DO NEW TIMES REQUIRE NEW MEN?

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In my thesis I aim to study the macro level changes through the lens of discussions of “close” values on a micro level. My main approach is discourse theoretical and social constructivist, so this designates both a theoretical and methodological approach. I am trying to show how informants use, produce and reproduce discursive features representing gender to make sense of their personal relations as well as of national and international politics. I interpret the findings from my participant observations, in-depth interviews, conversations and field-work from a semiotic angle, that is informants statements on masculinity and couple-relations are seen as signs or representations, in the system of representations and statements that is the discursive formation in process.

In this paper I aim to first give a brief outline of some of the methodological and theoretical questions I deal with in my thesis project – some kind of what, how and why. After that I will discuss some of the themes in my empirical material. I will focus on the question of Estonian EU application and succession, where I compare interview statements with a Western perspective in editorials and “overviews” in economy journals, leading to a discussion of national identity, post-colonial theories and global business masculinity.

Proximity and distance

One of the first questions I am asked when people learn about my project is always: Why Estonia? To start with I did not have an answer ready, since I felt my interest derived from such un-scientific reasons as emotions, curiosity and a will to confront my own prejudices.

My field of empirical studies Estonia, is situated just on the other side of the Baltic Sea from Stockholm, yet in my childhood in the 1970’s and 1980’s placed by teachers and parents into a confusing vast area called the Soviet union. A Soviet union I knew nothing about except that there was something called communism, and that people were poor and different from us Swedes and myself. This perception of country both so close, and possibly distant made me interested in studying Estonia as a country undergoing rapid economic and social changes.

It is always easy to, in an evolutionary western-centered manner, perceive the former East-Block states as looking towards “us” in the west for ideals as sort of role models. But is it that simple? Could there be something “inherently different” in these countries, modeled through history, that part makes it impossible for them to “jump” to where we’re at, part makes them unwilling to accept all the ideals of the West?

There is also a question of ideals and praxis’: The gender system is changing expressions, but the hierarchal structure is the same – with patriarchal benefits for men and masculinity. In the 1970’s women’s rights movements, the driving force behind gender equality in e.g. the Scandinavian
countries, were fighting for women’s rights to their own body, sexuality and re-productivity and to equal job-opportunities and wages. At the same time these were, in many respects, a fact in the Soviet Union, de jure if not de facto. All Soviet citizens were expected to work full time, and child care service was available (cf eg Lipsmeyer 2000, Hirdman 2001).

**Masculinity and change**

I see masculinity as closely linked to societal structures of power. If the gender of a police, a priest or a chairman of a board is not mentioned, the person referred to is of course – a man. (While a woman in the same position would almost inevitably be pointed out as differing from the norm, a female police officer etc.) And when society is changing, there is historically reoccurring a discussion about the crisis of masculinity, such as George Mosses historical contextualization of historical “crisis” of masculinity under threat of eg post-colonialism, socialism and feminism. (Mosse 1996). There are several studies of this phenomenon: Bo Nilsson describes how scout rhetoric dwell on the fostering of the young male to a strong masculine body, in order to combat a perceived effemization of the early 1900’s (Nilsson 1999), Michael Kimmel describes how men’s fear of not measuring up to notions of manliness is the driving force behind homosocialility, and how the American self-made man emerged as a response to the challenges from an industrialized urban society (Kimmel 1996).

With these presuppositions derived from critical studies of history, the project of doing it in reverse, so to say, to study a society in change from the viewpoint of masculinity seems feasible. Masculinity, manliness, malehood could be an indicator of change, a barometer of societal pressure for adaptation to new times.

Even in comparison to other states formerly engulfed by the Soviet Union change in Estonia has been radical and rapid. This notion of transformation and energy has become part of an Estonian self-representation. Estonian scholars Anu Masso and Triin Wihalemm describes the nation as “...one of the countries that has moved most rapidly into global communication networks and post-modern values, thereby offering fertile soil for distancing one self from previous identity-references, [and for] individualization and fragmentation of identity...”(Masso & Wihalemm 2003).

**Maleness as a black hole**

In the field of masculinities studies there is an ongoing debate on the label of the field. In away this is interesting in itself, as sort of a Bourdieu field under formation. I will not engage in this debate in this paper, and nor I think in my thesis. I sympathize with scholars who rightly want to give tribute to feminism for the theoretical basis and the raison d’etre of the field who would call themselves pro-feminist. One problem with that description of my own work would be that I strongly feel that my point of departure is feminist in any respect (as I would say is the work of the pro-feminists).

