

## RESTORATIONIST GEOPOLITICS: CONSTRUCTING THE NORTHEASTERN ESTONIAN BORDER

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### Abstract

*Geopolitical discourse reinforces and challenges national geopolitical narratives, nationalizing processes, and political-territorial borders. Political-territorial borders are prominent features in contemporary political geography and attract a wealth of interdisciplinary scholarship. I contribute to this scholarship by addressing Estonian restorationist geopolitical discourse and the northeastern Estonian-Russian border. I address the Estonian-Russian border through a critical approach that analyzes Estonian state discourse. This article focuses on the Estonian Internal Security Service (Kaitsepolitseiamet), a major branch of the Estonian Ministry of the Interior. I find that Estonian state border discourses and representations illustrate the socio-spatial consequences of Estonian nationalizing processes linked to restorationist geopolitics. The beginning of the twenty first century and pending EU accession were heralded as symbolizing the decline of Estonian restorationist geopolitics and the rise of Estonian political integration and accommodation with the European community; however, this analysis brings to the fore the problematic perpetuation of restorationist geopolitics through state-produced border discourse, which suggests restorationist geopolitics still thrives within the Estonian state and carries negative implications for resolving the ongoing Estonian-Russian (and now EU-Russian) border dispute.*

**Keywords:** Estonia; Ida-Viru County; borders; discourse; restorationist geopolitics

### GEOPOLITICA RESTAURACIONISTA: CONSTRUYENDO LA FRONTERA NORESTE DE ESTONIA

#### Resumen

*El discurso geopolítico refuerza y reta las narrativas geopolíticas nacionales, los procesos de nacionalización, y los límites político-territoriales. Los límites político-territoriales son características prominentes en la geografía política contemporánea y atraen una riqueza de erudición interdisciplinaria. Contribuyo con este conocimiento abordando el discurso geopolítico restauracionista de Estonia y la frontera nororiental Estoniana-Rusa. Tomo la frontera Estoniana-Rusa a través de un enfoque crítico que analiza el discurso del Estado Estoniano. Este artículo se centra en el Servicio de Seguridad Interno de Estonia (Kaitsepolitseiamet), una división principal del Ministerio del Interior de Estonia. Encuentro que los discursos y representaciones sobre las fronteras del Estado Estoniano ilustran las consecuencias socio-políticas del proceso de nacionalización de Estonia vinculado a la geopolítica restauracionista. El inicio del siglo XXI y la espera por el ingreso a la Unión Europea fueron anunciados como símbolos del declive de la geopolítica restauracionista de Estonia y el surgimiento de la política de integración y adaptación a la Comunidad Europea; sin embargo, este análisis trae a la palestra la perpetuación problemática de la geopolítica restauracionista a través del discurso de frontera elaborado por el Estado; lo que sugiere que la geopolítica restauracionista aún se mantiene viva en el Estado de Estonia y tiene implicaciones negativas para la solución de la actual disputa fronteriza Estoniana-Rusa (y Ahora EU-Rusa).*

**Palabras Clave:** Estonia, Condado Ida-Viru, fronteras, discurso, geopolítica restauracionista

## GÉOPOLITIQUE RESTAURATIONNISTE: CONSTRUIRE LA FRONTIÈRE NORD-EST DE L'ESTONIE

### Résumé

*Le discours géopolitique renforce et défie les rapports géopolitiques nationaux, les procès de nationalisation et les limites politique-territoriales. Les limites politique-territoriales son caractéristiques prééminentes dans la géographie politique contemporaine et elles attirent une richesse d'érudition interdisciplinaire. La contribution de ce travail à cette connaissance est l'étude de la frontière russo-estonienne par une approche critique qui analyse le discours de l'État Estonien. La recherche se concentre sur le Service de Sécurité Intérieure de l'Estonie (Kaitsepolitseiamet), une division principale du Ministère des Affaires Intérieures de l'Estonie. Il se trouve que les discours et les représentations des frontières de l'Etat Estonien illustrent les conséquences socio-politiques du processus de nationalisation de l'Estonie lié à la géopolitique restaurationniste. Le début du XXIe siècle et l'attente pour l'admission a l'Union européenne ont été annoncés comme des symboles du déclin de la politique géopolitique restaurationniste de l'Estonie et l'émergence de la politique de l'intégration et l'adaptation à l'Union européenne. Cependant, cette analyse met en évidence la perpétuation problématique de la géopolitique restaurationniste dans le discours de frontière élaboré par l'État ; en effet, il suggère que la géopolitique restaurationniste est encore vivante à l'État de l'Estonie et qu'elle a des implications négatives pour la solution de la dispute frontalière entre la Russie et l'Estonie (et maintenant la Russie et l'Union européenne).*

**Mots clés :** Estonie, Comté d'Ida-Viru, frontières, discours, géopolitique.

### Introduction

**P**olitical-territorial borders are entwined with a myriad of multiscale processes that challenge state sovereignty, territoriality, democracy, and security (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2013; Popescu 2012). As a consequence, the study of borders has become a prominently featured topic of critical inquiry within political geography and interdisciplinary scholarship (Bigo 2006; Diener and Hagen 2010; Jones 2012a, 2012b; Leonard 2010; Newman 2008). Recent border scholarship runs counter to the perception that neoliberal globalization heralded a borderless world and the decline of nation-states (Johnson, Jones, Paasi, Amoore, Mountz, Salter, and Rumford 2011; Newman 2008). Borders and nation-states still matter. Relevant examples of borders and nation-state processes abound in our contemporary geopolitical landscape.

The northeastern Estonian-Russian border dispute and its associated geopolitical border discourses expose the complexity of current geopolitical processes. The northeastern Estonian-Russian border evolved over centuries under the dictates of a cadre of Baltic geopolitical powers (Kasekamp 2010; Plakans 2011). According to Estonian political geographer Eiki Berg (2000), "the Estonian-Russian borderland and border people represent and reproduce today a geopolitically discursive battlefield which is relatively fragile, largely contested and far from withering away," (p. 80).

