

Reconfiguring nation and diaspora: self-identifying Estonians in Estonia as a diaspora

by

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Introduction

“I would do anything that this nightmare would stop and one would think what kind of people are growing up there” (Kalle Randalu, artist)

These were the words of one of the prominent persons about Lasnamäe, the district of Soviet-era block buildings in Tallinn. This quotation exemplifies dominant attitudes about Lasnamäe in Estonian society. Lasnamäe has a very negative image among the general public in Estonia, and is often depicted as either a ghetto, a bedroom district, unhomey or Russian. This all has also helped to place Lasnamäe as a constitutive outside in Estonian national discourse.

Estonianness, after the fall of Soviet Union, was strongly connected with nationalized discursive practices of identity (see Lauristin, Vihalemm, 2009). Being located inside Estonia did not make one Estonian, which was narrated and enacted as a primordialist ethno-cultural identity, and which excluded self-identifying Russians living in Estonia. Just as not all the people in Estonia were seen as Estonian, not all the places within the borders of Estonia were seen as Estonia. So what made some populations and places unEstonian?

Firstly and most importantly, Estonian-ness was defined in opposition to Russian-ness and Soviet occupation. There was strong bordering of timespace taking place between Estonia's first independence period and the Soviet era. While Estonia's first independence period was identified with everything that was defined as Estonian and positive (private house, individualism etc.), the Soviet period and everything connected to it was Othered, exteriorized, treated as the constitutive

outside of Estonia and Estonianness. Lasnamäe - as a district built during the Soviet period and housing considerable numbers of self-identifying Russians - obtained an image of not-Estonia. Further, this not-Estonian image was reinforced by picturing Lasnamäe as a criminal area and a bedroom community. Such representations of Lasnamäe became widespread through the popular media and nationalistic narratives. For example, in the following song Lasnamäe is imagined as a place of non-Estonian immigrants:

Look all is alien,

is this home?

In the middle of windy streets

drifting is aimless migrant.

Look in his eyes is emptiness

he does not feel nor see.

Let's cry all now down the valley

with all our strength

Stop Lasnamae!

Nowadays, many authors have suggested that Estonian/ness needs to be re-framed, in order to deal with the integration problems in Estonian society (see Saarkoppel, 2002, Subrenat, 2004 etc.). However, in this thesis, I argue that not only identity but also places imagined as not-Estonia must be re-imagined if integration is to occur, since even self-identifying Estonians who live in Lasnamäe have difficulty in

identifying themselves through dominant Estonian nationalized narratives. Until such reframing of the place of Estonian-ness happens, residents of Lasnamäe live lives exteriorized from Estonia and Estonian-ness. To refer back to opening quote, “what kind of people are growing up there?” How does living in a place exteriorized as not-Estonia effect identification narratives and enactments of even the self-identifying Estonians living there? What kind of different identities emerge in such a setting, and how do youth with such conflicting identities negotiate their self-understanding vis-à-vis dominant identity discourses? Do Estonian youth in Lasnamäe feel alienated from Estonian society, from Lasnamäe, from both? Can we see a distinctive Lasnamäe`an identity rising? How are they making sense of all different identities, starting from dominant discourse of Estonianess and ending with their personal experiences from Lasnamäe?

Such questions remind the questions Brah (1996) is asking about diasporic identities, (why certain conceptions of identity come to play in diaspora space etc). According to Brah, the concept of diaspora refers to multi-locationality within and across territorial, cultural and psychic boundaries, and diaspora space denotes to the area at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, belonging and otherness, of “us” and “them” are contested. Following her definition, I argue that Lasnamäe can be seen as diaspora space.

My different understanding of nationality and diaspora space comes mainly from seeing nations as defined through people`s identities and practices and not through arbitrary institutional lines. So, if we see nationality as foremost in peoples` identities, it becomes possible to see that people can become part of diasporic communities also if living inside their own countries when places that

they are inhabiting are defined as nonnational. Various ethnic enclaves seen as reflecting national identities other than the countries, where they are located, can be an example of this. For instance when American in NY decides to move to Chinatown he might feel himself similarly living in diaspora space.

As diaspora spaces I see too, that identities in surrounding national borders should be defined by self identities of the people which inhabit the borderland space rather than through the national territories. So some state institutional borders become less important in defining people's identities, whereas a number of regional frontiers hold more vital status. Various examples such as Basques in Spain can be given.

The main reason why I apply the notions of borderland and diaspora space to Lasnamae and suggest that the definitions of these terms should be widened is the fact that research about the identities of people inhabiting these spaces can be highly useful in contexts that supersede these narrow interpretations. I also claim that the identities of people living in borderlands and diaspora spaces are highly comparable. But because there is an effort to maintain distinction between diaspora studies and borderland research, there is little exchange of ideas amongst the disciplines. Thus information from either that can help to inform the other is missed. Diaspora literature has till now been more concentrated on people than spaces, and identities have been seen as aspatial (Ehrkamp, 2006, Easthope, 2009), whereas borderland research has adapted for too territorial attitude thus causing the equalization of the border and legal frontier (see Sadowski-Smith, 2002).

This separation means very little has been written about the identities of communities living in either borderlands or diaspora spaces (Wilson, Donnan, 1997). Besides critiquing traditional understandings of diaspora and borderland, I see my case as offering an ideal way to produce more material on how people in such spaces identify themselves, how they deal with living inbetween,

how dominant understandings of these spaces are both being contested and embraced. My project's main question will be, about how do people enact national identities in diaspora spaces and borderlands? In short, in the center of this thesis is diasporic identity produced in diaspora space within which even self identifying members of dominant national identity find themselves exteriorized.

I suggest that the situation in Lasnamäe gives further insights on how diasporic communities deal with their inbetweenness, how they negotiate dominant and resistance discourses. It also poses the question of how nationalism and nationals should be seen these days and what is the connection between nationals and state. My findings in Lasnamäe reflect that diaspora space should be seen more as mere inbetween space; it however can also become a space where different frontiers intersect, where bordering is even strengthened. I also suggest that I can provide further insights on how inbetweenness is formed and how different identity categories come to talk with each other.

I used various methods to observe diasporic identifications in Lasnamäe. I believe that my interviews with Estonian youth in Lasnamäe along with youth forum analysis help to provide a clearer picture of different identification processes and practices in Lasnamäe. To locate Lasnamäe as a diaspora space I used different sources of secondary information, such as articles, books etc. However I also analyzed media coverage about Lasnamäe and youth forum. Media analysis along with various history books helps to exemplify how Lasnamäe is constructed as not-Estonia, justifying my use of the concepts of diaspora and diaspora space in this setting.

To sum up I will present the main reasons why this research is important. First, it helps to contest the marriage between nation and state; second, it offers new ways for understanding borderland and diaspora space; third, it offers an overview of how nonnational spaces inside the institutional

borders of states are being created; fourth, it helps to bring together literature about diaspora and borderlands; and lastly it offers insights on people's identities who inhabit these spaces. My project investigates how groups grapple with and/or makes sense of their identities; how dialogues between dominant understandings and resistance identity take place, how diasporic identity and nationalism can be seen in new ways.

Theory

The structure

I make a claim that national borders can exist inside the national state. This means that one can see nonAmerican places inside America, etc. However when posing that national spaces do not coincide with legal borders of the states it is vital to ask, how should nationality be seen? I suggest that nationality can be seen as represented in two ways: firstly through inhabitants' self identification and secondly through the perception of the dominant national discourses. So I begin my theory part in discussing how nationality has been seen by literature so far, how dominant national discourses are produced and resisted. Then I move to my main argument: when there is a divide between inhabitant's self identification and how it is defined by dominant discourses do not coincide, diaspora space is being created. Diaspora space in this case means space, where conflicting meanings are being negotiated, where other and self become one. I go on in describing how the notion of diaspora fits into my context and how diaspora is seen in this thesis. Last I will engage with the notion of borderland and diaspora space.

National borders

In this section I am going to explain how I see national borders. Discussion over national borders is especially important since the concept of diaspora is strongly connected with national and nonnational spaces and territories. As I can see possibility for diaspora being enacted inside the state, it becomes vital to discuss what exactly is the difference between state, nation and national identification and how we should define national borders.

Not long ago national borders were seen as mere visible lines of territory situated between two states (Jacobson, 1997, Shapiro, 1996). Border in this notion functioned as mere economic, institutional and political restriction (see Sadowski-Smith, 2002). In such a definition, as Jacobson (1997) has stated, nation and territory are being seen as unity, as belonging together and state is often seen as having only single dimension: the territorial. Thus there are “natural linkages” between nation and state.

However there is wide array of scholars who contest such an idea of national border (see Newman, Paasi, 1998, Balibar, 1996, Brah, 1996 etc). National borders thus are seen as above all manifestations of social practice and discourse (Hardwick, Mansfield, 2009). National boundaries, besides marking material difference, are also metaphorical spatializations of psychological, sexual, spiritual, cultural, class and racialized differences (Morehouse, Pavlakovich-Kochi, 2004, Brah, 1996). Jacobson (1997) has outlined how such identity borders are practiced daily -through clothing, dietary restrictions etc. Finally Morehouse and Pavlakovich- Kochi (2004) pose that

territorial borders cease to exist once the rules and practices, discourses and actions that give them meaning and value, are no longer reproduced. Thus they see territorial borders as only spatial demarcations of identity differences.

Questioning how national borders should be seen connects with the recent dialogue about disappearing nationality. Several scholars have claimed that national borders will cease to exist. Drzewiecka (2002) suggests that new forms of identification displace the binary logic of race, ethnicity and nationality whereas Hall (1999) poses that final borders will be subjective, existing only between individuals. The disappearance of national borders is predicted for two main reasons: first of all because as the movement of knowledge, capital and information increases, borders are becoming so porous that they no longer fulfill their historical role as barriers (see Häkli, 2001, Wilson, Donnan, 1997, Sadowski-Smith, 2002, O'hame, 1990, Terkenli 2005 etc.). Second national borders disappear because of ever enlarging migrations and transborder movements that according to Appadurai (1997) undermine the state based nationalist ideologies and the oppressive nation state structures.