One other aspect that leads me to avoid this struggle in the field is that I feel my own work not to be concerned with men more than with women, rather the reversed. Up till now most my informants have been women, a bias I am aware of and that I will put effort into correcting. Besides that most of the conversations have also, when a specific gender has been mentioned, circulated around women. “Men do not move like women” ... “If this would have been about women, things would have been very different” ... Men and masculinity are described in contrast to women, straight men are described in contrast to gay men – masculinity is visible through its negations, or difference.
Maleness is, would in Richard Dyers (1997) terms roughly be considered, whiteness, what you do not see because it is so obvious. Studies on gender are because of the feminist roots of critical studies most often focused on women, the Other. What manliness or masculinity is, becomes, or creates, is seen as the obviously unproblematic first. In structuralist approaches you can encounter the “black box” model of explanations. You see what is streamed into the box – and are presented what comes out in the other end. I suggest, strangely for a post-structuralist, a similar approach, combining the notions of whiteness and the black-box into viewing maleness as a black hole. The black holes of the universe are invisible, scientist know they exist only through tracing the masses of energy that are drawn into them. Somehow my method of letting people talk quite unstructured is a way of trying to locate this black hole of masculinity.

For a while I was beginning to doubt whether my study had anything to do with men, maleness or masculinity: I introduced the subject, but informants seemed to talk about everything but male traits – with the exception for one conversation where a group talked about a cross-dressing birthday party and how odd it was to see men dressed in feminine clothing still moving like men, where the discussion was actually on femininity – the conversations very much tended to be on structural questions. Questions directly linked to men and maleness that occur in more than one conversation are unemployment, alcoholism, breaking up of families, questions of legal protection for single mothers and about the possibility (or rather impossibility) of paternal leave or of a father having custody of his child. All of the issues, the problems of men and the problems men cause are however discussed as structural problems. When mentioning women or femininity the discussions would be about specific situations or specific praxis’ while the men were normalized and normally invisible.

The method of conversations

I have done four visits to Estonia, of different duration. During these visits I have yet performed eight group conversations and seven interviews with experts – persons officially engaged in activities linked to feminism and to gender issues. In total 37 interviewees, I now consider myself to be halfway through field work. In the social sciences focus groups are an increasingly popular method of interview. The participants of the group are given a certain focus that structures the interview. Still with this method there is an interviewer steering what is said, thereby deciding what topics are relevant or not to the study. By creating an as relaxed and participant steered conversation as possible I hope that the informants will create a dynamic situation, where it is possible for me as an interviewer to trace the negotiations and positioning that are forming the discourses.

When I set out the method for my conversation interviews I wanted the interviews as participant steered as possible. One way of achieving this was my method of setting up the groups. Since I want people to speak as freely as possible. I used a modified version of the Snowball method, since this method is a good way of tracing a class, or group of people.

With a snowball method you start out with one contact person, who will lead to other informants, who in turn will give you new names etc. The critique against this kind of design is that you could easily end up with a skew sample – the primary person could be someone who is not really in the segment you are trying to investigate, and this first problem will than grow as the snowball rolls downhill.

I chose instead to have several contact persons. These in turn will contacts their own friends and set up a conversation group for me. The group than consists from people who are already friends, they are so to say, taking up a conversation they are continuously having with each other. What I do is to introduce the entrance point of “masculinity”, after that participants are free to talk of whatever they
feel interest them. This often leads to very free, sometimes even heated discussions, on a variety of topics. At times the group will self-censor by telling me that they have drifted from the subject. I will than encourage them to keep on talking.

Structural questions are intermingled with personal reflections, NATO and EU is discussed in relation to how come taking out the garbage is the one task everyone can agree is un questionably as mans task in the household.

I now have hours and hours of people talking, thinking and arguing. The most interesting points for analysis are where there either is an unreflected consensus: statements that no-one in the group even reflect upon, these can be considered in a foucauldian sense as belonging to discourses so stabile they are perceived as natural (Foucault 1993).

