NATIONALISM IN PARTY IDEOLOGIES IN ESTONIA: NATURE AND MANIFESTATIONS

There is a wide variety of definitions of nationalism. The most operational for our study would be the one coined by John Breuilly: «A nationalist argument is a political doctrine built upon three basis assertions: a) There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character, b) The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values, c) The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of political sovereignty» [3, p. 2]. First of all, we should differentiate between ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism [2, p. 69]. The former sees nation as an ethnocultural society based on ethnic solidarity (sometimes called the «German model», based on *jus sanguinis*), while for the latter nation is a political unity based on civic solidarity (sometimes called the «French model», based on *jus soli*).

Civic nationalism is a basis of patriotic political culture of almost every country. Here different identity-building strategies come to mind: collective memory practices, patriotic education, etc. Estonia makes no exception here. An important step towards building civic nationalist strategies is the introduction of a term «eestimaalased» («those who live on Estonian soil») that is a counterweight to «eestlased» («Estonians»). The former term is more inclusive and makes it possible to create a civic Estonian identity and a civic Estonian nationalism.

Estonian ethnic nationalism tells us another story. The Estonians have preserved their ethnic identity through centuries of life under different foreign authorities, having get the opportunity to found their own state in 1918 only. No wonder that Estonian identity-building strategy has initially been an exclusive one: «we are not like they». During the period of the so-called First Republic (1918–1940), Estonian state has stimulated *eestlus* («Estonianness») by different means: massive propaganda campaigns, monumental art, literature, even a campaign of «estonization» of all surnames and given names (1920–1940). The authoritarian president Konstantin Päts has begun to create a civic nation, having almost eradicated the most influential ethnically nationalist groupings, such as vapsid (Veterans of the Freedom War League). However, he did not have enough time before the Soviets entered the country. In the Second Republic (1990 – now), the legacy of Konstantin Päts is often invoked as a mythical Golden Age of Estonia.

Tõnis Saarts (Tallinn University) claims there are two types of democracy that may be found in the «Second Estonian republic», the so-called nationalist defence (exclusive) democracy, emerged out of the tradition of the 1990 Estonian Committee, later on
represented by the Isamaaliit (Fatherland Union, in 2007 became a part of IRL party), and the civic (inclusive) democracy, coined by the ideas of the National Front of Estonia (Rahvarinne), nowadays represented by Social Democrats and Centrists (Reform Party is said to have ambivalent position qua its ideology and practical deeds) [6]. For the proponents of the nationalist defense democracy, if one is non-Estonian, even if he/she gets Estonian citizenship, one still may end up being called vale kodanik («wrong citizen») if one votes for «wrong» parties or if one has «wrong» opinion about national history [6, p. 80–81]. For the proponents of the nationalist defense democracy, national security comes first, democracy second, while for the civic democracy, it is vice versa; the nationalist defense democracy is characterized by a controversy political style (there are «we» and «they», and «they» are a priori enemies), the civic democracy by compromise political style («they» are potential dialogue partners) [6, p. 82]. These two kinds of democracy clearly demonstrate the two above-mentioned types of nationalism, ethnic one and civic one, and they also show the existing division in understanding of nationalism in Estonian society.

One of the first overtly nationalistic organizations during the Second Republic in Estonia was Estonian Central Nationalist Union (ERKL) founded in 1994 by Tiit Madisson. Its fate was rather sad: the party has not obtained enough voices to participate in Riigikogu (Parliament), and in 1996 Mr. Madisson was charged with coup d’état attempt and arrested. Remarkably, the Union tried to create a kind of nationalist International within Estonia: Madisson was in active contact with a fascist Russian National Unity (RNE), Russian Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) and the Finnish neo-Nazis [5, p. 57].

If we speak about ethnic nationalism of today, two Estonian parties usually come to mind. Estonian Independence Party (EIP, Eesti Iseseisvuspartei) is a marginal party with a classical ideological mix of anti-Semitism (which is very rare in Estonia), xenophobia and conspiracy theory. It was founded in 1999 and has never obtained more than 0.5 % voices (the electoral results of all the parties mentioned in the article are summarized in a graph below). The founder, Vello Leito, is an author of a profound geopolitical theory, according to which his homeland has always fallen prey to different global conspiracies.

Estonian Conservative People’s Party (EKRE, Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond) that emerged in 2012 only and obtained 8.1 % voices in 2015 elections, often demonstrates overt xenophobia towards the Russian-speaking minority and the immigrants from the Middle East and Africa. Martin Helme, party parliamentary fraction leader, is notoriously known for his words «kui on must, näita us» («if black, go back», literally «show the door to the black people»); his father Mart Helme, the party founder, said: «No one believes in government’s fairy tales about the rapid integration of tropical adventurers». The party also has such an important nationalistic feature as isolation demand: it overtly rejects Estonian EU membership. In the party program we read, «EU membership and common currency should not limit the Estonian sovereignty and stay in the way of its development». Very important are also the activities of the young wing of the party, «Blue Awakening» (Sinine
See page image: it annually organizes torch marches, and the crowd was displaying motto’s «For the Estonia of the Estonians» (Eestlaste Eesti eesti); the motto, however, was changed in 2015 to just «For Estonia» (Eesti eest).