However, all these statements rely mostly on the territorial perception of national state and equalize territorial and symbolic spheres of nationality. For Appadurai (1997) nationality is strictly connected with the territory and thus immigration undermines the unity of national belonging, whereas for instance Newman and Paasi (1998) have claimed that migration helps to strengthen nationalistic movements, because for them one can be a national also without being located inside the legal borders of the state. Thus for Newman and Paasi (1998) nationality is more connected with identity and immigrants, who follow national traditions while located in other countries, can still help to enforce nationalistic ideas and nationality. Thus also the mere fact that there exists

administrative frontier does not mean that there also exist differences between people's identities. As an example of the unimportance of the administrative borderlines many borders of EU countries can be given and also the borders of former Soviet Union countries. Administrative borders should be seen as mere arbitrary creations. On the opposite also the fact that area is situated inside the state, does not mean that its inhabitants necessarily bound themselves with this state. For instance should we claim that Chinatown in NY is an American place because it is located inside US legitimization? To conclude: I understand national borders in symbolic manner which means as denoting to differences in identity and practice. I propose that nationality should be understood as being defined through inhabitant's self definition and the way it is being served by dominant national discourse. I now go on in describing in detail how I understand both dominant national discourse and self identification.

Dominant national discourse

The process of normalizing some values and identities in societies has come under discussion only in recent decades. Identities are not seen as natural and essentialist anymore. Foucault (1982) and Connolly (1990) etc have stressed that our societies are controlled by dominant identity discourses which employ categories self identically as referring to things themselves (see also Hage, 1996. Lamout, Molnar, 2002). Kloskowska (1994) has even stated that truth should be seen as an aspect of the hegemonic form of domination. Thus dominant cultures are legitimized through oppositions that lower other cultures, for instance picturing their practices as vulgar (Young, 1997, Manzo, 2005). This can be called symbolic violence. Most important in terms of defining are usually nodal points, borders, where identity is ultimately produced and policed (Natter, Jones, 1997).

Ethnicity and nationality have been presented as one of the cases of the domination. Various scholars have stressed that nation should be understood in a de-essentialized manner. So instead of seeing nation and ethnicity as something primordial, and linking people and places together in a naturalized manner (Malkki, 1997, Jones, 2009), they are now perceived as socio-historical and socio-spatial constructions (see Gupta, Ferguson, 1997, Hage, 1996).

The category of nation is created through using times, places and spaces selectively (Mavroudi, 2007). Nation has two distinct characters, first its institutional side that encompasses law, order, communication networks, policing administrative borders etc. (Hage, 1996), but then also its symbolical side that uses myths of nationalized historical past (Boym, 1995), shared memories (Winland, 1995), common genealogical and geographic origins (Kaiser, 2001) to create community based on sense of belonging and fictive unity. Such construction is continually at work (Hage, 1996) and thus concepts of what it means to represent one or another nationality are emergent, can be seen as a process of becoming.

As Bhabha (1994) has noted, identity is in its manner representational, and this means it is produced through discursive practices in specific institutional (and contextual) settings, through ascriptions of identity and processes of labeling. Most of the groups based on identity are too big for people to know all others belonging to the group (Anderson, 1991). Thus identity and feelings of belonging are always mediated, which makes most of the communities imagined. Various mediums like television, visual or printed representations are used (Cerulo, 1997, Groote, Haardsen, 2005). However as such mediums help to unite the community and form identities inside, they also work as stereotyping and labeling mechanisms from outside, differentiating

groups' and creating and maintaining borders. Thus categories of nation not only define who are nationals, but also who are not, meaning that national categories can cause exclusion. As Ehrkamp (2006) has noted, representations of immigrant groups in media, political and public discourses of host societies are integral to immigrants' identity constructions, as immigrants internalize, grapple with and often contest and challenge such labels and ascriptions. The definitions of nationality are not only important for those who are in, but also to those who are out.

All identity can be seen as relational, which means that it is always opposed to something (see Hall, 1997, Easthope, 2009, Sanders, 2002, Boski, 1994). Borders become borders only because there is some category of "other" outside. Also nationality can be seen as based on othering practices, categories of nation not only define who are nationals, but also who are not. Usually nationality comes out the sharpest if it is set against others, Molnar and Lamout (2002) have suggested that identity categories are stronger if defined against one another. Constitutive outside helps to define groups in both sides of boundary, one's identity always contains elements of what it is opposed to (Natter, Jones, 1997). Identity can be seen as an interplay between processes of internal and external definition (Jenkins, 1996). On one hand individuals must be able to differentiate themselves from others by the drawing on the criteria of community and a sense of shared belonging within their subgroup, on the other hand this internal identification must also be recognized by outsiders for an objectified identity to emerge (see Jenkins, 1996, Ehrkamp, 2006). Therefore difference is maintained from within and outside of the category (see Cornell, Hartmann, 1997). We can see how this argument clearly supports my vision of nationality as being defined through self identification and the way it is perceived by dominant power regimes.

National self identification, resistance identity

Strict borders, that are drawn between different groups in an exclusive way become a problem when people's self identification and how they are defined by the dominant national discourse are in conflict (but also in inter ethnic conflicts over territories etc). When people's identities coincide with dominant identities they usually do not have a reason to question these paradigms. When there is a contradiction it can often lead to resistance identities, people resist the ways they are pictured by the dominant discourses. Resistance identification practices can be seen as efforts to resist the normalization of one geometry of identity and place (Castells, 1997) by groups formed by individuals who are in devalued or stigmatized positions and conditions. Such groups build trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of the principles different from or opposed to those permeating the institutions of society (Calhoun, 1994). As Raudometof (2001) has suggested, it can be seen as the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded. Thus defensive identities are built as a reaction to the dominant institutions and ideologies, reversing the value of judgment while enforcing the boundary.

On one hand we can see resistance identities as being forced on the members of minority groups as they try to legitimize their identity and turn it into a positive value. Several authors have suggested that

although all identification discourses and practices are exclusionary (see Pratt, 2003), identificational borders also have their positive value when they are used as an act of resistance by those who are weak, dispossessed or located in the margins (see Anzaldua, 1999, Pratt, 1999). However resistance identities should not be seen as mere positive and innovative way of defining

oneself. As noted earlier also resistance identities exclude some groups and maintaining the borders. Border maintenance cannot be seen as merely forced on these groups by outside (Said, 1978), but also performed inside.

Diasporic identities

Several authors (see Anzaldúa, 1999, Pratt, 1999) have posed that diasporic identities should be seen as form of resistance identities. Such claim relies on the notion that diasporic identities are the result of exclusion (see Laitin, 1995) and that they are used to strengthen opposition to dislocation by the dominant ideology (Pratt, 1999). Louie (2006) for instance has described how ties to the parental country are used by second generation Dominicans to cope with their marginalization in the US. Thus diaspora can be seen as a strategy enacted by immigrants to challenge binary modes of thinking about time and space, and to resist their differential inclusion (Viruell-Fuentes, 2006). Therefore they are used to find meaningful alternatives to the dominant racial and ethnic paradigms (Raudometof, 2000). Diasporic identities in their manner contest the normalizing practices of the state, challenge the ideas of ancestral nationality (see Kaiser, Nikiforova, 2006). However this rather than being seen as mere resistance to the concrete state, should be seen as a resistance to dualities, to categories. I pose that diasporic identities in their manner stand somewhere in between dominant national discourses and resistance identities, namely they do not fit to this neat duality. Diasporic identities as I suggest, are formed when dominant discourse and self identification contradict. In my case study for instance people are identifying themselves as Estonians whereas they are pictured as non Estonians by dominant discourse because of their living place and daily practices. Thus they stand in between total

resistance to the ideas of Estonianess and adopting such ideas, there is a contradiction in their being.

In this thesis I will treat diasporic identity as a category of practice. This means that my interviewees are treated as representing diasporic community because of the way they enact and experience their identity. Diasporic identity then becomes to denote not only to the contradiction between self identification and dominant national discourse but also national identity practiced as inbetween. It thus as mentioned before displaces the binary logic of difference, culture, and identity and challenges categories of race, ethnicity and nationality (Drezewiecka, 2002). Diasporic communities thus do not belong either here or there and at the same time they are copresent in here and there, they are betwixt inbetween (Drezewiecka, 2002, Quereshi, Moores, 1999, Clifford, 1999). They experience their inbetweenness in daily basis, there is a lived tension in their being (Cohen, 1997). Easthope (2006) and Drezewiecka (2002) have stated that diaspora discourse articulates together both roots and routes to construct new forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside of national time and space. Thus elements of existing discourses are articulated together in new and temporary formations, which often contradict with the dominant discourses, diasporic communities are situated at the social, cultural and economic crossroads of multiple nations (Viruell- Fuentes, 2006).

One of the examples of diasporic inbetweenness is the relationship between community and home. Usually diasporic communities are described as being in between their home and the host societies. Ancestral homeland is seen to be present in mythology that is created through historical narrative, cultural discourse, memories, the relationship between people/places and people/nation-states (Markowitz et al., 2004). Such myths are often idealized (Tsuda, 2001) and thus make one

long for return to the homeland (Safran, 1991). However since homeland rarely exists in the state being imagined in mythology, it becomes a place of no return (see Brah, 1996). As various studies with return migrants have shown, the split between imagined and real homeland might often be shocking and alienating (Tsuda, 2001). In many cases this might end with strong identification with the country left behind, with the host country (Hedberg, Kepsu, 2003). So it can be said that often migrants relate host countries even more than they realize; this connection is subconscious and unnoticed, but becomes visible when returning to one's ancestral homeland and distancing oneself from it. As usual, one's identity comes to the surface when being faced with perceived opposite. Thus we can see that diasporic communities are in some ways homeless, they do not belong to their host country because they are still idealizing their ancestral homeland. However, they do not belong to their ancestral homeland either because they are dislocated, or more generally because they have taken over some of the values from the host country.

