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# RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPACT TO THE INTERNAL SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA

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ideology of extremism, Estonia



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The escalation of issues connected to the emergence of right-wing extremism is a problem with the pan-European dimension (Melzer and Serafin 2013, p. 5). Right-wing extremism is a reactionary and radical response to multiculturalism and globalisation, when some political forces are reluctant or even not capable to accept the co-existence of the people of different skin colours, religions and cultural backgrounds. This can bring about xenophobia, for example, in 2010 France deported the Roma, as they were considered to be a threat to society. International organisations saw the behaviour of French politicians as irresponsible, but it was also interpreted as a way of gaining popularity among French voters (Frazer 2010; Parker 2012). Silvio Berlusconi, an Italian politician, who has been the centre of interest of the international press, has accused immigrants of destabilising the society. Controversial German politician Thilo Sarrazin (2010) claimed almost in the same manner that immigrants are often a heavy burden to a country's social system, also their religion and cultural background can create a disturbing factor not letting them integrate with the rest of society (so called *cultural conflict*).

Political developments in the European Union indicate that right-wing extremism and radical right-wing parties will work to gain an even wider influence in society. As a member state of the EU, these trends could more or less affect Estonian internal security, e.g. street violence and vandalism, hate crimes, etc, herefore needing to be analysed more thoroughly.

## 2. THE RESEARCH TASKS AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the current research is to evaluate whether the emergence of right-wing extremism and radicalism is possible in Estonia, and what would be its possible impact to internal security. Studying right-wing political powers is not unknown in Estonia, there have been some articles published on the topic, for example by Andres Kasekamp (2003), Marika Mikkor (2003), and Daunis Auers with Andres Kasekamp (2013 and 2015). There have also been some student researches, but the topic has not received a significant academic interest in Estonia, and the investigation of the relationship with internal security is almost completely absent.

The research tasks are the following:

- 1) To map the potential right-wing extremist and right radical movements (parties) and to observe their position in the Estonian political sphere.
- 2) To evaluate whether the latter could pose a threat to internal security in Estonia.

Choosing methods is closely connected with the object of research. The current paper proceeds from the paradigm of interpreting social sciences and has set its task to research processes in the course of which social phenomena and meanings are constructed, and the ways of its interpretation (Strömpl *et al.* 2012, pp. 15-47). Qualitative research methods that first and foremost, fit into the aforementioned conceptual background are therefore used. A French sociologist of law Jean Carbonnier (1986) has mentioned that since modern law is usually in the written form and it is produced by composing different documents or sources (legal acts, explanatory notes, protocols, judgements, etc.) then the analysis of different documents is unavoidable for the sociology of law.

Sources for the present work are mainly Internet documents. In the beginning some searches were made on the party websites: <http://www.ekre.ee/><sup>1</sup> and <http://iseseisvuspartei.ee/><sup>2</sup>. It is possible to search from party documents and in addition, one can search from among press releases and other public documents. The author also uses different materials published in the media. Among the most important sources are definitely the reports from police organisations dealing with the matter. The main official source available to the author was the Annual Review of the Estonian Internal Security Service (EISS). The author also used comparative international research as the DEREK index and interpreted The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) overviews.

Why have just these two political parties been dealt with in this paper? Daunis Auers and Andres Kasekamp analysed these radical right wing parties, and this paper will follow the same direction. As Auers and Kasekamp emphasized, the Estonian party landscape became more consolidated since 1999, as a result of new legislation requiring parties to

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<sup>1</sup> Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond (in English: Estonian National Conservative Party).

<sup>2</sup> Eesti Iseseisvuspartei (in English: Estonian Independence Party).

have at least 1,000 members (previously 200). In 2013 there were only ten registered parties in Estonia; three of these ten parties can be categorised as radical right: the Estonian Independence Party, the Estonian National Conservative Party, and the Estonian Freedom Party – Farmer’s Assembly (*Eesti Vabaduspartei – Põllumeeste Kogu*). The latter can be considered practically defunct, because it has not fielded any candidates in a national election for over a decade (Auers and Kasekamp 2015, pp. 143-144). The Estonian Independence Party and Estonian National Conservative Party both took part in the 2011 and 2015 parliamentary elections.

### 3. IDEOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM

Studying the ideological factors gives us an overview of the ambitions and potential goals of radical right-wing extremists. Michael Freeden explains ideology as follows (2004, p. 6):

*“Ideologies are /\_ \_ \_ / clusters of ideas, beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes usually held by identifiable groups, that provide directives, even plans, of action for public policy-making in an endeavor to uphold, justify, change or criticize the social and political arrangements of a state or other political community.”*

Ideologies have a significant influence to the outcome of radical behavior as certain ruling values and attitudes could activate the political practice. Participants have one way or another to interpret the situation, radicalism did not emerge from nowhere, respectively. Because ideology precedes (and even likely predicts) action, it is also necessary to examine these influences in this paragraph. Aspects discussed here form the core elements of the extreme-right and a scientific approach to measure those elements as an index (DEREX).