A certain social segment

The standard procedure when writing an ethnological text is to make informants anonymous by giving them aliases. As a scholar doing ethnography I get close to people, interpret the statements the make, their body-language, and even what they do not say. I put peoples everyday-lifes inte a theoretic framework of interpretations that could feel uncomfortable to the persons who are my material. Still I have chosen not to anymize my informants. There are several reasons for that. The segment I am interviewing is very narrow. If I were to exchange names, professions, ages etc of a group of feminist female silver-smiths and artists they would either still be easily recognizable, or I would have turned them into their anti-thesis making my own interpretation invalid.

The persons that consider themselves “new Estonians” constitute a generation of academics, bureaucrats, businessmen and social elite that are visible in the public life of Estonia. I have focused on people connected to a cultural sphere, and contacted them under the heading of “social elite”

Therefore all my informants are interviewed so to speak from a certain position. The question of the language is another factor, in this respect working for my purpose: The conversations are held in English, with me as an obvious alien scholar to whom people know they are presenting a picture of their views, their country, themselves, their opinions. (Besides, when I talk to Estonians about my project they all conclude that if I would anonymize informants the reading in Estonia would be a guessing-game: Who is who, saying what…)

Feminism for women – masculinity for men?

As some scholars define themselves as pro-feminist, meaning that feminist studies can, and should be performed by women only, I have certain problems defining my study in feminist terminology. Calling myself feminist, working within a feminist framework, but from the entrance-point of maleness/masculinities may be difficult. The “father” of masculinities – Robert Connell means that as a man he can only speak about men – not women. This would be in analogy with a feminist view that gender is a matter of experience, that I do support, but still have some objections to. Viewing gender as a system, as Connell advocates

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1 One striking feature is that my informants often open the interview, or the contact process, by telling me that they do not have standard Estonian values. They explain to me that they have studied or worked abroad, and that this has changed their world-view in a direction they describe as European or Nordic.

2 This is a term I’m highly uncertain about whether I will use in the thesis.
The themes

One aspect that will lie in the background of my work will be the question of national identity. The independent nation state is often seen as a key factor in the construction of national identities along with national language and ethnic homogeneity. Since the nation-state is not only a political entity but a symbolic formation producing the idea of the nation, Estonia is applying for full membership in the European Union, a fact that is influencing the identity construction of Estonia and the Estonians. With the Soviet regime in such recent memory some Estonians oppose to the idea of to once again, and this time willingly, indulging in a union. The application for membership, that is now in its final stages, enhances the problem of identity since a “European identity” is under construction, the EU issues drivers licenses and passports and there is even an European Anthem, all of these classic means of construction of national identity. Further more the union now expands to other sectors than inter state trade and peace. The Estonian national currency –the Kroon – may soon be threatened by the European monetary union, EU police and customs takes over the work of national crime- and border control (cf Berg 2002, Gidlund & Sörlin 1993).

East is east and west…?

One of the aspects of change I encounter in any material I meet: In Estonian media, In Swedish and other foreign ditto, in the conversations is the accession and adaptations of Estonia to the European union and to NATO.

The arguments presented by my informants on EU accession are mostly economic, and very much in line with debate in western economic journals. In 1997 the Economist labeled Estonia “The Baltic Front-Runner” considering the efforts of Estonia to join the EU in relation to Latvia and Lithuania. The article also holds a description of Estonia's economic strength as a plus in the application attempt and of Russia's response to the eastward expansion of the EU, a theme that is continued the following week denominating this eastward extension “the best chance for Europe to unite in peace in 500 years”. The article also argues that market barriers make unification difficult, and that EU membership was the next-best way for the Baltic States to mark distance from Russia since NATO had turned down their applications.

The Economist’s article also implies that Estonia, afraid of being hampered by Latvia and Lithuania, instead consciously presents itself as “a bit of Scandinavia stranded across the Gulf of Finland”, not as “Baltic”. The economist speaks of this presentation as a “ploy”, and means that it’s seemingly working: “The EU has had to recognise that Estonia's tiny, open, fast-growing economy meets all reasonable criteria for entry... ”. They also mention Estonia’s readiness to meet any EU-demands such as liberalization of trade and investment, whether managing to enter EU in an early round or not. The article focuses one issue of specific interest: joining the EU means that Estonia might even in some areas have to lower its standard, since its market economy is very unhindered (Economist 97/07/19).