This all makes one wonder where is home for diasporic communities, and if one can so strongly distinguish between host country and homeland? What is in this definition of homeland; if diasporic communities are inbetween, do they still have a homeland, shouldn't their inbetweenness also contest the dominant understandings of home and foreign, contest the dualities? Diasporic identities should rather be seen as a meeting place, where all come together. As Drezewiecka (2002) has noted, they can be as described by competing national, cultural and ethnic discourses from both ethnic homeland and new home. Thus I suggest that we should think of adapting the term inbetween home, something that is at the same time alienating and safe, home and not home. Such inbetween home can be applied also in the case of people who cannot relate with the regions they are living in, since as mentioned I do not connect inbetweenness and diasporic identities only with international migration.

Diaspora becomes a tool for rethinking borders, presenting them as fluid and blurred rather than fixed and sharp. Diasporic identities thus can be seen as meeting places of different borders that are renarrated and contested, and continuously reformed. We cannot claim that there do not exist any borders, in fact as Brubaker (2005) has noted most of the literature on diasporic identities stresses the importance of the boundary maintenance and the preservation of identity in diaspora. One of the examples of how seemingly bordered identities are in continuous change in diaspora is the split between first and second generation. Whereas first generation is usually pictured as trying to maintain their connection with ancestral homeland, second generation is described as challenging the ideas about this ancestral link. Thus although diasporic identities are intersection of different borders, these borders are not fixed and stable. This also coincides with Brubaker's (2005) argument, that diaspora is often seen as only disrupting the immanent connection between nation and state, but is still seen as a non-territorial form of essentialized belonging and thus does not problematize the existence of ethnicities. Diaspora as strongly bordered becomes another form of essentialized identity that does not help to bring dualities together.

Thus diasporic communities should not be seen as another hard category. As Raudometof (2000) has mentioned, even within single diasporas simultaneous diasporan identities are possible. Not only is diaspora embarked, relived and lived through multiple modalities like gender or class (Brah, 1996), but it also depends on personal background like the reasons for leaving, parental environment etc. Moreover, even as noticed before one person might possess multiple identities that are being enacted in and through different places (Valentine et al., 2009). One identity category may be used to differentiate another in specific spatial contexts, and particular subject positions may become salient or irrelevant in particular spaces (Valentine et al., 2009). As Toyota

(2003) has noted, migrants' identities overlap and change depending on when and to whom and where they are presented.

Diaspora space and borderland

In current literature there exists strict differentiation between diaspora space and borderlands and also between the identities of people living in either of those. Such distinction has a lot to do with the conception of borders. I will explain as follows how both are seen in traditional understandings and how I see them.

Traditionally borderlands have been seen as an area between two states, region that coincides with the administrative borders. Hedberg and Kepsu (2003) have suggested that borderlands should be seen as places where administrative and symbolic borders do not overlap. Both of these notions connect borderlands with administrative border. Closer to my notion of national border as symbolic, is Kloskowska 's (1994) definition which suggest that borderlands should be seen as psychological frontiers between the participants of mainstream and periphery national cultures. In either way however there is a border in the center of borderland, be it then administrative or spatialized symbolic frontier. Borderlands in their basic notion are spatial, demarcated by spatial border, whereas inhabitants are perceived as only facing the difficulties of border, but usually not inbetween in their character, on the opposite they are usually bounded with certain ethnicities. Thus border in borderlands is present in spatial manner.

Diaspora space, on the other hand, can be seen as a space where population is acting as a border.

Diaspora space has borders around it that are very territorial since they are present in people's practices, habits, and they are also sustained by power regimes through for instance monitoring real estate prices etc; however unlike borderland it has no inside border. Two countries are not present territorially, but in people's identities. Two cultures are bordered and meet in people's minds, the way people give meanings to things. These people are the ones who do not belong either of the nationalities nor where they come from or where they stay. In that sense diaspora is as much a meeting point for two cultures as borderland.

Therefore the basic difference in traditional understandings of borderland and diaspora space is the fact that borderland seems to denote to spatial inbetweenness, whereas diaspora space inbetweenness in people. Borderland is inbetweenness between people, two spatial groups are bordered, whereas diaspora space is inbetweenness inside people, the ideas of different countries are bordered. Thus I see my case study encompassing both of these characters and I also find both literatures highly useful, I would also like to question if we can so clearly distinguish borderlands and diaspora space because it seems for me that there is a lot of overlapping. For instance, people in borderlands could also be seen as combining different elements from the cultures both sides of the border, whereas ethnic enclaves are only one example of the living places that diasporian communities inhabit and more often they live in mixed areas.

With that said, I find that each borderland/diaspora space should be looked individually and the strict distinction between borderland and diaspora space is arbitrary and has not contributed to either of these disciplines. I think that clearly both scholars could learn from each other. For instance borderland literature has till now been seen inhabitants identities very spatialized and territorial manner, whereas diaspora research has ignored territoriality almost entirely (see also

Easthope, 2009 and Brah, 1996). As I see identities of diasporic communities and borderland inhabitants being relatively similar, I will also explain them together. Describing them together is furthermore justified since I see my area fitting to both categories. Thus all above goes about both borderland and diaspora space.

Borderlands can be seen as places where cultural identity becomes mixed, blurred. Borderland inhabitants do not fit in any predefined categories, they are inbetween. Bathia, Ram (2009) have named such feeling inner dialectic of selfhood, Balibar (1996) calls it being a border oneself. Inhabitants of borderlands are not the only example of people inbetween. Young (1997) has also given an example on how people of mixed parentage do not fit with any categories, the same can be however said about queers etc. Spatial inbetweenness is only one possible example of crossing categories, of not fitting.

I see the main defining point of both the inbetweenness, the not belongingness, inability of fitting into categories. However inbetweenness is not the only defining point of borderland identities, as I earlier mentioned, they are also constantly shifting, they get renarrated and contested by inhabitants, but also by power relations, depending on how state is defining its ethnicity, what kind of status are borderlands given etc. Wilson and Donnan (1997) have stated that borderlands have critical role on the formation of the states and thus they can become a battleground for different hegemonic powers in their definition and demarcation process. This all comes back to the fact that identity is defined through negative lens, by seeing what one is not, thus states self definition process takes place through borderlands, through showing why they are different or through trying to minimize this difference by force. Thus borderland is also often seen as offering a critique to such power relations and hegemonic national identities (see Kaiser, Nikiforova, 2006, Morehouse,

Pavlakovich-Kochi, 2004 etc).

However approaches to borderlands differ somewhat on how they are being seen, as a possibility or as a burden. We can see borderland identities as contradicting and complex (Morehouse, Pavlakovich-Kochi. 2004) and as causing trouble for the people through discrimination, through not being able to define themselves clearly in terms of binary categories. We can see those people as not having real homeland, as being trapped in their position in the borderland, as Balibar (1996) states acting like a border themselves, having multiple and splitting identities. Bathia and Ram (2009) have noted that diaspora is usually formed when the immigrant community does not find its culture represented in the mainstream host culture and experiences erasure and silencing of their own culture by host culture. Thus we can see them as not having a safe place, having to fight for their self definition, being in the constant battle with the mainstream, having to prove themselves. Also we can see them as having inner battle, since they are having troubles in defining even themselves. As Hedberg and Kepsu (2003) have noted inhabitants of borderland may feel affinity for both countries, leading to contested national identity, diaspora communities are simultaneously present in the homeland and new land. Rabanowitz (1997) has stated that no one ever feels at home in borderland. In that sense he sees borderland as an anonymous place, not as place having multiple possibilities for self definition, but as having no possibility for identity at all. Identity according to him is not seen as multiple but as nonexistent.

However we can also see borderland identity as a possibility, acting like a dialogue site. As Bhabha (1994) has stated meaning is never transparent, the pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and You. Thus borderland can bring two opposites closer to each other or contest the whole paradigm of opposing dualities. As Bhabha (1994) has noted

borderland as a space of hybridity can open up a site for negotiation of contradictory identities and destroy negative polarities. It can help against the problem of misread signs, values and meanings (Bhabha, 1994). Also borderlands contest the idea of nationality as being primordial and pregiven. In borderlands we can clearly see the process of the production of nationality. Bhabha (1994) has used the notion of thirdspace to describe the place inbetween. Thirdspace according to him challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as homogenizing unifying force, authenticated by the originary past, kept alive in national tradition of the people. Thirdspace constitutes the discursive conditions that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity, fixity, that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, read anew. Thus thirdspace is seen as a place for translation, negotiation, whereas hybrids as having potentiality for new worldviews, new internal forms for perceiving the world. Morehouse, Pavlakovich-Kochi (1997) have stated that borderlands become deliberating only if individuals or groups actively take advantage of the inbetween space to remove themselves from conflictual or contradictory situations. Thus I claim that it would be deliberating for borderland inhabitant to see their status not as a burden, but as a possibility.

One other issue that needs to be cleared between borderland and diaspora space, is the fact that diaspora community has been viewed as moving from one place to other whereas those living in borderland are staying put. However even this statement has various relativities. For instance we could question from what point diaspora ceases to be diaspora, in US we are speaking of people who are third and fourth generation of diaspora, so they do not have any experience in moving at all.

I would also like to contest the idea that one can not become a diaspora by simply staying put. We

can bring out various examples when it is possible, for instance the change of power and regime in one country. I would for instance claim that Estonians lived through diaspora during Soviet occupation since all in their environment starting from surroundings and ending with everyday practices changed. Thus border must not be seen comprising only spatial realities. Referring to Turner`s (1969) theory of liminality might be useful in explaining such understanding. Liminality exists both in time and in space. Liminality is time of stillness within which an individual may be reconstituted, a social group remolded, a space reaffirmed or reshaped outside the strictures of customary structural barriers (Pavlakovich-Kochi, Morehouse et al., 2004). So when we claim that borderland is spatial liminality, not one nor the other, a space inbetween, betwixt, then we can also acknowledge that there can be borderland in time trap, a space that contains in itself memories of two distinct periods. Thus I also see that people can live through diaspora with having conflicting identities from separate time periods, feeling estrangement. In such notion time meets space, one can be trapped twice, in changing time and changing space.