### 3.1. THE CORE ELEMENTS OF THE EXTREME-RIGHT

When discussing modern radical-right groups the following core elements are referred to: xenophobia, nationalism with an emphasis on ethnic identification and exclusion, populism, ambivalence towards democratic values and support for a strict state guaranteeing law and order (Kasekamp 2003, p. 401). German *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* brings out that (Verfassungsschutz 2014) –

*One feature common to all right-wing extremists is their authoritarian notion of the state, in which the state and the people, in their view an ethnically homogeneous group merge into a single unit within a supposedly natural order. According to this ideology of Volksgemeinschaft, a National Socialist term for a community based on shared racial characteristics, the state leaders intuitively act in accordance with the supposedly uniform will of the people. Starting from this premise, right-wing extremists believe that a state based on right-wing extremist ideology can do without the essential controls of a liberal democratic system, such as the people's right to exercise state authority through elections or the right to form an opposition and take action.*

According to the same source, there are also other elements characteristic to right-wing extremist ideology, these are anti-Semitism, a revisionistic approach to history, in the past years islamophobia has also been added to the previous. Right-wing extremists can be divided into Neo-Nazis and skinheads. Neo-Nazis like to wear symbols of Nazism and honour the memory of Adolf Hitler. At the same time the ideology has three main branches, the following of Odinism, Christian identity and those with other spiritual or religious values. The skinhead subculture originated among working-class youths in London in the 1960s. Shaven heads symbolised the will to self-protect and it also had a practical aim as it helped to avoid a situation in which their enemies could have pulled their hair in street fights. Their objects of attack were immigrants from Pakistan, hippies, homosexuals and the high-class youth studying at Cambridge and at London School of Economics.

In 1972 the Skinhead movement was suppressed by police, but it emerged again in 1981. At that time their leading figure was Ian Stuart. Now the skins used music (white power rock) to spread their ideology, Margaret

Thatcher's policy of national values was also a good ground for their growth (Baysinger 2006). According to a Dutch researcher Cas Mudde (2010), the ideological nucleus of the populist right-wing radicalism is a combination of nativism, authoritarianism and populism. He states that –

*“nativism means an ideology which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group („the nation”) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the nation-state’s homogeneity. Authoritarianism, the belief in a strictly ordered society in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely, is a feature not even exclusive to the core of populist radical right ideology. Authoritarianism is a key aspect of both secular and religious thinking, ranging from (proto-)liberals like Thomas Hobbes to socialists like Vladimir Lenin, from Roman Catholicism to Orthodox Christianity. The third and final feature is populism, here defined as a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, „the pure people” versus „the corrupt elite”. It argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonte generale*, i.e. the general will of the people. While the populist ideology has much deeper roots in the US than in (western) Europe, key elements are clearly linked to fundamental values of western societies in general.”*

We could conclude that the manifestations of right-wing extremism in society is diverse and the different elements (like nativism, authoritarianism and populism) are often interwoven. The forms and actions of right-wing extremist ideology vary from rebellious street protests to polished parliamentary activity. The latter could be a highly dangerous version of activities, because it gives extremists and radicals the direct mechanism for law creation.



### 3.2. THE CORE ELEMENTS ACCORDING TO DEREK INDEX

One method researchers have used to explain right-extremist background factors has been the use of different opinion surveys that explain the most popular attitudes in a society. An example to illustrate that is the DEREK index (see Derek 2014). DEREK is an abbreviation of the following words, the Demand for Right-Wing Extremism and it is compiled by the Political Capital Policy Research & Consulting Institute in Hungary. DEREK is a theoretical model that helps to study the societal attitudes and values in more than 30 European and Middle East countries. It helps to define the attitudes of the surveyed European citizens towards different attitudes, that may have an output in the development of right-extremist views. Upon composing the index the data gathered with the European Social Survey (ESS) is taken as a basis. To be more exact, there are 29 questions the answers to which are used for calculating the DEREK index. The analysts of Political Capital define right-extremists from ideological and psychological aspects and have divided the before mentioned questions into four categories:

- 1) Prejudices and welfare chauvinism;
- 2) Extreme right-wing values;
- 3) Antisocial attitudes;
- 4) Fear, discredit and pessimism.

According to researchers having studied right-wing extremism the first three categories are a part of the right-wing extremist ideology. The emotions of the fourth category (fear, discredit and pessimism) increase the relative importance of the attitudes and values of the first three categories. The named four categories help to study right-wing extremist attitudes. Estonia's DEREK index has remained stable since 2005, its highest point was in 2009 (5.8%). In 2011 the index dropped to 4.1% but rose again in 2013 reaching 5%-5.2%. The new rise was caused by the strengthening of right-extremist values (from 11% in 2011 to 13% in 2013) and of antisocial attitudes (from 15% in 2011 to 18% in 2013). According to earlier DEREK surveys the right-extremist values in society have never been as popular as in 2013 (13%). Indicators for prejudices

and welfare chauvinism have been dropping since 2003, from 47% to 39% in 2013. At the same time the society's right-extremist values have become stronger with each survey.

In 2003 the percentage in question was only 8, but by 2013 already 13% of society stated having right-extremist values. Thus although the society's prejudices have decreased, the right-extremist values have increased. The society's morale and emotions (fear, discredit and pessimism) in Estonia have stayed the same throughout the years, 15% in 2003 and 13% in 2013.