This article examines the northeastern Estonian-Russian border (and surrounding region) located along the Narva River, just north of the transboundary Peipus lake. The northeastern Estonian-Russian borderland differs from that of the southeastern Estonian-Russian borderland in political, economic, demographic, historic, and geopolitical contexts, thus is addressed

separately (Fein 2005; Jääts 2000; Kaiser and Nikiforova 2006, 2008; Smith and Burch 2012). The northeastern Estonian-Russian border is also multiscale through its administrative-jurisdictional location and bordering practices. At a local-urban scale the border separates the third most populous Estonian city of Narva and its smaller Russian border twin-town of Ivangorod, of which it was once politically and infrastructurally enmeshed (Joenniemi and Sergunin 2011; Lunden and Zalamans 2000). At the county/regional scale, the boundary separates the Estonian county of Ida-Viru and the Russian oblast of Leningrad. At the national and supranational scales, the border separates the Estonian and Russian nation-states and the European Union and the Russian Federation. As part of the European Union (EU) and Schengen Area, Estonia is also part of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU (Frontex), which provides border security harmonization along the EU's hardened external borders (Leonard 2010; Neal 2009). Thus, northeastern Estonian border discourses have multiscale political, economic, socio-spatial, and security implications (Golunov 2013).

The Estonian-Russian border contention developed following the legal restoration of Estonian independence and subsequent emergence of restorationist geopolitics (Aalto 2000, 2003; Aalto and Berg 2002; Berg 2003; Golunov 2013). Restorationist geopolitics interprets Russia as a former occupier and the legal political-territorial borders outlined in the 1920 Treaty of Tartu as Estonia's legitimate borders (Aalto 2000, 2003; Aalto and Berg 2002; Thompson 1998). Although restorationist geopolitics abounded during the 1990s, Estonia's accession to the EU, Schengen Area (and Frontex), and NATO, spurred many scholars to assume that restorationist geopolitics and their associated

nationalist policies (such as citizenship, language, and borders) would erode (Aalto 2000; Berg and Aalto 2004). Yet despite the aforementioned assumption, this article suggests that Estonian restorationist geopolitics still thrive in Estonian nationalizing processes and are evinced through Estonian geopolitical discourse concerning the northeastern Estonian border. This article thus seeks to examine how restorationist geopolitics thrive and are reproduced within Estonian geopolitical discourse and its association with Estonia's northeastern border.

This article is conceptually founded on four key geopolitical insights. First, political-territorial borders are messy, socially constructed manifestations of state sovereignty, legitimacy, and territoriality (Popescu 2012). Second, nation-states are not monolithic entities or containers that can be easily defined and analyzed (Agnew 2009; Bourdieu 1999; Jones 2012a). Nation-states are made up of a vast array of departments, bureaucratic agencies, and individual actors that produce and reproduce often differing or competing discourses and practices associated with the state (Berg and Oras 2000; Bourdieu 1996). Third, borders are relevant beyond their physical locations and have significant multiscalar implications simultaneously (Balibar 1998; O'Lear 2011). Lastly, state and bordering practices are not easily or willfully accepted by border guards (as a profession and individuals) or local border populations (Jones 2012b). Bordering practices and discourses face acts of resistance on political and non-political grounds.

Based on the aforementioned geopolitical insights, this article explores the Estonian-Russian border through a critical analysis of Estonian (state) geopolitical discourse. Such discourse includes those of the Estonian Internal Security Service (Kaitsepolitseiamet), a major major branch of the Estonian Ministry of the Interior (Siseministeerium). According to the Internal Security Service's (ISS) website, the agency's key objective is the, "maintenance of national security through the collection of information and implementation of preventive measures as well as investigation of offences," (Retrieved April 17, 2013, from <http://www.kapo.ee/eng>). The Internal Security Service's main tasks include the following:

1. Collecting and processing information aimed at preventing the forced alteration of the Estonia constitutional order and territorial integrity;
2. Collecting and processing information aimed at preventing foreign intelligence directed at the Estonian state;
3. Collecting and processing information aimed at preventing terrorism;
4. Protecting classified information and state secrets;
5. Promoting the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other explosive devices;
6. Combating internal corruption;
7. Conducting proceedings related to other offices;

(Retrieved April 17, 2013, from <http://www.kapo.ee/eng>).

This article's initial intention was to focus on the Estonian bordering/securing practices of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board and Frontex; however, during the research process, it was discovered that the Police and Border Guard Board offers limited public information about its internal organizational and border practices (protocols, procedures, security tools, trainings, and statistics) without official researcher approval. This article was adjusted to focus on the Estonian Internal Security Service because it is part of the Estonian Ministry of the Interior and works in tandem with the Police and Border Guard Board (on border security issues related to national security). Thus this article focuses on the ISS as a site of state geopolitical discourse. By addressing northeastern Estonian geopolitical border discourse, this article elucidates the lingering impacts of Estonian restorationist geopolitics on the Estonian-Russian border (and border security processes, programs, and policies) and surrounding area.

The remainder of this article is composed of five subsequent sections, each contributing to the overarching purpose of this research project. The first section elaborates on the methodological approach. This section describes all interdisciplinary literature and data and how they appropriately elucidate the discourses in question. The second section highlights the historical and contemporary geopolitical context of the northeastern Estonian-Russian border region. This section describes the historical trajectory of the region and the post-Soviet Estonian-Russian border contention. The third section elucidates the aforementioned (critical) geopolitical insights and relevant concepts, including geopolitical discourse and restorationist geopolitics. The fourth section provides an analysis of both Estonian State (ISS) geopolitical discourse associated with the production/representation of the northeastern border. The final section of this article outlines some broader implications and offers concluding remarks.

### 1. Methodological Approach & Geopolitical Discourse

Borders are not fixed lines, but are rather socially constructed, "processes, practices, discourses, symbols, institutions or networks through which power works" (Johnson *et al.*, 2011, p. 62). Borders are reflected in and enhanced by state geopolitical discourse (Berg 2000; Johnson *et al.* 2011; Newman 2006; Paasi 1996, 1999). This article addresses geopolitical discourse to elucidate how the Estonian State (ISS) produces and reproduces the northeastern Estonian border.