Thus for me diaspora space and borderland both denote to areas, where people have inbetween identities, where dualities dissolve to the extent that one is not able to define oneself anymore, since there are no clear categories. Such identities as I have claimed must not only be understood in traditional ways, that are connected with legal state borders, but should be bounded with selfidentificational national borders. Such way of understanding national borders and diaspora space helps to locate my case study as one. Having now explained most of the key terms and their usage, I will outline specific questions asked throughout this thesis.

Objectives and questions

The main question of this thesis is: what kind of identities are practiced in diaspora spaces and borderlands? I pose that identities enacted in these spaces are far richer than presented by current literature. Taking into consideration my understanding of diaspora space as space where dominant national discourses do not coincide with inhabitants self identification, I will be first asking how such spaces become into being. Thus I will outline how diaspora spaces can be located inside the countries and what kind of conditions lead to that. Secondly I will offer overview of different identity categories that are enacted in diaspora spaces.

The questions I will be asking throughout the thesis connected to my respondents identities (second generation Estonian youth in Lasnamae) are strongly connected to how my interviewees and Lasnamae is perceived by the dominant discourse. Thus to understand youth identities it is vital to offer an overview how Estonian national discourse sees Lasnamae The way Lasnamae is placed outside of Estonia by dominant national discourse also reveals why Estonian youth inside the legal borders of Estonian state can be seen as part of diaspora community. In youth identities interplay between dominant discourse and resistance identities plays crucial role and thus a lot of attention will be paid on how youth try to reconcile being Estonian and being Lasnamae'an. Is this relationship only troubling and can youth be seen as victims, or do they find ways how to “use” their inbetweenness? Connected to my discussion of the central role of home in defining diasporic communities as inbetween identities, I also analyze how youth see home and their relationship

with it. Finally I also focus on the question of borders and different scales of othering that can be seen in Lasnamae.

Now, having demonstrated my specific questions and objectives of the thesis, I will next outline what kind of information allowed me to answer these questions and how I processed my data. The nature of my questions refers that main part of my thesis is based on qualitative data, mainly on interviews. However to offer overview of public understandings about Lasnamäe, also other methods were used.

Methodology

My interest in my field site dates back to the first years of my study when during a summer school we had the possibility to do workshop about Lasnamae. This workshop afterwards grew into the deeper analysis with one of my co students. Although being myself from Lasnamae, I had never before thought about actually studying the place, then however it seemed logical. Because of the dominant negative image my home district has, I was during the first years tempted to “save” Lasnamae and so my bachelor thesis concentrated more on issues related to planning. My first plan with my master thesis was to offer alternative view of Lasnamae as a place filled with meanings, contrary to how it was being pictured in media. This however as came out in my interviews, proved to be harder, than it had first seemed. First I noticed that there was relative split between elderly population who moved to Lasnamae and younger generation, who was born in Lasnamae. Second, it seemed that the meaningfulness of Lasnamae to youth was yet to be

developed, yet to be discovered by themselves, since seeing Lasnamäe as home directly contrasted with the dominant discourses about Lasnamae. These two factors caused my Estonian supervisor and I to think about diaspora communities, whose identities seemed to follow similar paths.

To view Lasnamae as a diaspora space, two different sets of data were necessary. First I needed to position Lasnamae as a diaspora space, as unEstonian, which meant that an overview of dominant understandings about the district in the society were necessary. Second I also wanted to concentrate on how such dominant image was being perceived and relived by insiders, second generation Estonians, in Lasnamae.

To reflect how dominant discourse constructs Lasnamäe as a place of other, by making it look Russian, unhomey etc., I used secondary materials such as other researches, history books, but also made media analysis and used youth forum in internet.

Preliminary media analysis was carried out in 2007 together with Rasmus Kask. For media analysis we used articles from three different periods: 1975-1981, 1986-1986 and 2001-2005 and newspapers such as EPL, Postimees, Noorte Hääl and Rahva Hääl were reviewed. Such periods were chosen because of the amount of data that had to be reviewed in the archives. The fore mentioned periods were chosen because of subsequent reasons- the construction in Lasnamae started in 1977 and authors wanted to analyze how Lasnamäe was pictured in media as part of Soviet ideology, second period was chosen because it was the period of transition, time, when the ideology changed, which meant also abrupt change in how Lasnamae was represented. Period 2001-2005 was chosen as an example from the independence period. Later in 2009 author also examined articles from 2005-2009. Newspapers were chosen accordingly: Noorte Hääl and

Rahva Hääl were the only daily newspapers until 1990. In the beginning of 90`s also Päevaleht (later EPL) began to be appear in print. Currently EPL and Postimees are the only general daily publications in Estonia. So I claim that such use of newspapers should give relatively accurate view of how Lasnamäe is pictured in dominant discourse.

Analysis of youth forum (www.orkut.ee) was mainly useful to reflect how youth in Lasnamäe see the place, however it also offered some insights on the attitudes prominent in the society. Although forum with subtopic Lasnamäe offered youth from Lasnamäe the way to discuss over the district, it was time to time also used by outsiders, whose comments were generally quite negative. Lasnamäe was also mentioned in topics about other block districts.

Thirdly I use the interviews carried out with the residents of Lasnamäe. First set of interviews were carried out in 2008 when 12 Estonian speaking inhabitants of various ages were questioned. Second set of interviews were finalized in 2009 when in total 28 interviews with both Estonian (16) and Russian speakers (12) were conducted. During the interviews it became clear that surveying youth is far more challenging and their identities offer valuable insights; thus interviews with older generation (who moved to Lasnamäe) are only used for comparison. In total, 28 of interviewees were youth most of whom were second generation Lasnamäe`ans (meaning that their parents moved to Lasnamäe). As It also became evident that more information is needed to get a clear overview of Russians identities in Lasnamäe, since their views are influenced by their background (for instance places they come from in Russia). interviews with Russians are also used in comparative way. I think, however, that the number of interviews with young Estonians supported by forum analysis is sufficient to make generalizations about their identities, considering the fact that repeating patterns started to emerge from their interviews.

Both times snowball sampling was used to find interviewees(see Heckathorn, 2002). In the beginning I used my acquaintances for interviews and then they recruited future subjects among their contacts.

My general approach and thus also analysis is carried by grounded theory method (see Strauss, Corbin, 1998). The general purpose of this approach is to generate new theory by finding out repeated patterns and their variations in the data. Although in the beginning research results were thought to be more objective the less preknowledge researcher has about the subject, now general standing point is that wide theoretical frame helps to find various ways for interpretation during investigation (Strauss, Corbin, 1998). Thus the usual process starts with obtaining general theoretical background, however this leads researcher to ask only general questions, whereas exact hypothesises are formed in the field. Such approach proves to be more open and interactive, since researchers theoretical approach does not define what he/she finds in the field. Collecting data and analyzing it are interrelated and take place concurrently which means that results are continuously controlled by new data. (Glaser, Strauss, 1967). This allows researcher to decide what kind of information is needed more, the aim is to choose cases that help to make the theory more accurate. The collection of data is finished when new data does not change the emerging theory anymore. To make sense of the data, concepts and categories are being formed which become the foundation of theory (Charmaz, 2006). In the last phase formed theory is being compared with the researches done earlier.

In my research, using the grounded theory method meant that although I started my research with the general idea of the information I would get from the field site and the questions I would ask, I

still let myself be guided by my interviewees. As I did not have initial sample I decided according to the results what kind of interviewees I need to interview and then found them through snowball sampling (for instance I decided during data collection to shift my attention to second generation youth). As I already mentioned I ended interviewing when I felt I had had enough information about second generation Estonians identities. Because of the character of collected material it soon became evident that I also need more information about public representations on Lasnamäe in the society. Thus I decided to use the data from the media analysis, that I had already done and also secondary data from previous researches on Lasnamäe

The case

Introduction

After the collapse of Soviet Union Estonia, similar to other post soviet countries, adopted for a very nationalistic regime. However, nationality in Estonia was more connected with identity and language (see Lauristin, Vihalemm, 2009) then with territorial borders. Thus the production of Estonian nationality relied largely on the symbolic side of the nation. As a result, borders of identity became more important then the legal borders. The center in Estonian identity formation was on othering practices (see Noreen, Sjöstedt, 2004). As Ehrkamp (2009) has noted identities in host societies are deeply intertwined with the presence and perceived or produced difference of the immigrants. For Estonia such immigrants were Russians who were strongly opposed to Estonianness. Such opposition, as I will explain existed already during Soviet period, but was

even more enforced in the independence movements when Estonia decided to connect its identity with its first independence period and almost ignore its Soviet past.

Estonian identity became clearly the dominant identity in the society. However, not only was it exclusive to Russian population in Estonia, but I also claim that through its othering practices it also defined some areas inside as nonEstonian. Lasnamae as an area that became to symbolize everything that was not Estonian, played the role of constitutive outside for national identity. It did not matter so much that Lasnamae was situated inside the legitimation of the state but its “symbolic standing” outside became more important. Lasnamae became a borderland that helped to both define what is Estonian and to border Estonianness. This goes back to my definition of nationality as not only territorial but also as metaphoric, as existing in people's practices and identities, in Lasnamae's case borders were defined through public discourse. So, the mere fact that Lasnamae is in Estonian legitimization zone, does not play any role in its image. This allows me to state that Lasnamae can be seen as an example of borderland that is situated outside the legal frontier and inside the nation.

Lasnamae's unEstonianness was created through various means as I aim to outline in the following paragraph. Lasnamae's image in public discourse is largely mediated and rarely relies on direct experiences of outsiders. Thus media has an important role in its formation, as Groote and Haardsen have stated (2005) media offers complete pictures, while our own eyes can only see the fragments. Media however functions both as an independent force, but also as a carrier of socio-political voice. Also the government, national elite, education system etc play important role in placing Lasnamae outside the national frame.

Lasnamae's non Estonian image can not be understood only in terms of Russian-ness. The picture is a bit more complicated since besides Russian image, Lasnamae is also pictured as poor and as a bedroom community. Thus it is opposed to the first independence period, when community was wealthy, living in private houses and having communal life (see Smith, 2001). Lasnamae can be seen as marginalized twice over, first being Soviet and Russian and second being an underclass district. Whereas Estonians in Lasnamae could be seen as belonging to Estonian society, they find themselves standing outside not only because they come from Russian place, but also because they are seen as “underclass”.