When comparing Estonia's relevant numbers for example to our Nordic neighbour country Finland, it appears that the DEREK index for the latter was 1.2 % in 2011 and 0.9% in 2013. A 21% of the Finnish people surveyed had prejudices and welfare chauvinism in 2011 and 16 % respectively in 2013 (almost two times lower than in Estonia). When comparing Estonia with our Baltic neighbors (Latvia and Lithuania), the comparison shows that Estonia's society feels safer and does not have as strong anti-establishment attitudes and right-wing value orientation as Latvia and Lithuania (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** The Baltic countries comparison (2008-2009)

	<b>ESTONIA</b>	<b>LATVIA</b>	<b>LITHUANIA</b>
Prejudices and welfare chauvinism	46 %	58 %	38 %
Anti-establishment attitudes	20 %	52 %	45 %
Right-wing value orientation	11 %	26 %	14 %
Fear, distrust, pessimism	13 %	25 %	25 %
DEREX	5.8 %	20.8 %	13.3%

Source: DEREK: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, available: <http://derexindex.eu/countries>

## 4. EVIDENCE FROM ESTONIAN POLICE REPORTS

In the Republic of Estonia, the main organisation responsible for law enforcement is the Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB). As a result, among other information, they collect all the required data about the suspicious or illegal activities of Estonian right-wing extremists. One important substructure of PBGB - the Estonian Internal Security Service (EISS) has a long tradition to publish a yearbook. The EISS yearbook often mirrors the information about extremists and is available online. The current chapter was based on these materials and transmits the information officially published by the EISS. The source is valuable, because the yearbook also contains a risk assessment on the extremism in Estonia.

### 4.1. THE EISS REPORTS 2008–2010

In its report of 2008 EISS announced that (EISS yearbook 2008, pp. 29-31) they have drawn their attention to people and activities that are considered to be both right and left extremist, and which may lead to the emergence of extremism or to violent conflicts. One of the most important tendencies in 2008 was the more frequent cooperation between the like-minded (both right and left-extremist) people from Estonia and abroad and also the clearer shaping of the left-extremist movement. In the past years there have been conflicts and violent clashes between right-wing extremists (skinheads, Neo-Nazis) and left-wing extremists (Anti-Fascists, anarchists, anti-globalists, anti-racists). As an example EISS could bring out the annual right-wing extremist Salem March in Sweden and the European Social Forum held in several countries, which often brings violent protests.

When foreign countries are considered, it can be said that Estonian right-extremists have the closest contacts with their Swedish counterparts. *Via* the connections of both types of Estonian extremists the aforementioned problems can reach Estonia in a few years. In August 2008 the Swedish police arrested a number of animal rights activists from Estonia after the event they had taken part in became violent. In December 2008 six Estonian skinheads, who had wanted to take part in the Salem March in Stockholm, were sent back from the border of Sweden. Since recently left-wing extremist movements have started to emerge and their actions

are also becoming more frequent, it would soon happen that the actions themselves and the conflicts between the two opposing parties may pose a potential threat. In 2008 it was already seen that the older generation skinheads were dissatisfied with the more frequent activities of Estonian anarchists and animal rights activists, which they saw as a threat to Estonian nationalism. Instead of wanting to defend or popularise one's ideas, the left and right-wing extremists aim was to look for conflict between the two sides or they had to provoke each other.

In addition to that the EISS mentioned, Estonian right-wing extremists sometimes organised events that are connected with the popularisation of National Socialism. Although there were only a few dozen Neo-Nazis in Estonia, the participation of people promoting National Socialism and xenophobia commemoratively and historically posed a direct threat to Estonia, since it gave Russian propaganda the pretext to show Estonia as a state that is was supporting Nazism. It can be said that there was a significant change in 2008 when Estonian right-wing extremists started to become more interested in being active in politics. The change in orientation can be explained by looking at the political success of right-wing extremists in several countries in Western Europe, that also inspired their counterparts in Estonia. The National Democratic Party of Germany (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands, NPD) and the Swedish Resistance Movement (Svenska Motståndsrörelsen, SRM) have been seen as the most important role models. Bigger social attention and support was mainly expected from Estonian Independence Party (Eesti Iseseisvuspartei, EIP), some members of the board were supportive to the right-extremist views and some have been skinheads in their youth. The next announcement about the activities of the EISS is from its report of 2010 (EISS yearbook 2010, p. 7). EISS reported that the activism and support for chauvinism and right-extremism in Estonia is still low.

#### 4.2. THE EISS REPORTS 2011–2013

The attempts of groups of people gathered around single activists to join for the elections of the Riigikogu in 2010 did not succeed and they did not manage to create a right-wing populist party. Since the right-wing-extremist organisations are split and the leading activists all strive for power, it is not likely that a united and active right-wing populist political

group will emerge in the nearest future. Organisations with financial issues have an aim to involve publicly known people in their activities. Due to the fact that leading figures of radical movements opposed each other, they mainly participated as independent candidates in the elections of 2011. Their populist and unreal statements have never received the public's support and as a result their prospects of succeeding in elections are minimal. In its yearbook of 2012 EISS (EISS yearbook 2012, pp. 4-5), the report again approved that extremist ideologies are not widespread in Estonia. In the past years the ways of expressing extremist ideologies have changed. In Europe there is a new far-right generation, the so called Autonomous Nationalists that are becoming more popular and who do not use the recognisable extremist symbols and hide their attitudes from the public. They are willing to use violence in order to achieve their aims. According to law enforcement agencies those are the circuits that may bring about the next far-right terrorism.