In Russia economic transition was brought about despite political opposition with economic reformers of the government confronting first the opposition from traditional agricultural and industrial interests that had been left from the Soviet economy, later banks an energy companies that had benefited from initial phases of the reform and thus defended status quo. The Russian parliament was at first negative towards market reforms and the government had an ongoing problem of regional claims of economic and political independence from regions in the Russian periphery (Shleifer & Treisman 2000).
It is in opposition to this Russian\(^3\) approach that the Estonian extreme liberal approach must be seen. Estonia faced the same opposition of regional- and interest groups, but had the self image of being “western” as opposed to “eastern” or Russian, therefore political support was very much with the reformist movement, since the reform was connoted with “non-Russian” (for a similar discussion on Nation and Europe, see Rindzевичиute 2003).

**Why joining at all… pros and cons**

One of the themes in these reviews is that the former Soviet countries have so much to gain from joining the “clubs” of EU or NATO. The inhabitants of these states are thought to hunger for economic security after decades of communism, and also for “the habits of democracy and the rules of free-marketry”. The benefits of market economy are never questioned, but are assumed ad hoc. There is very much a view of market economy as the only way to economic prosperity, the Smithsonin hand being presumed to moove these ill-fated people in the right direction\(^4\).

The EU issued certain political tests of democracy and respect for human rights and minorities, along with an increasing amount of competition rules and market regulations. Each of these rules, and when to imply them, had to be negotiated. (Economist 1997/07/19).

Under the headline “Reform begins at home” the Economist presented the problem of the Own and the Other: claiming the existing 15 members as the biggest obstacles to EU enlargement, unwilling to make necessary changes to cope with a Union of up to 25 members. The big beneficiaries of the EU budget also have their own house to look after: opposing both cuts in farm prices and the redistribution of regional aid (Economist 1997/07/19).

The Central European focuses on Estonia's economic conditions as of December -97, evaluating the prospect of Estonian EU membership in the light of Estonian exporters' shift towards western markets. Estonia's low production costs have attracted foreign investments along with the size of the country, being relatively small makes Estonia very adaptable allowing things to happen quicker than in so-called conservative western countries. Since the cornerstones of the EU are free capital and labor movements Estonia can attract further investment by providing the same quality and the same standard as the EU (Central European). In November of 1997 half of Estonian exports came from companies dependent on foreign capital, a risky position for Estonian economy. While Estonia's trade deficit was 24% of GDP with income from chiefly Finn tourists to narrow the gap, but to a still startling 10%; the rest was financed by capital inflow. The EU membership could be used as a means to keep the lion's share of foreign investment in the Baltic region (Economist 97/11/10).

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\(^3\) “Russian” here means the Russian Federation, or person from the Russian Federation. When the term is used in connection to my interview material it will also be used about the Russophone Estonians, regardless of their citizenship. I use the word Russian because it’s used by my informants to denominate this group.

\(^4\) In *Without a Map* Shleifer and Treisman scrutinize political tactics behind Russian market reforms after the collapse of the communist regimes in 1989 and 1991. They consider that while economic goals were the same in the post-communist countries; economic growth through free markets and privatization of properties, governments needed what the authors call the “how” of the reform. Their aim is also to compare the Russian reforms not to any market economy utopia, but to alternatives that were politically feasible at the time, a way of reasoning I find very much paralleled in the Economist view of Estonia.
The Russian threat

In 2001 the Economist discusses the outlook for the post-Soviet Baltic states to join NATO the European Union EU from a viewpoint that economic conditions in the countries create different kinds of political problems: “The three Baltic governments are eager to join the club. They have shown that they are prepared to spend a big share of their puny budgets on defense: fully 2% of national income. Hundreds of millions of dollars-worth of donated Swedish equipment will add beef in the coming years. The Balts may not be able to afford jet fighters, but they will have runways and hangars that can accommodate NATO ones.

The economist plays heavily on the Russian threat claiming that The Balts’ cause is helped by Russia, which has misplayed its hand. The Kremlin claims at one and the same time that it poses no threat to the Baltic countries (and so NATO membership is unnecessary for them) but that its special interest in this region, as a chunk of the former Soviet Union, should be respected (therefore NATO membership is an insult to Russia). Enforced respect and unwanted influence are exactly the threats from Russia against which the Balts want NATO protection. (Economist 2001, p22).