Thus Lasnamae can be seen as both borderland and diaspora space. Its character as borderland relies mainly on the fact that it is home for two different nationalities, Estonians and Russians, but also on how it is used as a symbolic border of Estonianess. Lasnamae's image as a borderland goes to the extent that also its population is seen as performing Russianness. Lasnamae can be seen as a diaspora space because of its Russian image. Thus it becomes the place of other for Estonian`s although it is located inside the administrative borders of Estonia. Estonian population over there then can be seen as inhabiting nonnational space thus forming diaspora community.

Estonian history of migration

To understand better the context of Estonian national identity formation and its bordering, it is worthwhile to look at the history of Estonian migration. The bigger waves of immigration in 20th century can be said to have started after the end of the second World war. Right before the end of

the World War the percentage of Estonians was almost 100 (Kulu, 1998). After the war immigration however took such an extent that already in 1959 immigrants constituted 20.1 % of the population (Katus et al., 2005). Immigration to Estonia was greatly supported by the communist party; for instance, a number of economic spheres and political institutions in Estonia worked only in Russian, migrants had considerable preferences in getting housing and also a separate Russian language educational system was established (Saar, Lindemann, 2010). Such strategies aimed to reconstruct Estonia both economically and socially as integral part of Soviet Union (Mettam, Williams, 2001). Immigration from the other parts of Union continued till the very end of the Union when 40% of Estonian population was born elsewhere (Katus et al., 2005). However after the collapse of the Union, during Estonian independence period about 150 000 migrants decided to leave, so by 2007 the percentage of immigrants had dropped to 30 (Statistical Office of Estonia).



Table 1. (made by author, source of information Saar, Titma, 1992)

In total, only about a third of the migrants that arrived to Estonia during 1946-1991 decided to stay

(Katus, Sakkeus, 1993), which shows the high mobility of migrants and explains the minimal interaction between the locals and migrants in both structural and cultural domains. First Soviet labor market was structured along the line of external all/union enterprises, that employed mainly Russians (Hallik, 1998) versus internal local enterprises that hired Estonians (Voormann, Helemae, 2003). All-union ministries controlled the most privileged industries, such as those connected to the military. These industries were closed to the local population (due to disloyalty, Pettai, Hallik, 2002). So Estonians were mainly working in light industry, social service and agriculture, whereas Russians were occupied in industry, party jobs and construction (Kala, 1992). Such separation in occupational level also created the division in the social sphere since many services such as medical institutions, kindergartens, vocational schools and even accommodation were provided through the working places. Also as mentioned earlier separate educational systems that operated in different languages were created (Saar, Lindemann, 2010). Different educational systems also paved the way to cultural separation, where language was an important factor. For instance according to the census in 1989 only 15% of Russians reported their knowledge of Estonian as a mother tongue or second language (Hallik, 2002). This was caused by the fact that migrants saw their movement as voluntary economic migration inside the Union and were not obliged to invest to Estonian specific human capital (Saar et al., 2009). Besides the fact that Estonian language skills were not important, their educational credentials obtained outside Estonia were relevant in Estonia as well. They also did not need to engage in interaction with local people (see Vetik, 1993). However borders were redrawn by Estonians as well. During Soviet times Estonia can be seen as a state where resistance movement was probably one of the strongest over all the Union (Vetik, Helemae, 2010). For instance, one of the specific features of Estonia as compared to the other national republics of the Soviet Union was the fact that Estonians refused to use Russian language or admit their skills (Hogan-Brun et al., 2007).

The existence of parallel societies was even more enforced by spatial segregation. Due to the location of the work places Russians were concentrated mainly in Tallinn and North East of Estonia (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2000). This segregation was also enforced by the fact that starting from 1960's the immigration became less centralized and was organized mainly by local enterprises and personal ties (Kulu 1998). This created a situation where about 70% of Russians were concentrated in aforementioned regions, whereas 90% of them lived in urban areas (Katus, Sakkeus, 1993).

The split in society became even deeper when Estonia gained independence. For instance, in the 1991 independence referendum, the majority of Estonians voted for independence, whereas only 25% Russians were in favor of it (Vetik 1993). Estonian independence led to the redefinition of the Estonian nation, time and space, and its relationships with Russia, the Russian minority and the West (Bohle, Greskovits, 2007b). One of the main criteria for Estonian identity became its opposition to Russianness and Sovietness, which were defined through domination (Bohle, Greskovits, 2007a). After the collapse of Union Russia also was still seen as an enemy trying to maintain control over the near abroad (Trenin, 2007). Estonian identity besides being opposed to Russianness, was strongly connected with language and identity. This led to restrictive citizenship laws that granted citizenship only to pre 1940 citizens and their descendants whereas for others the knowledge of Estonian was prerequisite to apply for citizenship. Most of the Russians perceived this new status to be unjust and thus much higher levels of reactive and resistance identity can be found among them (Vetik, 2007). Thus citizenship rules had a further effect in inter ethnic alienation in Estonia (Brosing, 2008). Also, occupational segregation (Russians being employed in the lower positions (Helemae, 2008) and parallel educational

systems continue to exist. Further conflicts between Estonians and Russians are created because of different interpretations of the history, whereas Estonians perceive Russian immigration as colonialism, Russians see it as voluntary migration inside the Union (Kuzio, 2002).

Lasnamae



Due to the big immigration from both all over the Union and countryside to Tallinn and because 50% of its buildings were destroyed in war, it became evident that Tallinn needs to create further accommodation possibilities. Thus during 30 years, 3 big block building districts were built, starting from Mustamae in the 60's and ending with Lasnamae from 1975 to 1990. Due to the period of construction but also because of the fact that a lot of Estonian cultural people were given apartments over there Mustamae was seen as positive thing. However Lasnamae never had such an image (Kurg, 2007). Instead Lasnamae came across as an oppressive colony (Viires, 2005) and the symbol of the influx of Russians. Although it was advertised as accommodating Estonians who before lived in wooden houses without facilities, it was perceived by Estonians as part of Russification policy that meant to transform Estonians into a minority group (Nerman, 1998, Kurg, 2007). Also, when Mustamae's population was only 50 % Russian, then in Lasnamae this

share was 70. Besides being mainly Russian, a large part of its population was working class (Kurg, 2007; Saar, Titma, 1992). For instance according to Port (one of the authors of Lasnamae's masterplan) constructors who were given free apartments in Lasnamae were due to the shortage of labor sought even from prison and military. Furthermore, after 70`s migrants that arrived to Estonia had lower education levels, for instance due to Olympic regatta a lot of constructors arrived, also many all union enterprises, that hired mainly workers, shared free apartments in Lasnamae (see Saar, Titma, 1992). One of the examples of such enterprise was huge factory named Dvigatel. Only 2-3 % of its workers were Estonians and so it was seen as foreign workers springboard to Estonia that was at the time better off economically (Nerman, 1998). Dvigatel also became one of the centers of the resistance movement against Estonian independence. Estonians perceived Dvigatel workers as easy to manipulate by imperial minded management, because they were living in apartments owned by the factory and thus skipping their work days to go to the protest meetings. Also Dvigatel cultural club was accused for housing Russian politicians who openly announced that they were against the independence. (see Nerman, 1998) Thus because it was located in Lasnamäe and its workers lived in Lasnamäe, Dvigatel played a role in creating Lasnamäe`s image.

Lasnamae was also used by Estonian nationals in the independence movement which came to define the other, the occupation and Russianess. One of the most important parts of Estonian independence movement was singing revolution through which Estonians defined themselves a singing nation, a characteristic that separated them from Russians who were defined as Soviet occupiers. One of the key patriotic songs was called “Stop Lasnamae” and is translated below. This song symbolized Estonians resistance to the forced Russification and was used as an allegory against the influx of Russian immigrants and Sovietization, where things never worked as they

were told. Lasnamae thus came to represent the gap between the dream and the reality, where things were perceived as of bad quality and work as never finished (Kurg, 2007). The campaign called to stop the constructions in Lasnamae as a symbolic outrage against everything that was (Soviet and) Russian. As a result only first and second microrayon in Lasnamae were fully completed. Song also worked as demonizing other since Russians were connected with rootlessness, anonymity and evil, Lasnamae was seen as the disgrace of Tallinn.

Let's go up

(Stop Lasnamae)

Let's go up to the hills (mae in the end of districts means hill)

to Musta-, Ois or Lasnamae.

Let's look at the soul of nation

through silent alien power.

Look how soul is sick

evil has grabbed its hand

and then let's cry down the valley (rest of Tallinn)

with all our strength

Stop Lasnamae!

-"- (2 times)

Look how wounds in nations body

are still not recovering

no mean is

too early anymore

City as cancer in its slated ground

without an end

Let's cry all now down the valley

with all our strength

Stop Lasnamae!

-”- (3 times)

Let's go up the hill in the middle of the winds

let's look down the valley over flowers.

Look all is alien,

is this home?

In the middle of windy streets

drifting is aimless migrant.

Look in his eyes is emptiness

he does not feel nor see.

Let's cry all now down the valley

with all our strength

Stop Lasnamae!

-”- (5 times)

During the Estonian nationalist movement Estonian-ness was strongly connected to Estonia`s first independence period (1918-1942 y.) which was named Estonia's golden age (Hughes, 2005).

Smith (2001) for instance describes these days as the periods in which community was wealthy, creative and powerful, making important contributions to culture, religion and knowledge or displaying heroic feats in nature and in battle. This also caused the idealization of the architecture from this period. Thus wooden private house became the archetype of Estonian-ness and Soviet block buildings were marked as other, referring to Russianess and occupation. For instance, according to Nerman (1998), the planning of Lasnamae reflected Soviet authorities' attitude towards people, where the aim was not to create an aesthetic, human friendly environment but to save. Also Argenbright (1999) has mentioned that under the Soviet power people inhabited the theory of abstractions not real places. Architecture in this sense was more than physical outline of buildings, it also adverted to the living style. For instance both media and public differentiate between Estonian and Russian living style, first one referring to the space and openness, whereas second one to strong the communal ties and living close together (see for instance Pedosk, Kaasik (2004)). Such ideals can be also seen reflected in rapid suburbanization that has taken place mainly among the Estonian population throughout the end of 90's and the beginning of 21st century (see Ahas et al., 2007). For instance, in 1999 future mayor suggested that Soviet housing estates should be pulled down, because Tallinner's do not want to live in apartment block anymore, but like all other Europeans want to live in private houses (Kurg, 2007). Henceforth Lasnamae was considered as not suitable living estate for Europeans which can be seen as indirect reference to Russianess not being Estonian nor European.