The authors of the EISS yearbook 2013 say that in Estonia there have been a couple of websites used for promoting anonymous activism, but without any success so far. When compared with the rest of the world, it can be said that right-wing extremism is marginal in Estonia, and the circle supporting it is of no more than a hundred people. Authors express opinion that when one is behaving in a way that is ethnically, religiously or racially insulting, it is usually not caused by utter extremism, but by thoughtlessness and gaps in one's education. If one is deliberately acting illegally in public or is doing it in order to receive the public's attention, it cannot always be considered to be extremism as its main characteristics are that it is based on extremist ideology. But even this challenging and aggressive activity has no certain ideological background, for example on the Internet where it may indirectly be a threat to the state's constitutional order. Generally in cases like that it is the copying of an activity that has already been noticed in some other countries. In its yearbook 2013 EISS (EISS yearbook 2013, p. 5) it was mentioned that most of the security agencies in the world deal with the prevention and blocking of extremism and other threats of security related with it.

In its annual reviews of the past 15 years the EISS has described what threat extremism poses to the constitutional order. There were no forms of extremism threatening Estonia's security directly in 2013. EISS states that a bigger threat to our inner security is actually Russian chauvinists and Moscow-backed activists. Here we can summarise the conclusions

based on the reports of the EISS. The police do not consider right-wing extremism to be significant in Estonia as it is a rather marginal phenomenon in which the number of actors and powers is minimal. A bigger threat is Russian extremists that are more active and have a more important role in Estonia.

## 5. RIGHT-WING RADICAL POLITICAL GROUPS

### 5.1. SITUATION WITH RADICAL RIGHT-WING PARTIES IN EUROPE

Many radical right-wing parties and politicians have appeared all over the European political arena (Mammone, Godin and Jenkins 2012). For example, Prime Minister Berlusconi who used several measures for blocking immigration spread to Italy (Ridgwell 2010; Fabbrini 2013). *Jobbik*, a right-wing radical party that has gained popularity in Hungary, received 14.8 per cent of votes in the 2009 parliamentary elections, and 16.67 per cent of votes in 2010 (Barlai 2012, p. 233; Karácsony and Róna 2011). This party is also represented at the European Parliament (European Parliament 2014). The Hungarian researchers elucidate that *Jobbik* is exceptional among other European far-right parties, by its decision to denounce every prior Hungarian social consensus. *Jobbik* does not hesitate to question almost all established policies: e.g., that the country should be democratic, that it should belong to the European Union, and that racism and anti-Semitism should be unacceptable. In doing so, it has radicalized even mainstream political discourse, examples include its exploitation of the so-called “Roma issue”. *Jobbik* expresses deep aggressiveness and despite its minor political position, the Hungarian far-right has begun to change the orientation of the entire society (Nagy, Boros and Vasali 2013, p. 232). In the European Parliament elections of 2014 the named institution included a significant number of right-wing politicians (McDonald-Gibson and Lichfield 2014). The results of elections showed that radical right parties are spreading and gathering support, e.g. Front National (FN) in France, Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) in Austria, Dansk Folkeparti (DF) in Denmark, Lega Nord in Italy, Vlaams Belang in Belgium, etc (Minkenberg 2013, p. 14).

## 5.2. THE ESTONIAN PARTY SYSTEM: SOME CURRENTS

Compared to the European situation, it has not been seen in a very energetic presence of extremist parties in Estonia. The current situation in Estonia needs some explanation here.

The Constitution of Estonia enacts a proportional political system while researcher Tõnis Saarts has indicated that Estonia is among the countries with widely spread majoritarian rather than a consensual politics and decision-making style (Saarts 2008). Very plainly put, the majoritarian style stands for a winner-takes-all logic or the “road roller” strategy. It is not as much the matter of parties in power not negotiating with the opposition in an attempt to find greater public approval of the politics designed, as the general style of policy-making characterised by communicating from the position of power and getting wrangled. Seeking consensus is considered a sign of weakness. Conflicts and confrontations are not to be avoided. In addition, in terms of the Estonian political system one has to consider that the internal organisation of Estonian parties reflects features characteristic of a cartel party (Saarts & Lumi 2012, pp. 186-244). Therefore, it is difficult for small parties to get going, and they choose public confrontation with large parties (differentiation). It also means a clear discrepancy from the ruling opinion and sometimes the desire to find new supporters among the people with extreme views. It has to be noted here that the position of the Estonian National Conservative Party is different: as it is much larger and the party’s political success depends on a broader support than “gaming on” only the Estonian radicals. Although, their program has a clear emphasis as meant specifically to the last category of electors. Therefore the author has put more stress on them (e.g. 5.2.2. “Populist elements in EKRE’s program”). The case of the Estonian Independence Party, the right-wing internet groupuscules and the Hitler-orientated activism are different. The latter two are overtly extreme and the Estonian Independence Party is politically marginal, as their program is strongly contrasting from the common parties in Estonia.

### **5.2.1. *Estonian National Conservative Party***

In his article Andres Kasekamp (2003) brought out the political powers he considered as parties with a strong national ideology. Those were the following: the Estonian National Independence Party (Eesti Rahvusliku Sõltumatuse Partei, ERSP), a movement called Estonian Citizen (Eesti Kodanik), the Central League of Estonian Nationalists (Eesti Rahvuslaste Keskliit, ERK), the Estonian Independence Party (Eesti Iseseisvuspartei, EIP) and the Republican Party (Vabariiklik Partei). Kasekamp also mentions small groupuscules that are basically nothing more than party programmes published on the Internet. Now, when more than ten years have passed from his article, Estonia's political scene has changed and many of the aforementioned powers have disappeared, joined with other parties or have been liquidated. It is the Estonian Independence Party that is still functioning. There is also a new power that has arisen, the Estonian National Conservative Party (EKRE).

