both within the institutions of the European Union, and those of the current member and candidate states. EU documents, therefore, provide a basis for understanding the 'above' scale of Estonian territorial politics.

The editorial and opinion letters of a local Narva-based weekly *Narvskaya Nedelya + Kreenholm* were included in the study of Northeast Estonian security (Chapter 4) in order to contribute a local Russian-speaking perspective to the issue of security in Northeast Estonia. The intention was to assess the particularities of a local non-Estonian discourse that assumedly was very different not only from Estonian and Tallinn-based Russian discourse, but also from the Russian discourse across the Estonian-Russian border. Including editorial commentaries and opinion letters from the first joint issue of *Narvskaya Nedelya + Kreenholm* published on August 5th, 1999 through to the last edition of 2000, alltogether 220 articles from 72 issues altogether were selected. The material was contains all issues published as *Narvskaya Nedelya + Kreenholm.* Also, the editorial commentaries and opinion letters were the only regularly published articles both reflecting and changing the opinions of the local non-Estonian readership. After

reading the articles, they were divided into five categories – ethnic discourse, state border discourse, socio-economic discourse, political discourse and other – then re-read and re-evaluated.

The internet home page of the Baltic News Service describes itself as the largest news agency of the Baltic states, defending a market share which ranges from 60 to 80 percent of the total respective news market. (http://www.bns.ee). As the main news service in Estonia – with some 1 000 daily published news items in five languages (Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian and English) distributed – the Baltic News Service (BNS) is one of the most significant centres of post-Soviet Estonian media publicity and geopolitical image production. Due to this significance, 202 articles from May 3rd to November 12th, 1999 were analysed for the purposes of this research. The focus was not on all (ethnic and territorial) boundary politics in post-Soviet Estonia but only on ethnic and territorial images related with the Northeast Estonian borderland. Because of Northeast Estonia's ethnic composition, it was not adequate to consider Northeast Estonia merely in geographical terms as or a territorial borderland only. Therefore, a Narva viewpoint, to reflect Northeast Estonia's identity, was complemented with cultural images of the Russian-speaking population as an 'internal other'. This was to give a more complete view on the geopolitical images mediated by the Baltic News Service. The categorisation into *Stereotyping images*, *News-like images*, *Integrative images*, and *Disintegrative images* took place after reading and rereading the articles. The problem of categorisation is discussed later in this section.

When I compared the non-Estonian discourses on post-Soviet territorial or inter-ethnic boundaries with the ones of the Baltic News Service, it became evident that history and contemporary political realities were significant for the emerging political discourse. Therefore, I decided to provide an analogous analysis of the ethnic and territorial images represented by non-Estonian parties during the parliamentary election campaign in 1999. All advertisements from February 6th to March 7th of that year from the two largest Estonian-based Russian-language newspapers (*Estonija* and *Maladezh Estonii*) were incorporated into the analysis, 66 advertisements altogether. Some of these ads – interestingly – were election candidates' self-written articles and interviews, complete with candidates' election numbers displayed. Particularly because of its popularised and strategy-oriented character, the parliamentary election campaign provided to be interesting source material with which to illustrate the political and manifold character of the post-Soviet Estonian territorial discourse.

Finally, the sets of empirical data in this research is completed with the material representing social mobilisation (i.e. the institutionalisation of social movements) in the contemporary Northeast Estonian town of Narva. After the systematic collection of basic information concerning the structure and aspiration of local social movements, several (explorative and in-depth) interviews with local social movement activists were conducted. These interviews were then supplemented with participant observation at training sessions arranged for the development of third sector in the Northeast Estonian border region. The Narva office of the *Centre for Transboundary Cooperation* (CTC) provided great support for the study of social movements. I was provided with access to existing research on local social movements and, significantly, also to the necessary contacts with the local activists. The institutionalisation of

social movements illustrates well the role of contextual understanding in politics. Social movements are not only consequences of 'local' social and political concerns but also reflections of local political culture within which mobilisation takes place.

How data was analysed?

This research utilises both various primary empirical materials and a number of different secondary materials. The choice and use of particular material and methods of analysis present a major challenge in subjective theory based qualitative data analysis. The analysis may be based on a thematic approach, typifying or quantifying the materials or, specifying the contents etc. Qualitative analysis does only seldom follow strict procedural rules, and only few standards exist regarding sampling methods, reliability and interpretation (Eyles 1988). Above all, qualitative research is a learning process during which a theory-led critical reading of various source materials acts as a tool for interpretation and further analysis (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). In this process, there are no given categories that direct the study to a particular conclusion. Rather, the categories are constructed, and with most likelihood, revised during the process of research and analysis. Still, the theoretically informed classes that were discovered during this research do not capture all of the colourful multi-dimensional reality constituted by identity-based conceptual processes. To suggest such a conclusion would mean an attempt to reduce the multiplicity of the social world into theoretical categories. That is not what this research has sought to accomplish.