Discourse is commonly, "understood as constituted by a collection of theories, writings, public speeches, and popular media broadcasts that create a specific context

that dominates the interpretation of a given issue” (Popescu 2012: 22). This article utilizes a framework derived from critical geopolitics aimed at unraveling the complex political processes and power relations behind geopolitical constructions and knowledge production (Aalto 2003; Berg and Oras 2000; O Tuathail and Dalby 1998). Geopolitical discourse is typically shaped by geopolitical agents or institutions, like nation-states (Berg and Oras 2000; Häkli 1997; Johnson and Coleman 2012; Paasi 1996). Geopolitical agents or institutions guide border formation and conceptualization through discourse and thus in turn form a socially constructed spatial division between an “us” (internal) and a “them” (external) (Izotov 2012; Popescu 2012; Virkkunen 2002). Geopolitical discourse tends to be associated with nationalizing processes and national identity formation (Izotov 2012; Johnson and Coleman 2012). I incorporate critical discourse (text) analysis to elucidate how the Interior Security Service forms and informs the northeastern Estonian-Russian border.

This analysis focuses on one particular geopolitical discourse site (Berg and Oras 2000; O Tuathail and Dalby 1998). This site is considered a “high” site of geopolitical discourse (O Tuathail and Dalby 1998). “High” sites of geopolitical discourse include national security memorandum, foreign policy strategies, and even official speeches or documents (Berg and Oras 2000). The site utilized in this analysis is the ISS and its associated annual reviews (1998 to 2012 annual reviews available online). All report segments or sections utilized focus on the northeastern Estonian border and surrounding region (references addressed and incorporated in this analysis include: border, boundary, borderland, frontier, northeastern Estonia, Ida-Viru County, and Narva).

The Interior Security Service’s annual reviews highlight Estonian national security issues and threats, both domestic and international. Security threats include those connected to Estonia’s past, present, and future, thus some threats are constructed as actualized, while others seem to be in a pending state of actualization. Annual reviews are available online in Estonian and English languages. I acknowledge that the ISS represents just one of many multiscalar sites of geopolitical discourse production and consumption (O Tuathail and Dalby 1998). I also acknowledge that this analysis provides just one of many representations of this particular site of geopolitical discourse (Strüver 2003).

## **2. Northeastern Estonian Border & Borderland**

The northeastern Estonian borderland encompasses

Ida-Viru County and Narva, Estonia’s third largest city. Ida-Viru County forms an isthmus wedged between Russia (Leningrad Oblast), Lääne-Viru County, Lake Peipus, and the Gulf of Finland (Baltic Sea). Ida-Viru County is approximately 3,364 square kilometers (1299 square miles) and with a population of 166,548, is currently Estonia’s second most populated county (Statistics Estonia 2012; Terk 2000). This borderland county is also considered Estonia’s industrial center, stemming from the location of a large oil shale deposit and associated oil shale industry (Joenniemi and Sergunin 2011; Lunden and Zalamans 2000). Northeastern Estonia currently suffers from high outmigration (Leepik 2013; Tooman 2012), unemployment (Lunden and Zalamans 2000; Narva Department of Development and Economy, 2012), violent crime (Ceccato 2008), public health concerns, environmental problems, and economic disinvestment (Ahas, Koduver, and Mark 2001).

A cadre of competing Baltic geopolitical powers and a succession of forced occupations deeply influenced Estonia’s northeastern region (like Estonia as a whole) (Kasekamp 2010; Plakans 2011; Raun 2001). These geopolitical powers and occupations shaped northeastern Estonia as a unique place within the Estonian national context, Estonian dominant national narrative, and national geopolitical imagination. To understand northeastern Estonia’s post-Soviet socio-spatial context, it is necessary to delve into how this borderland region evolved over time. This section provides an overview of Ida-Viru County’s complex historical trajectory starting from the Danish period in the thirteenth century to the present period.

Northeastern Estonia evolved from a network of loosely settled peoples to a minor trading region centered on the border fortification of Narva under Danish occupation in the thirteenth century (Kostochkin 1948; Latenko 2004). The Danes utilized the Narva River as their demarcated border. The Livonian Order (comprised of German Teutonic Knights) soon replaced Danish rule. As part of the Livonian Order and Baltic German geopolitical network, northeastern Estonia and Narva were incorporated into the expansive Hanseatic League (German-dominated European trading network) in the fifteenth century (Kasekamp 2010).

Livonian occupation was subsequently replaced by Russian (1555 to 1581) and then Swedish (1581 to early 1700s) (Kasekamp 2010; Smith 2002). Under the leadership of King Gustav II Adolf (ruled from 1611 to 1632), the Swedish Empire solidified its geopolitical position in the Baltic region (Kasekamp 2010). Swedish occupation dramatically altered northeastern Estonia’s (and Narva’s) landscape and geopolitical position in the region. For example, Narva became Sweden’s second imperial capital during the seventeenth century (Hansar 2009). As Sweden’s second capital, Narva was inundated by vast infrastructural, architectural, and

quality of life improvements (Alatalu 2009; Hansar 2009). The legacy of Swedish investment and interest are noted as a “golden era” within contemporary Estonian national narratives (Burch and Smith 2007; Kaiser and Nikiforova 2008; Smith and Burch 2012).

Estonia was incorporated into the Russian Empire during the Great Northern War (1700 to 1721) and would remain entwined with Russia for the next two hundred years (Latenko 2004; Smith 2002). Narva merged with Ivangorod and was incorporated into the St. Petersburg gubernia (administrative region), thus slightly altering the borders between these two regions. Under Russian occupation, northeastern Estonia developed into an industrial and mining region (oil shale) (Kasekamp 2010).

The early twentieth century witnessed political upheaval throughout the Russian Empire. The Russian Revolution, Civil War, and Estonian War of Independence enveloped Ida-Viru County and the rest of Estonia. The Estonian nation-state gained independence through military force and Narva with Ivangorod (Jaanilinn) were incorporated into the new republic. The border between the young Soviet Union and independent Republic of Estonia was established by the 1920 Treaty of Tartu and was demarcated along the military frontline with Estonia gaining a ten-kilometer-wide strip of land east of the Narva River in addition to Setomaa lands (Setos are a small ethnic minority primarily residing in the southeastern Estonian-Russian borderland region) following the Estonian War of Independence (Berg and Oras 2000; Kaiser and Nikiforova 2006). Estonian independence and nation-building were temporary and abruptly halted because of World War II.