EKRE was founded in 2012 when Estonia's National Movement (Eesti Rahvuslik Liikumine) did not have representation in the Riigikogu, and the People's Union of Estonia (Rahvaliid), which had formerly been in the parliament were united (Rudi 2012). The People's Union of Estonia was a party with a long history as it had been in both the Riigikogu and in the government (Auers and Kasekamp 2013, p. 239). The leader of the People's Union of Estonia was the former president of Estonia, Arnold Rüütel, who still is one of the leading figures of the new party. In the parliamentary election of 2015, EKRE secured 8.1 % of the votes (46 772) and entered the parliament with 7 seats (Kund 2015; Voting in Estonia 2015). Now EKRE has about 7.700 members, mostly remnants from the People's Union of Estonia – Estonia's National Movement actually had an extremely low number of members. We could conclude that EKRE is the legal successor of the People's Union of Estonia, but with a changed name and armed with a radical-right ideology.

### **5.2.2. *Populist elements in EKRE's program***

In its programme, the party stresses that Estonia is in crisis and in order to escape from it one has to vote for EKRE's candidates. The following example illustrates the anti-elitist and populist ideas in the programme (EKRE's programme 2014) –



*„All people who are honest and think understand that without significant changes the Estonia of today is not sustainable. It does not guarantee welfare to our people, the needs of developing the economy, culture and the preserving of Estonian nationalism in Estonia and all over the world. The situation we have today has been caused by the non-democratic way of centralising the governing of the country, the monopolisation of the media, self-praising demagoguery, a corrupt cartel policy, financial decline and the continuous stalling of the economics belonging to the Estonian capital, changing Estonia into a country with cheap labour, taking out the profits of foreign companies tax-free, limiting the local municipalities' profits and stalling local life.*

*A sovereign state has been changed into a vassal state representing the interests of the European Union, foreign capital and the stagnant career officials and functionaries, here no layer of society feels good neither workers, entrepreneurs, intelligence, countrymen, city people, children, the young or the elderly. The leaders of the parties in power and their governments have caused limitless damage to the state of Estonia, to its economy, its people, and its nation. The political parties that have lead Estonia into crisis are not capable of bringing us out from the crisis. The governing of the state has to be changed momentarily, since otherwise the processes causing damage become irreversible. We encourage everybody to think along and join us in order to reach Estonia's highest political aim. That is the preservation of Estonian nationalism, realistic assurance of the development of the state, its people and the increase of welfare. Only the people of Estonia can change it all!”*

A more thorough analysis of the programme shows the strong nationalist impetus and includes populist, even contradicting left and right-wing ideologies, e.g. the founding of a national commercial bank and radical tax reductions at the same time. Although, there are some principles missing that are common to far-right powers, these are islamophobia and anti-Semitism, but EKRE wants the limiting of immigration to Estonia and expresses Russophobia. It has to be said that one of the leaders of the party has drawn attention to him with the help of some xenophobic

statements published in the media.<sup>1</sup> The political programme of EKRE also emphasises the moment of militarism. According to the party, the European Union is moving towards federalism and should not have any more power centralised to Brussels (Euroscepticism). Shortly after the election, a scandal erupted because of the pro-fascist statements made by Jaak Madison, the leader of EKRE's youth organisation and a new MP, who sees in Nazism and Fascism "many positive things." (Hot News, 2015).

Swedish researcher Péteris Timofejevs Henriksson expressed an opinion after the election, that the emergence of EKRE was "a slight surprise". Henriksson compared EKRE to some extent with its Latvian counterpart National Alliance (*Nacionālā apvienība „Visu Latvijai!” – „Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK”*), which has managed despite its nationalist rhetoric, seats in the government. Therefore it will be interesting to see, how long a process of political normalisation of EKRE will take. In case of the National Alliance, it took less than a year (Henriksson 2015). EKRE masterfully took advantage of dissatisfaction with the government and won supporters by populist promises, but populism has not been a very useful tool for politics in Estonia. A research report called "Populism in the Baltic States" (by the Tallinn University Institute of Political Science and Governance and Open Estonia Foundation 2012) explained, that populists have not been very successful in the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania all included) and overall, it may be claimed that populism is not challenging the liberal *status quo* in the Baltic States (Jakobson, M.-L. *et al.* 2012, p. 124). EKRE's further political fate depends on whether they stay as hardline populists or have access to government and begin to normalise.