However Lasnamae is still the biggest district in Tallinn with its 110 000 inhabitants, which is more than live in Estonia's second largest city. It also has the biggest share of Russian population out of Tallinns districts, according to 2007 almost 60% of inhabitants were Russians. Illustrative is also the fact that when in 2003 in Estonia 19% of inhabitants did not have Estonian citizenship

(Lagerspetz, Vogt, 2004) then in Lasnamae this percentage was 44. Besides during 90's service (e.g shops, hairdressers, sportsclubs etc) in Lasnamae was mainly in Russian. For instance one citation from "Lasnamae's history": 1960 it was not even characteristic to Lasnamae that salesmen knew how to answer in Estonian, later however this became typical (Nerman, 1998)." Thus language issue became vital in Lasnamae as well and even these days Lasnamae is perceived as mainly Russian-speaking: "If you want to learn Russian, go to the market in Lasnamae." (2007). Also lately many Estonian schools have been closed in Lasnamae and are now outnumbered by Russian schools which makes Pedosk, Kaasik (2004, EPL) to compare Estonians in Lasnamäe with Last Mohawks.

Not only are Estonians a minority in Lasnamae, they also feel that Russian community has much stronger ties and their social life is more active. Among a lot of Estonians Lasnamae is perceived as a sleeping district where people only go to spend their nights. Such an image has strongly been influenced by its physical structure. According to high modernist building principles, accommodation and facilities should be separated (see Scott, 1998). Lasnamae had in its general plan centers for each mikrorayon, however due to the high need for new living spaces and resistance movement against Lasnamae during the independence movement they were never completed in most of the rayons. Even in 2000 one could only find one bigger shop, two sports clubs and one cultural club for 110 000 inhabitants. Thus Lasnamaes quick connection with the center and lack of facilities made it hard to spend any time in Lasnamae. Even the district elder stated in one interview: " We cannot deny it, Lasnamae is a sleeping district, people do not have any entertainment at all." (EPL 11.07)



Lasnamäe through the eyes of foreigner, notice the difference of representation (<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=384103>)

Medias influence in Lasnamae's image, public understandings

Media has played an important role in developing peoples understandings about Lasnamae. Media's great role in Estonia, especially for young people, has been brought out by Jarve et al. (2000) who states that the reality is more often mediated, virtual reality, satiated with the signs and messages of mass media. Media has often referred to Lasnamae as Russian place. Some examples: "In Lasnamae and Eastern Estonia people live their own life, watch PBK, read MK Estonija (both Russian channels), go to their own markets, own schools and factories and do not want to study geography in Estonian." (Eesti Ekspress, 23.11.2005). Although today such articles are published less frequently, still one can find also later articles that prove the prevalence of such an image. For

instance in 2008 (Postimees 12.12.2008) one reporter asked from the district elder if Lasnamae is 100% Estonia or Russian ways are more honored and beloved. Further on even the elder of Lasnamae says: "We must change Lasnamae from Soviet sleeping district to comfortable district whose inhabitants have European mentality." Thus Europeaness and Russianness are strongly counterposed, seen as delimiting and Lasnamae as remnant of Soviet past.

Media has greatly contributed in politicizing Lasnamae. As Lasnamae is 60% Russian and 40% non citizen, non citizens however have a chance to vote in the local elections. This population mainly votes for Estonian Russo-friendly party. As Lasnamae's population is quite big, Russians have big importance in influencing local elections and thus Lasnamae becomes both the site of populism for Central Party and demonizing force for others. Media has published a lot of negative articles about Lasnamae and Central party, one example of connecting Lasnamäe and Central party: most people who vote for Central party are from Narva, Sillamäe or Lasnamäe (all the other towns are in Eastern Estonia and also known for great numbers of Russians) (<http://www.ohtuleht.ee/index.aspx?id=294699>).



Lasnamäe as a space of Central party (<http://estland4ever.files.wordpress.com/2009/09/sotniku-yenekeelne.jpg>) Picture with election posters

Lasnamäe's image as non Estonian was further enforced through selective reflection of events. In 2001 there were fights between Estonians and Russians in Lasnamäe (but also in Oismae). These fights were instantly pictured in media as the outburst of nationalistic hate. Later however many prominent figures announced that youth instead did not have anything to do in Lasnamäe and fights were one way to spend their time. Also according to some participating Estonians and Russians fights were more reflection of the class struggle, since there were many wealthy Estonians living in area nearby (see Postimees 22.10.2001, EPL 20.10.2001). In media there were various stories about how dangerous it is to be Estonian in Lasnamäe. These stories had a great impact on the public. For instance according to survey in Lasnamäe's Estonian school a lot of youth found Russians as dangerous and mentioned such events as rapes, stealing etc.; however, only 10% of them had direct experiences, thus most of the stories originated from peers and media

(EPL. 22.10.01).



Lasnamäe as Russian space (<http://maniakk.files.wordpress.com/2009/10/picture-001.jpg>)

Picturing markets that are publicly referred to as Russian.

However Russianess is not the only image that media has attached with Lasnamae. Lasnamae is also pictured as criminal and poor area. Starting from 1990 media started to represent Lasnamae as a place for social conflicts and problems (see Kask, Saar, 2006). After 1993 regular crime reports were being published in the newspapers. Lasnamae was the only district that's name kept appearing in titles whereas for other districts the character of crime was in the center. Not long after Lasnamae was deemed as ghetto: “Vulgar generalization about Lasnamae might include: It is a shoddy place, a ghetto where junkies live and an area where one gets beaten up all the time.” (EPL. 08.09.02) Thus Lasnamae is being connected with poverty and low class manners. Also according to several articles (see Postimees 03.04.03) Lasnamae is a place where those who have no possibility to purchase home in better place, live. When we look at the youth forum, we can see

how such an image is strong in people's perceptions as well, for instance: "I would never dare to live and move around in Lasnamae after dark. Where are most criminal incidents? Always in Lasnamae.". Lasnamae's criminal image was even more enforced by the fact that during 10 years over 15 bombs that were exploded by man who hated the poor (see Eesti Elu 2005).



Lasnamäe as poor. Picturing two homeless.

As mentioned already before two images, Russianess and criminality tend to be somewhat connected. According to Jarve et al. (2000) there exists negative stereotype about Russians who are more alleged to drink, swear, brawl a lot and be aggressive and impulsive. Russianess is connected with Otherness and its demonization can be strongly connected with postcolonial and postsoviet reaction to the 50 years of Russification and Sovietization period in Estonia (Jarve et al 2000). Such connection also comes out in the youth forum where one can find cites such as:

“Lasnamae is full of Russian addicts who are after another shot.”, but is again also stressed by media (for instance title “70% of Russian pupils in Lasnamae have been offered drugs).

Finally, printed media is not the only source criticizing Lasnamae. Lately, the movie “Sugisball” was released. Although author has said that film was not a critique to Lasnamae but to the modern life itself with people living only in their small boxes, separated from each other, it is still telling that namely Lasnamae was used for shooting since movie is based on a novel that takes place in Mustamae. Also, the film starts with the scene in which unkempt youth are tossing a football while telling obscenities, in between bushes there are few drunkards laying etc.(see Alas, 2007). Thus Lasnamae's image as poor, gray and miserable is even more stigmatized.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to demonstrate how Lasnamae became a borderland and diaspora space and to show why it was constructed as unEstonian place. We can see, that its unEstonianess did not only rely on the fact that it was defined as Russian, but also on its status as underclass and unhomey.

Thus not only did Estonian image of the living place exclude Russianess, but it was also not meant to be filled with poor and home was meant to function as a place for more than just sleeping. Lasnamae therefore created dual opposite to “real Estonian home”- private house in countryside.

Lasnamae's unEstonian image was created through many different factors. First it was strongly connected to Soviet occupation both because it offered housing for large amount of Russian immigrants and because of its dominant role in Estonian independence movement. Lasnamae becoming a symbol of Soviet occupation also helped to create its image as a sleeping district, since "it reflected Soviet powers attitude towards people, as unimportant and not worthy of good living conditions". Also the fact that Lasnamae now houses the biggest share of Russians in Tallinn is important in maintaining its Russian image. The medias role in defining Lasnamae has been important throughout the history as well. Media has helped to affirm the understanding that Lasnamae is underclass by creating criminal aura around it and partly also connecting criminality with Russians.

Thus we can see how it was useful for the dominant discourse to lower Lasnamae that came to mark the other in terms of Estonian identity. Lasnamae became like a nodal point where Estonianess was both defined and bordered. Its unEstonianess created a place for other inside Estonia, thus placing Lasnamae as borderland and diaspora space.

Second generation Estonian youth identities in Lasnamäe

Introduction

The last chapter concentrated on how Lasnamae was defined as nonEstonian. Its construction as a border zone, the constitutive outside of Estonian identity played vital role in the national construction (see also Balibar, 1996). Whereas such a definition helped to form Estonian identity and unite Estonians as a nation, it worked as stereotyping to exteriorize people who lived in Lasnamae. This is similar to how immigrants are used by nationalists to create the idea of unity (see Easthope, 2009). Through such labeling the dominant discourse does not only influence those placed inside the hegemony (Estonians), but is also in a strong dialogue with outsiders identities (Lasnamae'ans), who grapple with, contest and challenge such images. (especially so for those self-identifying Estonians living in lasnamae, and so occupying the uneasy position of being both interior and exterior to Estonia/Estonian-ness) Such categorizing together with creating borders between outsiders and insiders can often be seen as a basis for both insiders and outsiders identity formations and feelings of unity (see Ehrkamp, 2006). Venkatesh (2000), for instance, has suggested that urban enclaves form identities because they are being decried and excluded by mainstream culture. Thus it becomes a question if we can see similar developments among youth in Lasnamäe, who are being excluded in dominant idea of Estonianess.