In this study, however, a number of categorisations have been used to illuminate the qualities of the empirical data. A daunting challenge was set by the editorials and opinion letters of a local Northeast Estonian newspaper, the ethnic and territorial images of an Estonian news agency and the political advertisements of Russian-speaking parties in Estonia. These textual images not only contained conflicting positions in terms of ethnic and territorial development, but these also represented very different materials that needed to be analytically categorised. To correspond with the particular objectives of Chapters 4 and 5, the classes were created by reference to: (1) outlook of security politics, and (2) politics of ethnic-territorial landscapes in Northeast Estonian politics. These reflect my aims at illustrating the central role and diversity of the security concept, as well as the connection between discourses and place, in post-Soviet Estonian ethnic and territorial politics. An even more challenging task was to determine the criteria according to which particular images were placed into certain categories.

It was obvious that both Soviet and post-Soviet texts were produced by particular authors for certain purposes. Expressions and rhetoric were carefully chosen to express the particular standpoints of the reality. While an identity-related national discourse may be explicitly territorial, it may also implicitly refer to numerous other politics, such as the politics of inequalities, the politics of regional development or the politics of citizenship. Therefore, I decided to rely on explicit articulation only, and to discuss the already-categorised images by placing those into the particular social context and theoretical-conceptual argumentation. Precisely here the 'scientific' nature of qualitative research is often contested: the researcher's personal reading and theory-

led interpretation of the material become the central tool for the analysis. Here, the arts of critical reading became combined with subjective interpretations of empirical data and the prevailing realities described. In Soviet and post-Soviet Estonia, the majority of published material has been explicitly political and contextual.

Instead of presenting an 'objective' reading, the study has proceeded as a subjective process reflecting and expressing my own curiosity as well as my professional academic history. In other words, the research has become a presentation of my grounded and 'educated' argumentation on the diverse ethnic and territorial discourses, an attempt to understand and explain the regularities and differences that the empirical source material reveals. This is exactly where the strengths (and weaknesses) of the qualitative research may lie. The empirical material is read from a particular critical perspective, and allowed to support as well as challenge some of the actual conceptualisations prevailing in the social world. In the Soviet and post-Soviet Estonia, for example, it became evident that 'old' theories developed to describe the (West European) world during the Cold War are only partly applicable to the post-Soviet East European contexts. In this respect, both the primary and the secondary source materials have been allowed to alter previous empirical and theoretical interpretations of ethnic and territorial politics.

Structure of the Research

The dissertation consists of an introduction, five articles published in nationally and internationally recognised geographical journals (Terra, Alue ja Ympäristö, GeoJournal and Nordisk Samhällsgeografisk Tidskrift) and one edited volume published by Rowman & Littlefield (Häkli & Kaplan 2002, forthcoming).

Discourses, Boundaries and Scales: Introduction
1. Virkkunen, Joni (1998) Identiteetin ja rajan politiikkaa Virossa, *Terra* 110(3): 205-207
2. Virkkunen, Joni (1998) Valtio, Identiteetti, Demokratia, *Alue- ja Ympäristö*, 17(2): 21-32
3. Virkkunen, Joni (1999) The Politics of Identity: Ethnicity, Minority and Nationalism in Soviet Estonia, *GeoJournal* 48: 83-89
4. Virkkunen, Joni (2001). Discourse, Boundaries and Scale: Constructing Security in Northeast Estonian Borderlands. *Nordisk Samhällsgeografisk Tidskrift* 32: 45-66
5. Virkkunen, Joni (2002, forthcoming). Place and Boundaries in the Formation of Northeast Estonian Borderlands. In Häkli J. & D. Kaplan (eds): *Boundaries and Place: European Borderlands in Geographical Context*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, xx-xx
6. Virkkunen, Joni (2001, forthcoming). Post-Socialist Borderland: Promoting or Challenging the Enlarged European Union? *Geografiska Annaler* 83 B (3): xx-xx

The argument of the dissertation runs as follows. After the introductory chapters (this general Introduction and the Estonian case-oriented, Chapter 1) follows the conceptual discussion on 'State, Identity and Democracy' (Chapter 2). The dissertation then focuses on the politics of identity in

Soviet and post-Soviet Estonia. It is argued in Chapter 3 that the present political realities and multi-layered identity politics must be studied with considerable historical sensitivity and contextually embedded theoretical understanding. In the Soviet political environment, the Estonian national consciousness has become an element of political resistance very different from that in the West. Therefore, both Soviet politics and the post-Soviet Estonian 'nationalising' politics need to be studied in the context of contemporary post-Soviet political culture and transformation. In the dissertation, Estonian 'nationalisation' serves as the point of departure for addressing the multi-layered formation of the Estonian borderland.