World War II brought about the most significant socio-spatial changes to Estonia’s northeastern borderland leaving it unrecognizable from its previous form. Over 97 percent of Narva’s buildings were destroyed and its entire native population (except military personnel) forcefully evacuated and deported (Kasekamp 2010; Raun 2001). Near the end of World War II, the Soviet Union illegally annexed Estonia and in 1944 the Soviet Union redemarcated the borders between the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR) and Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR), with the Narva River as the new border (Thompson 1998). The illegal Soviet annexation of Estonia invalidated the 1920 Treaty of Tartu and its borders.

Ida-Viru County’s transformation under Soviet occupation substantially influences its post-Soviet political, economic, and socio-cultural position within Estonia (Berg and Oras 2000; Joenniemi and Sergunin 2011; Latenko 2004; Lunden and Zalamans 2000). Soviet occupation altered northeastern Estonia’s socio-spatial trajectory, leading it on a divergent path from the rest of the Estonian nation-state. One of the major legacies of the Soviet occupation remains integral to post-Soviet Estonian-Russian relations, Estonian

geopolitics, and Estonian Russian minority integration. With This legacy was the Soviet re-demarcation of the Estonian-Russian border and the post-Soviet de facto de jure discrepancy. This discrepancy was manifested and exacerbated in northeastern Estonia. Although a Estonian-Russian border treaty came to fruition in 2014 (Salu 2014), the northeastern borderland region continues to be problematic within the current contentious Russian geopolitical context.

Following the restoration of Estonian independence on August 21, 1991, the previous border between the ESSR and RSFSR became an international border between the Republic of Estonia and the Russian Federation. The restored Estonian state secured its national legal continuity and its restoration on the legitimacy and historical significance of the 1920 Treaty of Tartu, which is considered the “birth certificate” of the country (Aalto and Berg 2003; Berg 2003). The 1920 Treaty of Tartu and its stated border agreement was enshrined in the Estonian Constitution as the legal boundaries of Estonia (Aalto and Berg 2003; Thompson 1998). The stated de jure border as outlined by the 1920 Treaty of Tartu and the post-Soviet de facto border line did not match however, causing considerable diplomatic tension on both sides of the border following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Berg and Oras 2000; Thompson 1998).

The Estonian-Russian border discrepancy developed because of divergent geopolitical narratives and interpretations of history and border demarcation. These divergent geopolitical narratives and interpretations are associated with the legacy of the illegal Soviet occupation and sovietization (Berg 2003; Golunov 2013). Dominant Estonian narratives perceive the Soviet era as a period of forced occupation and the legal border, as the border outlined in the 1920 Treaty of Tartu. Dominant Russian state narratives conversely perceive the former ESSR as a republic that willfully joined the USSR and the legal border, as the border outlined in an agreement on interstate relations that was signed on January 12, 1991 by the then ESSR and RSFSR (Berg 2003).

Initially the Estonian state and state elites emphasized the necessity of re-demarcating the border because based on the Treaty of Tartu, Russia still occupied 5 percent of Estonian territory or 2,000 square kilometers (772 square miles) (Berg 2003). Diplomatic relations quickly soured and it wasn’t until 1994 when the Estonian state dropped its territorial claim and demands for re-demarcation (Aalto and Berg 2003). Although Estonia dropped its claim and considers the Narva River (the de facto border) the current control line, the border still remains an unresolved contentious issue for both nation-states (Berg and Oras 2000; Golunov 2013; Ideon 2013; Thompson 1998).

In 2005 a new border treaty was collaboratively produced; however, the Russian Federation refused to

be a signatory because of references to the 1920 Treaty of Tartu. In late 2012 and early 2013 the Estonian and Russian governments rekindled efforts to revive an edited version of the 2005 border treaty; however, recent meetings and talks have been highly contentious (news.err.ee/politics, 2012, December 1) As a consequence, Estonia and the Russian Federation did not have a solidified mutually agreed upon post-Soviet border treaty until 2014 (Salu 2014, June 19, 2015) and recent geopolitical developments in Ukraine and elsewhere in the former Soviet space (BBC 2014, December 30) further complicate Estonian-Russian relations and mutual border legitimation. Consequentially, the northeastern Estonian borderland, has suffered tremendous underinvestment and population decline. As part of the EU and Schengen Area, the borderland region is heavily securitized with extensive border security infrastructure (as part of Frontex's border security harmonization process). The Estonia-Russian border-crossing at Narva is a key border crossing between these two substantial economic zones and hosts around 4 million border-crossers annually (Golunov 2013).

The border contention is exacerbated by the large concentration of minority Estonian Russophones in northeastern Estonia. Following the Soviet annexation of Estonia and deportation of native Estonians from the northeastern borderland, the Soviet government incentivized Russophone labor migration, particularly to promote the large industrial sector and oil shale industry (Kasekamp 2010; Raun 2001). The Soviet policies propelling Russophone immigration in masse is still considered divisive and unresolved. Some scholars suggest Russophone immigration and resettlement within the borderland region was an element of Soviet colonial Russification; however, others consider this phenomenon as purely economic (Joenniemi and Sergunin 2011). Estonian oil shale production and other industries attracted around 500,000 Russophones to the ESSR, the majority of which settled in Tallinn and Ida-Viru County (Feldman, 2010). By 1989, the proportion of ethnic Estonians within the ESSR declined from approximately 95 percent to 61.5 percent (Raun, 2001). Russophones, consisting of a mix of ethnic Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian industrial workers and retired military personnel, increased to an estimated 30 to 35 percent (Raun, 2001).