Lasnamäe's nonEstonian character is also carried over to its inhabitants. However, besides the fact that outsiders see Lasnamäe as unEstonian, I also suggest that such an image is at least partly being accepted by Estonians in Lasnamäe as well. Because of Lasnamäe`s image as nonEstonian and Russian, I hypothesize that Estonians in Lasnamae become part of diaspora community rather than Russians who are officially living outside “the national” place. However, for Russians, Lasnamae is being perceived as relatively homey part of Estonia, offering them ways to make themselves feel at ease in the middle of Estonian state. Russians´ homey feelings are connected with the strong sense of community they have formed in Lasnamäe. Estonians in Lasnamae

however find themselves living outside, because of Lasnamae's image as nonEstonian and because of strong Russian community. Thus they can be seen as forming a group who stands outside the national definition of Estonianess. Their culture is not represented in dominant understandings and it is even considered standing outside of Estonia. Thus they find themselves inbetween, struggling for self definition. Therefore I find comparing them with diaspora communities a good way to analyze their identities or to even start asking questions about how they feel, how they manage negotiating between Lasnamäe as nonEstonian and their self-definitions as Estonian.

Similar to diaspora communities, we can also distinguish among Lasnamäe`ans between first and second generation. First generation here denotes to people who moved to Lasnamäe, whereas second generation means that they were born there. Although my research mainly engages with the second generation, whose identity is far more complicated and troubling, at times I find it necessary to also give examples of first generation identity. These examples help to place younger generation as diaspora community by showing the split between the generations. When older generation mainly identifies with Estonian dominant discourse, then younger generation finds themselves trapped inbetween the national paradigm and awakening resistance identity. The ways in which different generations identify refers to strong similarities with diaspora communities. When first generation in diaspora usually connects strongly with ancestral homeland, then second generation finds themselves in the middle of ancestral homeland and new home.

Sleeping district

Older generation attitudes toward Lasnamae can be seen as mainly coinciding with the dominant discourse and public attitude. They in great deal shared negative feelings about Lasnamae. Usually when asked about the positive things they stressed on the commodities Lasnamae once and even nowadays offers. For instance:

“I take it as a good place for living where I can work throughout the day and do not need to worry about warm water and a warm room. I live like I were in the hotel and if I want something else then I go to my country house on the weekend.”

Thus their relationship with Lasnamae has remained throughout the years functional and they show little signs of attachment to the area. Facilities tend to be the only positive thing about otherwise negative area. This is exemplified in following citation:

“It is not a comfortable place for living. It is so overcrowded with these big bulky houses and it has nothing pleasant. The only pleasant thing was that I received a bigger apartment here. But with that it ended, I stay in my apartment and do not come out there. Pleasant feelings such as pride that I live in Lasnamae like people talk about Nomme, calling it their home area, our region, we do not have such stories. Just people have remained here, they live here.”

We can see that living in Lasnamae is conceived by the interviewee as a necessity. Similar to her, most people among older Lasnamae'ans see it as anonymous place and usually connect strongly with their childhood homes. As their childhood homes were mainly located in the countryside, such longing also helps to further strengthen the private house ideal. For example one interviewee mentioned that for her home starts when she drives out of Lasnamae and when the greenness

starts. Lasnamae for most is perceived as not home and not even offering the possibility for warm feelings and attachment. We can make clear comparison between older Lasnamae'ans and first generation diaspora, since they both show strong longing for their birthplaces and feel alienated in their new living place. Moreover among first generation diaspora also practical ideas about their new home tend to prevail. For instance moving away from ancestral homeland is often viewed as connected with practical issues, such as better job possibilities etc.

We can also see that younger generation shares some of the feelings expressed by their parents. Youth were clearly influenced by the dominant understandings as well as their parents attitudes and thus their identities can partly be seen as embracing these public images. Such acceptance can be compared with second generation diaspora taking over their parents ideas about ancestral homeland and also about host country. Thus dominant discourse in my case can be equalized with the values taken over from ancestral homeland.

Among youth in Lasnamäe, the image of the sleeping district was very strong. To describe Lasnamae, terms such as “concrete box sleeping district” and “slur” were used. One interviewee described Lasnamae as follows:

“ It is like a giant beehive where a lot of people stay, sleep and only go to buy food.”

Youth also praised Lasnamae for its functionality, however as such commodities like warm water and central heating now seem natural to them, the proximity to the central town and good transportation were stressed. The importance of these characters became evident when youth described how they only use Lasnamae for sleeping and their life is in the center.

Besides perceiving Lasnamae through mere functional lens, a lot of youth also saw it as inevitability. This is exemplified by the following citation:

“Lasnamäe is like a step in life. I have not encountered people who would like to stay here for the rest of their life. They rather want to move somewhere. I doubt that they all want to live in private houses, but I have heard that all want to move away.”

and

“Most of the people for whom it is possible have moved away from Lasnamae.”

We can again see how their parents attitudes together with society’s image of Lasnamae are vital for youth identity constructions. Lasnamäe being served by their parents as a place where they were forced to move, makes it for youth a place, where nobody could move deliberately. This also explains why youth saw Lasnamäe as a poor place. Being pictured as a place where nobody wants to live draws youth to the conclusions that those who have remained there must be poor. However, this poverty is connected with district’s image as nonEstonian, with the idea that private house should be a dream for every Estonian:

“At a certain age you want a house and a garden. I do not know any Estonian who wants to live in Lasnamae. “

“Estonians are more used to living close to earth and greenness and have distance between their houses.”

We can see how private house for Estonians in Lasnamäe acts as a myth about ancestral homeland for diasporic communities. As private house is something connected to Estonian identity, then maintaining private house ideal can be seen as connecting themselves with other Estonia and in some ways distancing them from Lasnamäe. Not having any experiences living in private house however turns it into myth, into story of what it is like to be Estonian, what it was like to live in ancestral homeland. Such a myth is also used to distance Estonians' community in Lasnamäe from Russians, just as stories about ancestral homeland act as ways of othering from the new host country and its citizens. The ways Estonians typically live were separated from "Russian living". As mentioned in last quote, Estonians were perceived to love living separate from their parents and having neighbors in great distance, Russians however were pictured as loving the sense of community and thus preferring to live close to each other. This was one of the most often marked reasons when youth tried to explain why Estonians move away from Lasnamäe, but Russians stay. youth also mentioned, that feeling of communality among Russians makes them move close to their parents and thus the children of Russians in Lasnamäe prefer to move to the neighboring house. Thus we can see how even among youth othering between them and Russians is strong and how myths about different habits and characters are formed through using some parts of history.

Thus living in Lasnamäe does not fit with the general idea of Estonianess and Estonian way of living. This is clearly brought out by following:

"It is awkward if people show their childhood homes to children, usually these are houses in the countryside. I do not imagine that I go back with my children and show them that I lived here in the ninth floor at this house."

Being unable to connect their childhood with typical Estonian experience clearly causes some confusing emotions. On one hand Lasnamae's sleeping district image and private house ideal are embraced by youth, on the other hand, they also try to legitimize their childhood and define themselves as Estonians. In a sense it seems like embracing such an image makes them unEstonian as well. Thus there is a constant battle going on between those two feelings. Sometimes these feelings are clearly separated from each other not to cause any conflict. For instance some of the youth described Lasnamae as a sleeping district and yet also talked about how they enjoyed their childhood and what kind of plays they had. Lasnamae was described as having no identity and then again childhood there explained as different, more interesting, as more positive. So although private house was seen as a perfect place for their children, Lasnamae was seen as better for themselves, because childhood there was more adventurous. Thus, the situation determined which identity dominated and was used. Sometimes two different identities were openly being negotiated:

“I guess I never got used to living in an apartment, but Lasnamäe is still close to my heart and filled with memories. I guess I should get a tattoo `Lasnamäe forever`.”

Seemingly oppositional identities are being negotiated and the interviewee has found for himself a way to embrace both of them. This exemplifies a lot of cases in which the private house ideal did not ruin youth experience and feelings of Lasnamae. Thus they did not find it disturbing that whereas their ideal place of living was in private house, they grow up in block building. Such examples can be seen as signs of inbetween identities. youth try to dialogue between the dominant discourse and the resistance identity, between Estonia and Lasnamäe. Similarly as second generation diaspora, they find it hard to identify with one rigid category and to obtain clear

borders. And similarly as for diasporic communities, it becomes challenging to fit two ideas together. How can diasporic communities belong to two nationalities, how can Estonians in Lasnamäe be Lasnamäe`ans and Estonians at the same time? Separated or conflicting identities are only two of the outcomes of such conflict. There are also individuals who decide to celebrate either Estonianess or Lasnamae`aness. For instance there were couple of interviewees who openly contested the ideas of Estonianess and identified with Lasnamäe:

“I like it here because we have many people, different people. I would not like to live alone in the countryside. Over here you can hear Russians yelling, but it is still life. And when you go to the cheap shop you can see different people, if you want to feel that there is life around you, you just need to go outside.”

Thus this interviewee contests the idea that all Estonians should long to live in the countryside, in their own house and far away from others, by clearly stating that he does not desire such a future for himself. However, he cannot be seen as completely abandoning dominant discourse since he still refers to Lasnamäe as Russian and poor, but he contests private house as an ideal. Put another way, he does not see the aforementioned characters as negative or stopping him from feeling at home. Also, one other interviewee described the problems in suburbia, where one does not have any infrastructure, and stated that he prefers to live in Lasnamae. In some ways he also enforced the stereotypes about Lasnamae being mere functional district but did not see it as a problem.