### 5.3. THE ESTONIAN INDEPENDENCE PARTY

In addition to EKRE there is also the Estonian Independence Party (Eesti Iseseisvuspartei, EIP), which is still active in Estonia. After analysing the programme, this party can also be considered to be a populist party with a radical nationalist touch. The party is small, as it has

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. "If you're black, go back" and "I want Estonia to be a white country" were some of the comments made by Martin Helme, a board member of EKRE (News.err.ee 2013).

only a little more than 2.000 members. In 2008 the EISS pointed out that right-wing extremists are trying to get public attention *via* the EIP, many members of the board of whom support far-right views, as some of them were skinheads in their youth (see Rand 2009). EIP shares the same anti-elitist and Eurosceptic attitudes as EKRE. These principles are stated in their charter (EIPs charter 2002) –

- 1) Estonia is not a free country, instead it is a neo-colonised country. The discordances of our country, which are mistaken as developmental disorders are actually classical characteristics of a neo-colonised country;
- 2) In the course of neo-colonisation banking is taken over, via a hostile loan policy, national production is stalled, in order to balance the situation national production has to be supported;
- 3) With joining the European Union Estonia's people lose everything that is worth buying, especially land. The territory will be taken over, which will be irreversible because a small nation is incapable of buying back their homeland if it has already been sold.

In its programme (EIPs programme 2009) EIP also stresses that Estonia must exit the European Union and regain independence once again. As Auer's and Kasekamp conclude, EIP's ideology is largely based on it's leader – Vello Leito's anti-globalist and conspiracyting writings that the Estonian politicians engaged in European integration are "traitors", having violated the constitution (Auers and Kasekamp 2015, p. 143). In the parliamentary election of 2015, EIP secured 0.21 % of the votes (1047) and did not enter the parliament (Voting in Estonia 2015).

## 5.4. RIGHT-WING INTERNET GROUPUSCULES AND THE HITLER-ORIENTATED ACTIVISM

Researchers Mari-Liis Madisson and Andreas Ventsel have shown that there are very active right-wing online communities (groupuscules), acting as “ideology workshops” for the Estonian political scene -

*The self-descriptions of right-wing groupuscules are largely built around the code text of a conspiracy theory, which allows the representation of one's ideological opponents as extremely ill-intentioned or ignorant, and themselves, by contrast, as moral and heroic. The code text that narrates the decline of the liberal-democratic world constellates narratives of a conspiratorial world system, in which the cause of every event can be explained by the „evil“ intent of the conspirators. Groupuscules do not limit themselves to passive complaining about the decadence of the prevailing world order; often ideas are expressed of radically reforming this decadent world order, which should in turn lead to the rebirth of nation-states. The specificity of the code text leads participants in the extreme right to perceive causal connections between events that have occurred in different places at different times, and which seem totally unconnectable in the eyes of outsiders. Those phenomena that do not fit the code text, and which could make way for other explanations for sociocultural realities are virtually invisible in the self-descriptions of groupuscules, and are relegated to the periphery as unimportant. (Madisson and Ventsel 2015, pp. 26-27).*

The movement of the skinheads has been seen as “underground” and very marginal in Estonia (see Mikkor 2003). From time to time, besides organised political parties there have been other right-radical initiatives. For example Risto Teinonen has from 2006 tried to find a Hitler-orientated union (Jüriso and Kahu 2008).

He has recruited members at meetings where Hitler's ideology is introduced and promoted. But the Office to the Prosecutor General announced that criminal proceedings against Risto Teinonen were brought to a close, since there had been nothing in the legislation that would enable him to

be accused of anything. The law forbids organising a union whose activities are directed towards Estonia's independence and sovereignty, but Teinonen's activities are not like that. The prosecutor also cannot accuse him of instigating hostilities, since according to the law one instigates hostilities when there is a threat to someone's life, health or property. As Teinonen has not directly been threatening anybody, he got away from this accusation. According to the media there have been government officials, including men from the armed forces, celebrating the anniversaries of the Third Reich with Risto Teinonen. There were a few dozen people connected with the Nazi events held in Tartu, Tallinn and Pärnu County in 2006 and 2007 (Aasaru 2010; Vahter 2010). At the end of 2008 the EISS closed the two-year criminal investigation with no one being brought to justice. Due to fights between its members and due to national pressure Tartu's Nazi groupuscule has fallen apart, which had been the aim of those in power. Nowadays Teinonen propagates his extremist worldview on a website called "natsiweb" ("Website of Estonian nazis") (<http://www.natsiweb.info/index.php?page=1>) (Natsiweb 2015).

## 6. PROHIBITIONS OF INCITEMENT IN LEGISLATION

The laws determine the border, which political action is considered extremist in society, and what penalties are authorised by parliament for violation of the prohibitions. In this sense, no political activity has been considered as the actual promotion of citizen activism. In the following, we are going to have to look at some extremism related legal solutions valid in the Estonian Penal Code, and the analysis and proposals in the ECRI reports, concerning the current situation in Estonia.

### 6.1. ESTONIAN PENAL CODE AND THE ECRI REPORTS

§ 12 of the Estonian Constitution states that incitement to ethnic, racial, religious or political hatred, violence or discrimination is prohibited and punishable by law. The named principles are more clearly defined in Penal Code – § 151, which forbids activities which publicly incite hatred or violence, also when the aforementioned arise from nationality, race, skin colour, etc. Also § 152 forbids discrimination based on nationality, race, skin colour, etc.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has composed several overviews of how the named principles are followed in Estonia. In its reports the ECRI has not found significant deficiencies (ECRI 2010). In 2007 a group of researchers composed a research report “Grudge against races and foreigners in Estonia” (in Estonian: “Rassi- ja võõravimm Eestis”), which included a thorough overview of three studies carried out in 2007. A study about internet comments, printed media and the population, which looked at racial hatred and national problems in Estonia from different points of view (Study 2007). The results of the study also pointed out the following attitudes:

- 1) 22% of the people living in Estonia had in the past year seen cases of unequal treatment based on a person’s race, nationality or religion;
- 2) 36% of the population (23% of the speakers of Estonian and 65% of the speakers of Russian) think that unequal treatment of

immigrants is a problem in Estonia. 34% of the population think that immigrants take jobs from the locals, and 46% agree with the statement that immigrants increase the crime rate;

- 3) The group of people the population of Estonia wants to work with the least are drug addicts (81%), people with a criminal record (64%) and HIV carriers (52%). Only 2.8% of people do not want to work with people of other nationalities;
- 4) Estonians with a lower educational level consider threats caused by immigrants higher than those with higher educational level. Russian speakers with secondary or with secondary specialised education consider threats caused by immigration lower;
- 5) Objects of hate speech based on race or nationality in comments published on the Internet in Estonian are more frequently Russians. Racist comments towards other nationalities are more frequently addressed to Americans, Jews and Finns. The number of comments illustrating racial hatred has not significantly risen in the past years;
- 6) Signs of symbolist (hidden) racism are more frequent than signs of real (visible) racism, which means that it is publicly shown that social groups are equal, but unconscious prejudices and hidden discrimination is still there. It was not proved that racial problems have increased in the past years in Estonia;
- 7) The number of articles including the topic of race has increased in the media. Media representation of race and racism increases after conflict situations (April riots, World Trade Center attacks),
- 8) Nation based discrimination is most frequently expressed by a general negative attitude.

In conclusion it can be said that at least based on this ECRI study the right-wing extremist ideology is not rooted in society. In general, Estonian society is “alien friendly” and there is only a little incitement to hatred.

## 6.2. DRAFT LEGISLATION AGAINST INCITEMENT TO HATRED

At the moment the Ministry of Justice is trying to draft legislation against incitement to hatred. According to the framework decision from 2008, Estonia, as a member of the European Union, is obliged to make incitement to hatred punishable. In order to do so, the Ministry of Justice composes a draft legislation, which the wording is at the moment being discussed. The discussions will continue until a wording satisfying those involved has been found and the questions arisen have been answered.

The framework decision enables a state to some extent choose how a punishable deed should be defined. If those norms are not adapted a state could face sanctions. At the moment the wording for incitement to hatred is related with causing real threat, which is why metaphorically there should in addition to a threat an axe be raised. But in this case it is already late, intervention is impossible, the axe will fall and a crime will be committed. The aim of the draft legislation is to create an opportunity for in time intervention and to prevent serious consequences. The draft legislation does not limit the freedom of speech. Before all the doubts of all of those involved are eliminated the draft legislation will not be approved and it will not be taken to the next level. The draft legislation (Ministry of Justice, 2014) also does not limit discussions about historical events. Nevertheless it does limit the denying, justifying or understating of certain crimes against humanity and war crimes, if those activities involve calls for violence against certain groups of people.

## 6.3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Legal positivism tends to define law as a formally closed normative system, based on itself; it is a phenomenon defined by the will of the legislator, which by its origin and characteristics, connected with the state as a sovereign subject of legal power (Raska 2004, p. 79). In legal positivism political discretion gains greater meaning, originating from the principle that law is nothing but lawfully limited power; law has become an instrument used in politics to lead the society in the direction most suitable (Varrak 2009, p. 16). Consequently, it is very important, according to which values the law has created. Being a member of the EU not



only brings along rights, but also obligations. At present, the Estonian Penal Code contains provisions, which provide penalties for extremist activities. The Ministry of Justice is trying to draft legislation against incitement to hatred, framework decisions on combating racism states that there is an obligation to punish one for inciting hatred and for denying or justifying certain crimes - if they are of the nature of incitement to hatred. The wording is unfortunately imprecise and needs some more adjustment. On the other hand, this wording does not need to restrict the freedom of expression. The main issue here is to find a suitable compromise between the different liberal beliefs.

## 7. THE CORE VALUES OF THE ESTONIAN POLITICAL CULTURE

The forming of extreme right political powers in Estonia has been dull and ineffective. At this point, we shall discuss why it has been so? Are there any general attitudes or values that start or stop the aforementioned developments? Researchers have studied the core values of the Estonian political culture (Kalev et al. 2008). The core values are characteristics of the Estonian cultural sphere, without knowing of which it is difficult to understand the local political culture. The following core values can be brought out:

- 1) Materialism and instrumentalism;
- 2) Secularity;
- 3) Individualism;
- 4) Short distance from power;
- 5) National worldview;
- 6) Masculinity;
- 7) The weakness of state tradition and antistatism;
- 8) Weak civic culture;
- 9) Weak communal values;
- 10) Orientation to changes;
- 11) Non-violent protest culture and anti-militarism.

Some values of those can be highlighted as reasons why extreme right ideology does not root in Estonia. For example, authors write about a non-violent protest culture and anti-militarism, violence is generally a taboo in Estonian political culture. Definitely it is an important characteristic to explain why national tensions did not turn into violence in the beginning of the 1990s. A non-violent protest culture moves Estonia closer to Scandinavia and more distant from Russia and Southern Europe. There is also weak militarism common to small states accompanying non-violent protest culture. Estonia cannot boast about long

historical military traditions or about successful conquests in the past. Still there is a certain point of conflict in the political culture. Do not forget that the popular freedom fighters movement in the beginning of the 1930s had a strong military ethos.