The rather exclusive Estonian nationalism and 'nationalising nationalism' (Brubaker 1996) has become one of the most critical security-related issues in the Northeast Estonian borderlands. The Estonian government has sought to integrate the newly established independent state by defining the territorial and legal borders in terms of the 'national' principle. This principle is, nonetheless, a subject of politics at several geographical scales. This is illustrated in the detailed discussion of scale (Chapter 4) and place (Chapter 5) in the formation of the Northeast Estonian borderland: the discussion of scale emphasises the multi-layered character of politics in general, and the study on place focuses on three specific discourses of Northeast Estonian borderland security. After the two-chapter commentary on Estonian nationalisation, the last chapter on European Union enlargement (Chapter 6) relates the previous discussions to a wider European integration context and discusses the prospect European Union enlargement. The following conclusion presents a short discussion that summarises the argumentation on Estonian territorial politics in the 'new' Europe.

Conclusion

This research has approached the Estonian territorial politics form the viewpoint of 'discourses, boundaries, and scales'. Diverse source material has been used to illuminate the differences that discourses and geographical scales continue to make in the formation of the post-Soviet Estonian territory. The research has been motivated by a need to contextualise the contemporary ethnic and territorial developments in the emerging 'New Europe'. Also, an effort has been made to move toward an increasingly geographical approach to politics, and thus, arrive at new interpretations that provide new ideas for academic as well as professional use. This was realised through a 'critical' design of research and a heightened attention to the diversity of boundaries in Estonian politics. In addition to these practical aims, the research had two theoretical and empirical ambitions.

Firstly, this research aspired to identify the different forms and scales of politics (see Figure 2) in the on-going spatialisation of Estonian boundaries and security. Secondly, the study concentrated on arguments (and counter-arguments) – the Estonian 'nationalising nationalism' and European integration – at different scales of Estonian territorial discourse. These brought the research interesting questions raising from the spheres of culture and history, developments behind the contemporary Estonian ethnic and territorial nationalisation and European integration politics. In all, these perspectives put forward an idea of the diversity of elements that participate

in the formation of contemporary inter-ethnic relations and state territorial borders in Estonia and elsewhere.

In the case of Estonia, the intertwined character of ethnic and territorial politics is clear. As a consequence of a rather strong Estonian identity and anti-Soviet attitude, the post-Soviet 'nationalising nationalism' has turned to a rather narrow politics of restoration that has, however, faced diverse political contentions both from domestic and international spaces of politics. Moderate Estonian activists, most non-Estonian activists and the European institutions have challenged this restoration. Each of these players has its particular identity or function-related conception of territory, boundaries, and security. Also, each of the players participates in the formation of Estonian territorial politics simultaneously by producing formal, practical, and popular representations. Therefore, an in-depth study of the formation of Estonian borders requires at the same time a detailed understanding of the diversity of roles and conflicting positions in territorial politics and, also, an appreciation of culturally and socially situated processes behind the particular positions. In Estonia, this means an acknowledgement of the diversity of views and identities in Estonia as well as the identity related territorial politics both at local, national, and international scales.

In the on-going spatialisation of Estonian boundaries and security, the diverse political discourse and the respective social representations express themselves in many ways. As the formal geopolitics of the Estonian state deals mainly with the 'nationalisation' of borders (territorialisation), globalisation and European integration (de-territorialisation), practical geopolitics is primarily formulated by employing a liberal conception of social development. Yet, that is an outcome as much of Estonian national history and prevailing power relations in domestic decision making as of 'external' influence from Russia and international bodies such as the European Union. In security discourse, for example, as Estonian state concentrates on 'securing' her boundaries from the 'Russian threat', the non-Estonian Russian-speaking activists concentrate on securing all non-Estonian minorities their fundamental freedoms. At the local scale, however, neither the 'nationalised' legislation nor territorial control arguments gain as much news column space as the quantity of national non-Estonian discourses would indicate. At the local scale, political citizenship and the colour of passports are secondary concerns after issues related to immediate socio-economic development and increased distress. There, security is a broad social issue, combining ethnic and territorial, socio-economic and political transformations. In such conditions, a strive toward regional development terms into a 'possibly politicised' aspects of identity politics.

Instead of advocating nationalism and conflicting boundary politics, the 'critical' perspective encourages a better identification and consideration of different voices in politics. Despite rather marginal position in formal politics, neither the non-Estonian minority – forming a great majority in the Northeast Estonian border region – nor the politically 'less prosperous' regions in the enlarged EU context are insignificant in overall territorial politics. These may not only influence the agenda of the ethnic and territorial discourse but also result in a contradicting outcomes in the case of poorly planned policy design. As nationalism generates nationalism, and as identities may politicise as well as de-politicise, the wide 'critical' approach reveals the cause

of concern that should be discovered and highlighted. Territories should be recognised as regions with different ethnic-national identities, contradictory institutional ideals and security conceptions. Despite having elements of social utopia, the objective of a multi-dimensional approach to territories may well provide a moral success and more stabile ethnic and territorial development. This is the case not only in post-Soviet Estonia but also in other nation states in Europe, Austalasia and the Americas.

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