Northeastern Estonia emerged from Soviet occupation as a distinct Russophone enclave within a relatively homogenous Estonian nation-state (Berg and Oras 2000; Smith and Burch 2012). Ida-Viru County did not necessarily fit within the emerging ethnic Estonian nationalizing project, dominant national narrative, and national geopolitical imagination following independence (Brubaker 2011). Ida-Viru County's socio-spatial distinction became apparent and politically problematic following the ratification of Estonia's controversial citizenship policies, which

denied citizenship to Soviet era Russian-speaking migrants and their descendants (approximately 420,000 Estonian residents). As a direct consequence, two of Ida-Viru County's cities (Narva and Sillamäe) sought regional autonomy through popular referendum (Burch and Smith 2007). Although the referendum was locally successful, it was declared unconstitutional and the issue subsequently dropped.

Ida-Viru County's political volatility led to intensified regional, political, and economic peripheralization and stigmatization (Joenniemi and Sergunin 2011; Lunden and Zalamans 2000; Virkkunen 2002). Unemployment, local disinvestment, and urban decay continue to spur considerable outmigration, criminality, and drug abuse (Ahas, Koduverve, and Mark 2001; Ceccato 2008 Lunden and Zalamans 2000). The concentration of social problems in Ida-Viru County (and Narva in particular) is aggravated by a lack of local civic involvement, political awareness, and trust in local (and state) democratic process (Berg 2001; Kallas 2008; Kõsto 2011). Ida-Viru County's divergent post-Soviet socio-spatial trajectory is problematized by Estonian nationalizing processes, restorationist geopolitics, and their manifestations through Estonian geopolitical discourse.

### 3. Borders & Restorationist Geopolitics

Borders are conceptually and contextually messy. I approach borders as a social construct perpetually contested, produced, and reproduced through multiscale practice and discourse (Diener and Hagen 2010, 2012; Johnson & et. al. 2011; Paasi 1999; Popescu 2012). This conceptualization is derived from a wealth of interdisciplinary scholarship, particularly from political geography and border studies. With this approach, borders are not conceived as physical or natural landscape formations, nor as finite and permanent political-territorial demarcation lines. Rather, they are historically contingent and mobile and entwined with social, cultural, and political processes (Diener and Hagen 2010; Newman 2011; Paasi and Prokkola 2008).

Borderlands, borders, and boundaries are entangled concepts within political geography (Hønneland 2010; Newman 2008; Popescu 2012). Boundaries typically refer to territorial demarcation lines, for example where a nation-state begins and another ends (Hønneland 2010). Borders tend to refer to the area in proximity to the boundary, such as a border-crossing between nation-states (Hønneland 2010). Borderlands are areas around the borders and boundaries (Hønneland 2010). Borders are no longer considered to be limited to physical manifestations of political-territorial boundaries. Borders are ubiquitous geographic constructs, that are manifested through geopolitical discourses and state practices (Morehouse and Pavlakovich-Kochi 2004; Newman 2006; Paasi 1996; Popescu 2012).

Borders are relevant beyond their physical locations and have significant multiscalar implications and impacts (Balibar 1998; O'Lear 2011). Borders and their associated discourses are not easily or willfully accepted by borderland populations and often face resistance (Jones 2012b). As social constructs (Morehouse and Pavlakovich-Kochi 2004; Paasi 1999), borders have tremendous influence on nationalizing state processes (Agnew 2009; Paasi 1997), identity formation (Izotov 2012; Kaiser and Nikiforova 2006; Paasi 2002, 2009), economic opportunity (Brunet-Jailly 2005), military conflict (Diener and Hagen 2012; Jones 2012a), and everyday life (Paasi and Prokkola 2008).

With as the contested constructs, borders necessitate the conceptual and critical deconstruction of state geopolitical discourses and narratives. As aforementioned, nation-states are not monolithic entities or containers, but are rather comprised of a vast array of social agents, institutions, and relational networks that produce and reproduce often differing state discourses and practices (Agnew 2009; Bourdieu 1996, 1999). This article addresses the particular geopolitical discourse and narrative of the post-Soviet Estonian nation-state known as restorationist geopolitics and how restorationist geopolitical discourse (Aalto 2003; Aalto and Berg 2003) impacts northeastern Estonian border construction and conceptualization.

Restorationist geopolitics evolved during the Estonian Singing Revolution in the late-1980s and emerged as the dominant geopolitical ideology (and legal logic) for the restored Estonian nation-state in 1991 (Aalto 2003; Aalto and Berg 2003). Restorationism is premised on the legal restoration of Estonian independence and national continuity. Thus the post-Soviet Estonian state is conceived of as a restored nation-state (with restored political structures, legal processes, territory, borders, and citizenry). Restorationism interprets Russia as a former occupier and the Soviet era as a period of illegal occupation. Soviet era migrants and policies (like citizenship and border agreements) are considered illegal and illegitimate. Restorationism also interprets the legal political-territorial borders outlined in the 1920 Treaty of Tartu as Estonia's "birth certificate" and legitimate borders of the Estonian state (Aalto 2000, 2003; Aalto and Berg 2002; Berg 2003). During the Estonian Singing Revolution, restorationism became entwined with the Estonian national narrative and nationalizing process (Aalto, 2003). This ideology evolved into the dominant geopolitical logic of the new Estonian nation-state.

According to Aalto (2003), restorationist geopolitics, "is identical to the project of 'Estonianization', (p. 28)" and aims to restore the pre-Soviet Estonian state. Numerous internal and external restorationist initiatives abounded in the early 1990s. Most domestic initiatives focused on restoring the pre-Soviet Estonian demographic structure. Such initiatives targeted

citizenship, language, employment (public sector), education, and mostly importantly for this analysis border demarcation. Most external initiatives focused on restoring and securing Estonian national security and territorial sovereignty. Such initiatives included border securitization and the conceptual "othering" of Russia (and Russians) within state discourse and practice (Aalto 2003). Restorationist geopolitics is entwined with the nationalistic conceptualization of a pre-Soviet (homogenous) Estonian national identity, national narrative/discourse, and nation-state.