In the Estonia of today we can also see how the Battle of the Tannenberg Line and the War of Independence are as described heroic. In certain circles of the political elite it is an honour for one to be a member of the Estonian Defence League and to be seen in a uniform when attending certain events, this refers to contradictions between elite groups. Although in international terms, the Estonian population as a whole is very peaceful, it is definitely not utterly pacifistic. On the other hand, our worldview is national and sceptic towards strong centralised power. Apparently it is impossible to understand the Estonian political culture if we do not consider the strong emphasis there is on national ideology. The latter is visible in everyday political rhetoric, in the programmes of political parties with a strong national touch and in political aims. The national ideology in Estonia can rather be characterised by the so-called modern national approach, which sees the nation as an egalitarian and inclusive basis for identity (the countrymen vs. oppressors) and thus it is seen as an important cornerstone when building democracy.

What is also common to the Estonian political culture is the fact that usually identity is created *via* negative opposition, not *via* highlighting positive achievements directed towards the future or the past. Sometimes strong emphasis on nationalism results in intolerance towards the foreign and the different. Estonians have experienced real independent nationhood for less than 40 years all together. Central power has been in the hands of foreigners, that is why the institutions of central power are not seen as our *own*. Expectations for the institutions of central power are thus not very high. The weakness of the state tradition is reflected in the antistatic attitudes Estonians have, they are afraid of a strong state.

What characterises Estonia is the belief according to which a state is something “special and superior”. One has to be faithful to one’s *nation* not to one’s *state*. Hence, it is no surprise that the neo-liberalist slogans about a “thin state” became very popular in Estonia of the 1990s.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

This research topic commenced, because right-wing radicalism and extremism has emerged in some European countries, the same can also take place in Estonia. Through the media, reflections on the electoral successes of European extreme right-wing parties, could arrive in Estonia and motivate the local politicians to copy the tactics and slogans. Possibly having a detrimental impact on Estonian internal security.

The author uses a variety of sources: international comparative data, documents of Estonian political parties, information from police reports, as well as report on Estonian legal policy. The aim is to make as expanded a picture about the subject as possible, to see all details in context.

The current paper is dedicated to examining whether there are right-wing extremist and radical right organisations in Estonia (Ch. 5), and analysed what factors may affect the functioning of these forces, from the aspect of internal security in Estonia. The first factor under observation here is the DEREK index (the Demand for Right-Wing Extremism). DEREK is a theoretical model that helps to study the societal attitudes and values in more than 30 European and Middle East countries (Subch. 3.2). The DEREK index showed that Estonia is much more vulnerable compared to Finland, but in comparison with other Baltic countries, the support for right-wing extremism and the radical right is lower in Estonia. However, the index is on a slight rise lately. This section was followed by an analysis of police reports to identify the current situation with right-wing extremism in Estonia (Ch. 4). The Estonian Internal Security Service admits in its annual reports that the most significant threat to Estonian internal security is coming from Russian abettors and from realistic threatening activities. In the context of information war, the Russian side has tried to make use of the few people with extreme-right symbols who have been shown on propagandistic channels, with the aim to show Estonia as a "Nazi state". The Estonian Internal Security Service has seen this plan through and thus informed the Estonian public about that. The police will not see a real threat in right-wing extremists. Actually, it has to be mentioned with strong approval, that the police have found it necessary to deal with this phenomenon over the years, as well as to inform the public of the results.

Special chapter (Ch. 6) was devoted to the analysis of the legal regulation situation in Estonia and to the reports of the European Commission

against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). In general, the situation is satisfactory, the valid legislation includes norms stating punishments for extreme-right crimes, but there are moments that should be improved, such as regulation regarding hate speech.

The author is of an opinion that in order to find answers to the question why right-wing extremism has not emerged deeply in Estonia, one has to look into the cultural factors that influence the spread of ideologies in society (Ch. 7). The present work could be developed further by doing some detailed analysis, in which the cultural factors inhibiting right-wing extremism and their influence in society are looked at.

Analysis showed that we have only one right radical political party in Estonia, which has representation in parliament. The other political parties are almost nonexistent. Lately right-wing extremist groupuscules have emerged, which disseminate conspiracy theories and nationalist ideas on the internet (Subch. 5.4). Apparently, their impact is marginal and virtual, with no effect on real politics.

As explained previously, the Estonian political system does not hold in high esteem the consensual politics and decision-making (the winner-takes-all logic prevails). It means that the political opposition needs to trust mainly on undisguised conflicts and confrontations (differentiation prevails). The Estonian National Conservative Party have been successful in mobilising the people with radical views: their program contains a very strong populist impetus.

In the near future, we could witness the impact of the political renaissance of EKRE, because it has a large number of party members with active parliamentary representation and state budget based funding. After the 2015 elections, several new policy initiatives have been available to them (Ch. 5). Although, the nature of this party shouldn't be interpreted as overtly dangerous based on their program only, it is important to evaluate their undertakings and behavior while in power.

It should also be taken into account that future developments in Europe may bring out totally new circumstances, such as the escalation of war in the Middle East and the increasing migration of refugees, which in turn can affect negatively the wave of xenophobia and right-wing extremist, hand in hand. Although the situation with right-wing extremist and the radical right in Estonia is not remarkably bad, more studies are necessary in the future to observe the phenomenon.

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