The question of readiness

In the above quoted report the Economist try to evaluate how ready the Baltic states are for entering the western “clubs” of Nato and the EU. The article further elaborates the economic background of the EU applicant Estonia: Estonia’s economic growth, although one of the fastest in the former Soviet countries, still is slow, the GDP per person would have to increase by 5-6% per year to reach half of the EU average by 2010. The country has few internationally competitive businesses, re-decorated touristical cities contrasting a depopulated and shanty country side with large differences of wealth between citizens in a regional aspect and a population with a decreasing trust and belief in their own politicians: a nation of inefficiency, corruption and incompetence. The Economist concludes that joining the EU should solve these internal troubles (Economist 2001).

There are also factors of EU-adaption that reduces the standard for Estonians, such as the introduction of import tariffs and agricultural subsidies prompted by the EU are referred to by the Economist as “…two bad habits [Estonias] zealously free-trading government had scorned in the early years of reform…” (Economist 2001). This another example of how the EU imposes values of “the right” marketization on succession

Alesina and Drazen tries to show in a famous article how stabilization in economic transition is delayed by socioeconomic groups interacting to shift the burden of policy change, such as fiscal adjustments, to other groups: “…the politico-economic determinants of delays in the adoption of fiscal adjustment programs.” (Alesina & Drazen 1991) Under the head line “Estonia faces up to challenge of EU targets” the Central European in February 2000 quotes Vahur Kraft, governor of Estonia’s central bank, who admits accession to the EU will be a major challenge for the Estonian economy but claims it will benefit the country enormously in terms of growth and foreign investment: "After the Russian crisis, our economy totally turned its exports from eastern countries to western ones...". In Kraft’s description Estonian exporters have consciously chosen to turn to western markets rather than Russian, an export policy that has stabilized Estonian economy and will pull down interest rates.

5 This may be done by e.g. “stalling”, and concession may be reached by political means such as legislative agreements, electoral outcomes or ceding to policy makers power to decree
He continues by stating that Estonia has yet to meet the inflation and long-term interest rate targets but that government debt is in very good shape and that the government has made huge progress in cutting inflation from 8% last 1999 to around 3% in 2000 (Central European).

But Estonia sees that as a fair price to pay for the "soft" security gain of being inside one of the big western clubs, and for the guaranteed market access that would also come with EU membership.

Russia claims it is perfectly happy for any or all of the Baltic States to join the EU. In practice, it may decide to have second thoughts. Many Russians have still not learnt to view the Baltic States as independent countries. Russia's foreign ministry is still temporizing over border treaties. Boris Yeltsin singled Balts out for criticism at last month's summit in Denver of the seven leading industrial countries plus Russia. The thought of "losing" the Baltic States to the West, even in the gentler shape of the EU, is bound to trouble the Kremlin. At the least, it may threaten to cut up rough in order to see what new concessions it can wring.

Indeed, those unimpressed by this historical opportunity for Europe should think of the practical benefits. The new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe need to shake up and deregulate their economies in order to prosper in a tough, competitive world, whether they manage to join the EU or not. The EU's existing members need to press on with reforms to their ways of working, their farm policy and their budget if Europe's western half is to continue to prosper. Taking in new members from the east will help them find the courage to do so. It would be hard, the skeptics should note, to find a European project that arouses so many suspicions and yet produces such beneficial results (Economist 97/07/19.)

How do the Other perceive new applicants like Estonia?

The benefits from enlargement will be considerable, and not only in terms of stability on the EU's eastern flank. Adding several faster-growing countries to the single market should pay economic dividends, while the costs in the early years can be contained by negotiating transition periods for the newcomers. Nor should widening the Union be seen as a barrier to deepening it, through economic and monetary union: Europe's single currency will live or die on its own merits. As for agricultural reform and changes to regional subsidies, these are desperately needed whether or not the EU grows bigger (Economist 97/07/19).

I think the above quote gives a picture of how the Economist perceives itself as European, as opposed to all traits described as, or connoted to anything “Eastern”. The descriptions of the Estonian economic transformation reveals not only a picture of an economy considered to be in need of reform: the need for reform is transformed to the subject of Estonia and Estonians…

Estonia is considered in need of transformation – from the Eastern to the European, from the Other to Us. What is interesting is that Estonian reasoning follows the same turn. As quote from Vahur Kraft shows, the shift in Estonian export has gone from trade with Russia to trade with western countries. There is no need for economic argumentation. To state that dependence has shifted from Russia to Western countries and to Finnish tourism is a way of saying that Estonia is moving in to Europe. The same line of reasoning underlies how Estonia seeks connotations to Scandinavia rather than the to the Baltic’s. The Baltic’s as a concept is connected in European consciousness with Eastern/Russian, with refugees and with occupation. This is not a representation suitable for a European country.
As I read the debate, economy is only one of the tools to create difference between Us/EU and the Other/the former Eastern countries. To be able to attain the acceptance by the EU Estonia must use the tool of liberal market economy as a means of signifying difference from Russia and from other countries from the East block – particularly the other two Baltic countries.