As aforementioned, the Estonian state initially sought territorial reclamation and border re-demarcation based on the 1920 Treaty of Tartu; Estonian political elites dropped their territorial claims and have since attempted to rekindle border treaty negotiations with the Russian Federation, but no sound border treaty has been agreed upon. During the early 2000s, many scholars surmised that Estonian restorationist geopolitics (and discourse) and policies were shifting and normalizing because of international and supranational pressures (Aalto 2000, 2003; Berg and Aalto 2003; Jääts 2000; Thompson 1998). Other scholars have noted that the EU expansion and Frontex security (and border practice) harmonization also dilute national geopolitics and national border formation processes (Bigo 2006; Neal 2009). Yet although restorationist geopolitics has been challenged by (internal and external) resistance, alternative geopolitical logics, and international/transnational influences, restorationist geopolitics survive. This analysis illustrates how restorationist geopolitics continue to be enhanced by and reflected in Estonian state geopolitical discourse centered on the northeastern Estonian border.

#### 4. Analysis

Estonian ISS annual reviews reflect and enhance the northeastern Estonian border through geopolitical discourse. All resources are public, available online, and available in the Estonian and English languages. All electronically available reviews are included in this analysis and include all reviews from 1998 to 2012. All were easily obtained from the ISS's website (2013, April 17). Although a more thorough qualitative methodological approach is required to ascertain a solid relationship between Estonian geopolitical discourse and its impacts on border production, borderland population, and the Estonian-Russian border dispute, this analysis aims to provide at least a starting point for such critical analyses.

The overall purpose of the annual reviews "is to analyze and improve our common security together with our partners and the public," (Kaitsepõlitseiamet 2009:5). The ISS is a state regulated security agency tasked with analyzing and preventing perceived threats to Estonian national security and stability; thus the

annual reviews outline Estonia's highest priority threats of the previous year (past years and potential pending threats) and are a prime example of "high" geopolitical discourse (O Tuathail and Dalby 1998). The publication of the annual reviews attracts nation-wide publicity and news coverage in Estonia. I acknowledge that the annual reviews are a national security-focused geopolitical source which in turn produces security-focused socio-spatial representations of the northeastern Estonian border and borderland. However, it is still a significant site of geopolitical discourse and understanding within the context of Estonian nationalizing processes and state securitizing processes.

Table N° 1 provides a sample of annual report section titles referencing the northeastern border and surrounding region (references include: northeastern Estonia, northeastern border/borderland, Narva, or Ida-Viru County) (for a total list of Kaitsepolitseiamet annual report section titles referencing the northeastern Estonian border and surrounding region, see Appendix A). The Kaitsepolitseiamet annual reviews' textual discourse depictions of the northeastern border and surrounding region are reflected through a politicized and nationalistic purview. As visualized and exemplified in both Table N° 1, Figure N° 1, and Appendix A (word cloud produced with Kaitsepolitseiamet annual reviews' section titles referencing the northeastern border and surrounding region – including references to Ida-Viru County and Narva), the northeastern border is consistently problematized within this geopolitical discourse.

The Estonian northeastern border and surrounding region, is repetitively represented as a major threat to Estonian national security, constitutional order, and territorial integrity. As evinced in Table N° 1, Appendix A, and Figure 1, examples abound throughout the annual reviews. The border itself and borderland (Russophone) population are textually and visually depicted as both vulnerable and complicit in cross-border illegalities and threats.

The northeastern border is commonly presented as a place of cross-border threats from the Russian Federation (and beyond) and is seen as a potential mechanism that could trigger greater instability within Estonia proper. The northeastern border and surrounding region are also repeatedly connected to other high priority security issues, that include: border guard corruption and criminality; regional border official (judges, county officials, city officials) corruption; cross-border smuggling (weapons, people, alcohol, cigarettes, and gasoline); border population criminality (anti-government activities and illegal possession of firearms, explosives, and anti-government propaganda); and the northeastern border is constructed as under Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and trans-national Russian-speaking extremist influence. Northeastern Estonia also contains more ISS offices than any other

region in Estonia, including the more populous Tallinn metropolitan region. Kaitsepolitseiamet annual reviews reflect how the northeastern border is constructed as a major threat to Estonian security and nationalizing processes.

Kaitsepolitseiamet annual reviews foreground, background, present, and hide particular socio-spatial representations of the northeastern Estonian border and surrounding region. In 2007 for example this particular border was considered the, "greatest threat to the state's security," (Kaitsepolitseiamet 2007: 2). The annual reviews also report that Ida-Viru County has a higher, "level of corruption," than any other in Estonia (Kaitsepolitseiamet 2009: 36). The annual reviews produce and reproduce this particular border as a distinct socio-spatial manifestation within the larger Estonian national discourse and narrative. As a site of geopolitical discourse, the Kaitsepolitseiamet annual reviews textually, visually, and symbolically reflect and enhance the northeastern Estonian border through a restorationist geopolitical lens. The ISS even considers itself a restored agency whose history dates back to the pre-Soviet period and whose legacy it continues to promote (Kaitsepolitseiamet 1998). As aforementioned, restorationist geopolitics and policies concentrate on Estonian securitization and the othering of Russia (and Russians) through state practice and discourse (Aalto 2000, 2003; Aalto and Berg 2003).

The Estonian state constructs the northeastern border through restorationist geopolitical discourse (and securitized conceptualizations) as a potential geopolitical "pivot area" that undermines its security and stability. The northeastern border and surrounding region are constructed and conceptualized as a battlefield under consistent threats from the Russian Federation (and FSB). The northeastern border region (including Russia) is constructed as an internal regional other (Johnson and Coleman 2012) within the larger Estonian national context, suffering from debilitating corruption, criminality, illegal cross-border activities, and lawlessness.

This discourse coalesces well with some recent activities and statements of the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board (Politsei-ja Piirivalveamet, 2013), the ISS's partner agency in national and border security. The Police and Border Guard Board is currently one of Estonia's largest national employers (approximately 5,000 employees) and recently incorporated the Estonian Migration and Citizenship Board (Politsei-ja Piirivalveamet 2013, April 17) and maintains one of the strictest border crossing regimes along the EU-Russian border (Golunov, 2013). The Police and Border Guard Board also state that the border is a "temporary" border, which suggests restorationist irredentism still lingers within the agency (Politsei-ja Piirivalveamet, 2013, April 17).