For EKRE, anti-Russian rhetoric is also a rather important part of the discourse; however, while Russia is considered an enemy, the local «Estonian Russians» are not. [4]. The exceptions are rare: e.g., when Marina Kaljurand (Rajevskaja), the former ambassador to Moscow, was running for presidency together with Siim Kallas and Kersti Kaljulaid, Martin Helme said her main problem was her Russian ethnic background.

So we can say that the EKRE discourse combines the features of ethnic and civic nationalism: while the party is constantly appealing to the Estonians as an ethncial group, thus excluding Russians and immigrants, it does not also forget about appealing to the nation as a whole, which usually occurs during the electoral campaigns, when nation is in a classic populist rhetoric presented as a «brave people» opposed to a «cruel Tallinn/Brussels elite».

IRL party (Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit, Fatherland and Res Publica Union) is usually associated with civic Estonian nationalism, though some authors call it extreme-right, which is, in our humble opinion, highly incorrect [1, p. 84]. One of the party original components, Isamaaliit party, was a descendant of the nationalist defense democratic values of the Estonian Committee; however, these values were blurred after the merge with a more moderate Res Publica. Electoral opponents of IRL have tried to create the image of an ethnically nationalist IRL; however, the party avoided these accusations by making a Russian deputy, Viktorii Ladõnskaia, one of its forepersons. Later on, in 2016, the party has even joined a ruling coalition with Social Democrats and the traditionally Russian-oriented Centrist Party (Keskerakond). From the graph 1, it is evident, that the newly-emerged Estonian Conservative People’s Party took over the nationalistic electorate from IRL; that is how we can explain the electoral decline in 2015, simultaneously with the relatively unexpected success of EKRE.

If we look at the correspondence of party ideologies with the nationalism definition given by J. Breuilly, we see that both the first and the second criteria (let they be called «existence criterion» and «priority criterion») are present in the party’s discourse. IRL, EIP and EKRE appeal to the Estonian people. IRL usually means all the Estonian citizens, while EIP tends to exclude Jews and Russians from this category, and EKRE often lays stress on the need for the further Estonization of the Russian-speaking minority and further legal restrictions on the stateless persons. All the parties agree, though in a usual populist rhetoric, that the priority in all affairs should be given to the interests and values of the nation; usually the nation here overlaps with the ideal Estonian nation-state.

The third part of the definition (let us call it «independence criterion») should be a priori present in the discourse of any Estonian party. As every state that has been under foreign domination for many years and even centuries, Estonia has a civic ideology built
upon the (re)gaining of the independence (taasiseseisvumine). There emerge every year new books about the heroic strife for the first and second independence. Every party that dares to refuse the independence discourse would be doomed to a failure, and even some percent of the marginal Soviet-nostalgic votes will not save the situation (we should also note that the bearers of the so-called alien’s passports, i.e. stateless persons, the descendants of Soviet-era immigrants who have not gained the Estonian citizenship due to the lack of the Estonian language/history knowledge or just the unwillingness, have the active electoral right at municipal level only; and it is the only category where anti-independence discourse may find its proponents).

**Table 1**

**Basic nationalistic features in the discourse of the parties mentioned in the article. Please note that to these features, specific discourse characteristics in each case were added before the inclusion of the party into the classification**

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<th>Types of nationalism</th>
<th>Basis assertions of nationalism, according to Breuilly</th>
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**Graph 1. Electoral results of the parties mentioned in the article in 2003-2015 (%). Please note that EKRE emerged in 2012 only, and IRL in 2006**
To sum up, as in every country, nationalism is present in the Estonian politics. However, ethnic nationalism is weakly represented on a party level because of the restrictions civil society and liberal democracy put on the development of nationalist tendencies. Nowadays, only one party with a rather high electoral support may be considered nationalistic in the ethnic (though combined with civic) sense of this word; however, if EKRE were to govern, we may assume that it would soften its rhetoric to match coalition partners’ strategies, because no party in Estonia enjoys sufficient support to govern alone.

References


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PROTESTNÉ POLITICKÉ STRANY V SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKE

Anti-establishment political parties of a democratic or undemocratic type are not a new revelation in politics. With the ongoing crisis of traditional political parties and the widespread public mistrust of these political parties, various protest clusters are taking place across the Euro-Atlantic area, ranging from so-called anti-party political parties to anti-system political parties that may threaten liberal democracy. Under the terms of the Slovak Republic, we can include it there