One aspect that is underlying these arguments, and that drift up in the conversations, is the Other, within and on the border, the Russians. The Russian question is kept very silent in media discourse – Estonia is praised for its language policy and for the integration of Russians into Estonian society as citizens. What is notable in my interviews though is that “they” can never become one of “us”. One of my informants states that she was trained from early age to distinguish a Russian face. Other informants claim that you can always distinguish a Russian accent no matter how well a person speaks Estonian. Of my informants, with above-mentioned criteria, none have a Russian name. So far two informants have mixed background, that is one parent is Russian and the other ethnic Estonian. They both have Estonian names. This follows the reasoning of previously mentioned Masso and Wihalemm. They discuss how both ethnic Estonians and Russian-Estonians consider Russian-Estonians as a sub-group of social and cultural life. Informants have also pointed out in conversations that Russians are active in other spheres of culture, and in business. They are active and visible in the dominant discourse, but in designated areas that are not culturally preferred.

There is also the fear of the Russians actually invading Estonia. The mother bear always being on the border fueling the hatred for domestic Russians. This one aspect rising great distress in the two groups where informants had mixed background. Since this question is taboo, it is not discussed openly even between friends of different backgrounds. Ethnic Estonians pride themselves of being tolerant, while people with Russian background would say that it is a stigma in today’s Estonia, and that they feel marginalized.

Globalization and post-colonial theories

Could post-colonial theory be used for studies of post-communist countries? Dipesh Chakrabarty designates two kinds of relation to history in social sciences; either historicism that argues that specific knowledge of a nations or cultures development is essential to realize what future measures could be taken to set foot on a certain path, that is a cause effect scheme as the black-box approach I mentioned earlier. The other is a decisionist approach, where value laden choices can be made drawing necessary knowledge from the variety of the past in order to attain a certain desired future (Chakrabarty 2000: 247ff). The reasons for such an appropriation would obviously be that e.g. Estonia has been colonialized by the Soviet. The counter argument would simply be one of contextuality: The Soviet Union in the 20th century is not analogous with Great Britain in the 19th, using post-colonial theories on 3rd world European colonies is in itself dangerous, and heavily criticized, and further more so the attempts to apply the same theories to the 2nd world.

These theories of post-colonialism are underlying Robert Connell’s much debated notion of the global business masculinity, a hegemonic masculinity with features tied to capitalism and the western sphere dominating others also in formulating the gender order (Connell 1998). There is however one inherent problem in this explanation, that is that the post-colonial perspective used by Connell and others in respect to the former eastern block: the history of domination was not the same in the former Soviet Union as in European colonies, and the post colonial history is neither – The Soviet Union was dissolved in a time much different from the liberation of European 3rd world colonies.

When my informants describe how Russians differ from Estonian men, they point out that Russians do constitute Estonian elite, only its not the cultural elite, but connected to business and money.
Thereby Russian men in Estonia would be the ones measuring up to the new business masculinity so in a way the theory would hold true. The Russian men in Estonia are marginalized into this sector, as Others, trade and business is effemized in the Estonian setting. As in colonial theories the Russians are said to have other tastes, for glitter and color, they have other contact nets and social relations, described almost as clans or tribes, Russians are also described as more emotional, all classic means of Othering (cf eg Said 1994, Hall 1997). Yet, at the same time that there exists racism against Russians in Estonia today, we shall also be aware that there are virtually no non-European immigrants. This is one of the changes that will be brought about with the EU – possibly making Russians comparatively Estonian.

Somehow the Estonians internalize the positive connotations – of change, success and individual freedoms the possibility of “selfmaking” and of marketization to ethnic Estonians and to Estonia as a nation, while they reserve certain features for Russian-Estonians.

The elite I study however as I pointed out earlier view themselves as “globalized”, cosmopolitan and European, stating that they are not typical Estonians, that their values are different. Their capital is mostly intellectual and cultural in Bourdieus terminology. They are also the ones with power, making them hegemonic in Connells use of the term: They get media coverage, and write in the media, they have contacts with government and other persons in leading positions.
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