Geopolitical discourse representing the northeastern



Restorationist geopolitical discourse is less evident in annual review reports on the southeastern border region (for a total list of Kaitsepolitseiamet annual report section titles referencing the southeastern Estonian border and surrounding region, see Appendix B). While the northeastern border region is repetitively represented as a major threat to Estonian national security, constitutional order, and territorial integrity, the only major issue that is consistently foregrounded is internal corruption among border guard agents or regional officials (Kaitsepolitseiamet 2002, 2012). The southeastern border is also referenced less and more generally or normatively than the northeastern border. This difference in representation is evinced in Table N° 2. It should also be noted that the southeastern region is less well defined and is often used interchangeably with the broader southern region, thus some references may actually reference other parts of the southern border that exclude the southeastern region. The majority of articles discussing the southeastern border region is rather normative and emphasizes the border's history, the security agency's general structure or work, or local cooperation (Kaitsepolitseiamet 1998, 1999, 2008). Although the southeastern and northeastern regions share borders with the Russian Federation, how they are defined, constructed, and represented through the geopolitical lens of restorationism differs.

This restorationist socio-spatial representation also runs counter to EU (and Frontex) border security concerns (Antonenko 2005; Frontex 2010, 2011, 2012; Omelicheva 2009). Although the Russian border has not posed serious challenges to the EU and EU member states, recent Russian remilitarization, irredentism, and geopolitical overtures within the former Soviet space do raise considerable concerns. While the Russian state continues to militarily and geopolitically challenge Estonian, EU, and NATO norms and relations, the Estonian nation-state in particular has primarily dealt

with border issues related to illegal migrants (one of the least popular illegal migration routes in the EU) and loosely organized smuggling rings (cigarettes, gasoline, alcohol) (Frontex 2010, 2011, 2012; Golunov 2013; Omelicheva 2009). Frontex (2010, 2011, 2012) does not consider the Estonian-Russian border as a major threat area, and the EU has even initiated (and partly funded) cross-border partnership (community and economic development) programs within the northeastern Estonian borderland region (including numerous programs in Ida-Viru County) (Eslatrus.eu, 2013, April 17). As evinced through this section, the Estonian northeastern border and surrounding area are consistently presented within this discourse as geographically, economically, politically, socially, and demographically problematic within the Estonian nationalizing process. This analysis also conveys the continued perpetuation of restorationist geopolitics within Estonian political institutions and processes.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

The intersectionality between geopolitical discourse and political-territorial borders illustrates how states (and their internal agencies, actors, and bureaucracies) reflect and enhance the social constructions of borders and borderlands within nationalizing and state processes. The relationship between geopolitical discourse and political-territorial borders also brings to the fore the entangled power relations and processes behind state sovereignty, territoriality, democracy, and security. Estonia like other EU external border States provides a rich contemporary geopolitical landscape to address issues of border production through discourse and practice.

The continued vitality of restorationist geopolitics and logic with Estonian State institutions, like the Estonian Interior Security Service and its perpetuation of the Estonian northeastern border as a threat and potential site for "fifth columnists" (or Russian "minions") continues to be problematic for the Estonian nationalizing process (Brubaker, 2011) and geopolitical narrative purported by the Estonian nation-state, which presents Estonia as an ethnically divided state (Berg and Oras 2000). The northeastern border has become conceptually and hegemonically entwined with restorationist geopolitical discourse and as such, it will continue to be problematic and problematize Estonian minority integration, Estonian-Russian relations, and Estonian democratic processes. This geographic approach hopes to reinvigorate critical Estonian geopolitical research and alternative Estonian national discourse. This article also hopes to illustrate how geopolitical discourse reflects and enhances not only border construction and conceptualization, but also impacts international relations and the lives of borderland populations.

**Table 2.** Kaitsepolitseiamet Annual Report Section Title Sample

Kaitsepolitseiamet Annual Report Section Title Referencing Southeastern Estonian Border & Surrounding Region	Year
"Organizational Structure of the Security Police Board"	1998
"The House-Warming Parties of 1999"	1999
None	2001
"Customs and Border Corruption"	2005
"Cooperation and Public Relations"	2008
"The Fight Against Corruption"	2012

Retrieved April 17, 2013, from <http://www.kapo.ee/est/aastaraamatud>

## Appendix

## Appendix A: Kaitsepolitseiamet Annual Report Section Titles focused on the Northeastern Border

<i>Kaitsepolitseiamet Annual Report Section Title Referencing Northeastern Estonian Border &amp; Surrounding Region</i>	Year
"Counter-Intelligence and Protection of State Secrets"	1998
"Detecting Organizers of Bomb Explosions"	1998
"Protection of Constitutional Order"	1998
"Material Conditions and Material Technology"	1998
"Corruption in Estonia"	1999
"Of the Results of Preliminary Investigation of the March Deportation of 1949"	1999
"Protection of Constitutional Law"	1999
"Prevention of International Terrorism"	2000
"Combating Corruption"	2000
"Protection of Constitutional Order"	2000
"Counter-Intelligence"	2001
"Prevention of International Terrorism"	2001
"Combating Corruption"	2001
"Protection of Constitutional Order"	2001
"Counter-Intelligence"	2002
"Prevention of International Terrorism"	2002
"Staff and Training"	2003
"Counter-Intelligence"	2003
"Protection of Constitutional Order"	2003
"Prevention of International Terrorism"	2003
"Combating Corruption"	2003
"85 Years Since Foundation of the Security Police of the Republic of Estonia"	2004
"Counter-Intelligence"	2004
"Protection of Constitutional Order"	2004
"Combating Terrorism"	2004
"Combating Corruption"	2004
"Counter-Intelligence"	2005
"Protection of Constitutional Order"	2005
"Prevention of International Terrorism"	2005
"Anti-Corrupt Combat"	2005
"Combating Terrorism"	2006
"Combating Corruption"	2006
"Investigation of Timeless Crimes"	2006
"Protection of Constitutional Order"	2007
"Anticipation of International Terrorism"	2007
"Counter-Intelligence"	2007
"Combating Corruption"	2007
"Counter-Intelligence"	2008
"Protection of Constitutional Order"	2008
"Prevention of International Terrorism"	2008
"Combating Corruption"	2008
"Combating Corruption"	2009
"Protection of Constitutional Order"	2009
"Counter-Intelligence"	2009
"Prevention of International Terrorism"	2009
"Counter-Intelligence"	2010
"Russia's Influence Operations Against Estonia"	2010
"Prevention of International Terrorism"	2010
"The Fight Against Corruption"	2010
"Heads of the Estonian Security Police"	2010
"Russia's so-called Compatriots Policy"	2011
"Fight Against Corruption"	2011
"Preventing International Terrorism"	2011
"The Fight Against Corruption"	2012
"Preventing International Terrorism"	2012

Retrieved April 17, 2013, from: <http://www.kapo.ee/est/aastaraamatud>

**Appendix B: Kaitsepolitseiamet Annual Report Section Titles focused on the Southeastern Border**

<b>Kaitsepolitseiamet Annual Report Section Title Referencing Southeastern Estonian Border &amp; Surrounding Region</b>	<b>Year</b>
"Estonian Legal Protection System"	1998
"Material Conditions and Information Technology"	1998
"Organizational Structure of the Security Police Board"	1998
"Debt of Honour"	1999
"The House-Warming Parties of 1999"	1999
"Crimes Against Humanity – Court Decision After 54 Years"	2000
None	2001
"Staff and Training"	2002
"Relations with Publicity"	2002
"Combating Corruption"	2002
None	2003
None	2004
"Customs and Border Corruption"	2005
"Combating Corruption"	2006
"Combating Corruption"	2007
"Preventing International Terrorism"	2008
"Cooperation and Public Relations"	2008
"Combating Corruption"	2009
"The Fight Against Corruption"	2010
"Heads of the Estonian Security Police"	2010
"70 years since the Communist Mass Murder in Pirita-Kose"	2011
"The Fight Against Corruption"	2012

Retrieved April 17, 2013, from:<http://www.kapo.ee/est/aastaraamatud>

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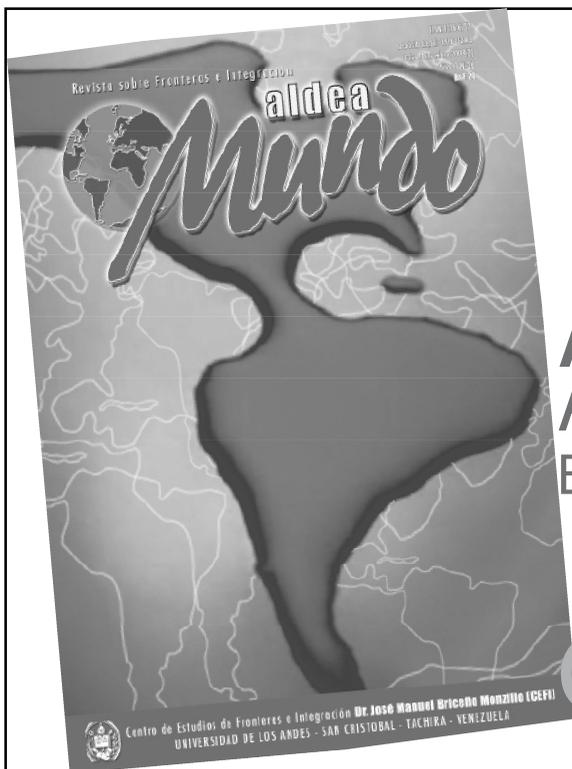
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# AldeaMundo

## Año 18, N° 35

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# CONTENIDO

#### INVESTIGACIÓN

- Acuerdos de Cooperación Energética de Venezuela con los países de Centro-América y el Caribe en el marco de Petrocaribe  
Venezuelan Energy Cooperation Agreements with Central America and the Caribbean Countries under Petrocaribe  
Accords de Coopération Énergétique entre le Venezuela et les pays de l'Amérique Centrale et des Caraïbes dans le cadre de Petrocaribe  
**Alberto Hoyos**
- Bolivia: La búsqueda de una relación comercial con Chile más allá del gas.  
Bolivia: Finding a business relationship with Chile beyond the gas  
Bolivie: La recherche d'une relation commerciale avec le Chili au-delà du gaz  
**Luis Alberto Morales**
- Incidencia del Acuerdo Sobre Obstáculos Técnicos al Comercio del Mercado Andino, en la década 1996 – 2006.  
The Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade's impact on the Andean Market in the decade 1996 – 2006.  
Impact de l'Accord sur les Obstacles Techniques au Commerce du Marché Andin dans la décennie 1996 – 2006  
**Carlos Moreno Elizandre**
- Los límites de la retórica en la globalización: la Venezuela de Hugo Chávez y los Estados Unidos de George W. Bush.  
The limits of rhetoric on globalization: The Venezuela of Hugo Chávez and the United States of George W. Bush  
Les limites de la rhétorique dans la mondialisation: le Venezuela de Hugo Chavez et les États-Unis de George Bush  
**Alejandra Mendoza**
- Vendedores ambulantes: Viejos y nuevos actores en ciudad de fronteras: Caso San Cristóbal-Venezuela  
Street Vendors: Old and new actors in border cities: San Cristobal-Case Venezuela  
Les marchands ambulants: Les acteurs anciens et nouveaux dans une ville frontalière. Le cas San Cristobal-Venezuela  
**Mario Valero Martínez**

#### ANÁLISIS Y DOCUMENTOS

Venezuela: Energía and Sociedad  
Venezuela: Energy and Society  
Venezuela: Energie et Société  
**Victor Varela Bolaños**

#### AGENDA

De las relaciones colombo - venezolanas enero-junio 2013  
Of Colombian-Venezuelan Relations January-June 2013  
Relations colombo - vénézuéliens janvier- juin 2013

#### INDICE ACUMULADO

#### RESEÑAS

BOOK REVIEWS  
RÉSERVER AVIS

Francisco J. Verdes-Montenegro «Crisis Orgánica» en la integración centroamericana. Integración económica y apertura comercial en Centroamérica, Guillermo Vázquez Vicente, Madrid: Ed. Plaza y Valdes, 2012, 296 págs.