Lasnamae as ghetto

Youth position inbetween also came out when they tried to negotiate between feeling at home in Lasnamae and Lasnamae`s ghetto identity. Lasnamae`s ghetto identity was at least partly overtaken by youth. Ghetto identity was further strengthened by negative experiences. Thus hegemonic ideas helped to exclude positive happenings in Lasnamae and directed youth attention to negative. Several of my interviewees mentioned that living in Lasnamae means that one has to be at guard all the time. One interviewee even described the feeling of Lasnamae as feeling of danger. Several very negative events were described to reason the criminal image. For instance:

“My sister moved away from the house after our neighbor, drunk, covered with blood holding in his hand a knife, appeared behind our door.”

Youth described how after a while such events cease to come across as surprising and shocking and are being seen as a mere part of everyday life, they are being normalized. Although criminal images become part of the every day, it still does not mean, that they are seen as unproblematic. Placing Lasnamae as criminal makes it also unEstonian, which causes mixing feelings for youth. It complicates the relationship that they have with home when they try to negotiate between criminality and home. Such confusing and conflicting feelings are exemplified by one of the interviewees:

“Always when I see home in my dreams, I see Lasnamae, not other places I have lived. But I always dream about something to do with danger. I see that somebody tries to break in to our

apartment or that I am walking in the hall and never reach home.”

Thus being inbetween is a problem for this interviewee, since she is not able to make sense of who she is. She cannot identify how she feels about Lasnamäe and also she cannot identify what is home for her and where it is located. Unlike traditional Estonian image of home as safe and cozy place in the countryside, she finds her home being directly connected with criminality. This makes her stand inbetween the idea of private house as safe and inbetween Lasnamäe as criminal, but yet home. She similarly as diasporic communities cannot locate one home, she is inbetween homes.

To even stress the otherness and alienate Lasnamäe more from Estonianess, its criminal image is also being connected with Russianess. The idea of Russians being dangerous originated both from media, but also from myths and experiences shared among insiders themselves. A good example is how the time of conflict between Russians and Estonians is explained by one of the youth:

“ I remember when Estonians and Russians fought with each other. Then I was afraid and did not dare to come home. All the others spoke, I did not think that Russians are bad, but others spoke that there are fights and I was afraid. They might just sit there in gangs and I was afraid to pass because you never knew what they would do, if they would chase you or something.”

Thus although the respondent did not have direct bad experiences herself, through the stories she learned that she must be afraid of Russians. The negative stereotype about Russians was even more strengthened by the negative events experienced by youth. This led to the situation where everyday encounters with Russians were dismissed and only the negative events became important in describing Russians. Thus youth described a lot of negative experiences in connection with

Russians, such as beatings, robberies etc. This exemplifies how Estonian population in Lasnamäe tries to other themselves from Russians. Again parallels with diasporic communities can be brought. It is characteristic for diasporic community to other from host culture and maintain their connections with ancestral homeland. Such othering can also take the form of lowering host culture and connecting it with evil. This is the case among Estonian population, when Russians are pictured as criminal and dangerous.

However the labeling is not one sided only. Several youth referred, that they had experienced stereotyping by Russians as well. For example one of the interviewees described how during the fights between Estonians and Russians one was labeled according to the nation irrespective of ones own mentality. Thus the mere fact of speaking Estonian also enabled to make conclusions about your mentality, borders were rigid, no inbetweenness was possible.

“When there was a war between Estonians and Russians then I had to run away. You did not have to be part of it. If you were in a place where some nasty gang of Russians were then you did not have to have done anything. You were chased and beaten, just out of the blue.”

Nationality was a good excuse for fighting and not asking further questions, simply distinguishing between Estonians and Russians was far easier then to delve more deeply into the problem. It can be questioned what was more important either to fight for fighting or to fight because of national problems. Also, several interviewees mentioned that when fights between Estonians happened there was some personal issue, whereas one could see fighting total strangers when they were of different nationalities. Thus Russians can be seen in some ways in Lasnamäe as host culture who engages with labeling as well. Such othering and labeling by Russians was drawn into the point

where Lasnamae became the place of other for Estonians. This image was created by both media, but also the fact that Russians outnumbered Estonians. Such a feeling comes out for instance from following citation: “In this period you thought for God sake not to speak Estonian.” Lasnamäe was not only pictured as unEstonian and alien by outsiders, also insiders experienced it as outside. Thus defining Estonians in Lasnamäe as diaspora does not rely solely on outsiders images, but insiders feelings as well.

Borders that were drawn between the rest of Estonian society and Lasnamäe`ans can be further exemplified through the ways youth made sense of their childhood. Schools were given as typical examples of Lasnamäe`s otherness.

“My school was the worst one in Lasnamae. All the teachers from other schools threatened that if their pupils behave badly they would be sent to my school. When I changed schools the change was enormous. I went there and I could not speak normally. My sentences ended and started with obscenities. Others looked at me like I was savage. The difference in culture and intelligence between my school and the others is huge. Others looked at me as a little fool, but I myself also felt like I did not fit in with the crowd.”

Thus there were double borders. Neither could my interviewee fit to the scene and also others felt that he was different. Not only was he acting dissimilar but he also saw his childhood experience as totally different:

“We did not play, we were all too tough for that. Those who did were mocked. During normal school days all kinds of things were thrown out of the window, put into the fire, my one friend

even burned a car. All drank, smoked and beat people. I doubt that it was normal for others. I have told it and they have just looked at me with amazement, it is totally outrageous. Someone who has never gone to this school cannot imagine how things were. “

Thus we can see that not only was differentiation felt from outside, but youth themselves felt borders and sensed that others cannot relate with their experience, they saw themselves as coming from totally different worlds. So we can claim that double borders exist both between Estonians and Russians in Lasnamäe as between Estonians in Lasnamäe and in the rest of the society. Again the comparison with diaspora can be used where diasporic community does not seem to belong either to their ancestral homeland but also not to the host culture.

The attitude of “Others” can also be exemplified by one of the interviewees who did not go to school in Lasnamae:

“I have always thought that those who go to school in Lasnamae are meant to stay there, they have no exit, when you start communicating with those people. I remember when I was a kid I was afraid to hang out with youth because I was afraid that I might end up badly.”

This interviewee differentiated herself from others in Lasnamae, because she had never went to school over there. We can see how she embraced the dominant discourse about Lasnamae as ghetto, as urban enclave where people who grew up there, stayed there, because of social reproduction of poverty. She however was not the only one to separate herself from others because she felt that she was “doing better”. Many of my interviewees shared with me the stories about their acquaintances who had ended up badly, as addicts, in prison, not completing even basic

education or even being dead by now. Such stories circle around youth and act as differentiating force among Lasnamae'ans. They offered my interviewees ways to see themselves through positive lens by stressing how they had managed to struggle out from Lasnamae. Thus although adapting dominant discourse about Lasnamae as ghetto they also found ways how to identify themselves positively, how not to take Lasnamae's image personally, because this was about others, these people who did not do so well. My respondents even stressed, that to become successful one has to be a strong person. Thus they tried to find ways how to still see themselves as Estonians.

However not always did youth find ways how not take dominant image of Lasnamae as a ghetto personally. Few of my interviewees mentioned that they felt themselves discredited. Such an image came with others reactions to the fact that they were living in Lasnamae. Many of the youth said that typical reaction to this was thinking of Lasnamae as a typical American ghetto, place where one gets beaten up all the time, where drug addicts drift along and only Russians live. One of the interviewees described how he had to constantly explain to his relatives from countryside why he is living in such a bad place and how after a while he started believing that Lasnamae is a bad place for living as well. Such feelings as the need to justify ones inheritance also come across among diaspora communities who need to redefine themselves as nationals, who are not living in their ancestral homeland anymore, thus missing vital part of ones "nationality". Inhabiting diaspora spaces makes them obliged to justify their identity to both host culture and ancestral communities.

Such decried feeling however is open to change and thus can easily transform to something that I call alternative identity. Such change is described by one of the interviewees:

“At first I was ashamed that I was living in Lasnamae. I never invited anybody over, but now I am saying with pride that I live in Lasnamae and I even stress that I live in Majaka street (one of the streets that has the worst image). I like to scare people, I tell them stories about drug addicts, I like to see how they react.”

This can be explained as a way to turn Lasnamae's negative image to use and as an attempt to benefit from Lasnamae's origin, as a way to empower oneself. Such notion further strengthens the borders between Lasnamae and “the rest” however these borders are made positive. Thus Lasnamaeans try to collectivize and establish their own positive means of identifying, turning their otherness to positive value. Throughout this process borders are often even exaggerated and Lasnamae's images served more extreme. This also comes out from forum, where people stressed on strange happenings they have had in Lasnamae, but these rather than being seen as scary, were described as normal everyday:

“I saw one uncle who tried out his own homemade bomb but as always the bang came a bit too early and soon there were sirens everywhere. So much for uncle that he probably continues to experiment in heaven, but I have a question if he also has one arm over there or he gets a new one?”

“In Pae street you could hear bombs exploding twice a year, especially in the morning. Well at least I did not need any coffee.”

Through such stories youth place themselves as tough and fearless, which are the main advantages

gained from growing up in Lasnamae. The events are made to sound funny and through this their marginality is being stressed. Instead of focusing on the negative side, Lasnamae is being pictured as exotic place, “sick and then again funny” as said by one person in forum. Such relationship is even better being exemplified in following citation:

“I am really happy that I have lived in Lasnamae, because it was cool. It is something exotic that not everybody does. Specifically that it is different, not neat all the time, shoddy things happen, danger, you are in the border of danger all the time. It is never boring.”

Thus Lasnamae is being pictured as contrary to the rest of the Estonia, where everything seems to be regulated, almost like out of the reach of Estonian government, not fitting with the idea of how things should work in society. However its otherness from Estonia is seen as a positive thing, Lasnamae is given positive meaning. Maintaining borders between Lasnamäe and the rest becomes Lasnamäe`ans interest. They are not victims anymore, but feel in some ways empowered by the border.

Besides bringing out the exotic of Lasnamae, youth also perceive their childhood as positive, partly because of the perceived difference between Lasnamae and other places. When describing their childhood youth stressed again how different it was, how typical plays were climbing in constructions, in careers, visiting roofs and attics etc. Again they stressed positivity that was obtained through such childhood by noting how they had to be creative in finding themselves things to do because there were no playgrounds, no possibilities. Thus it made them different than others:

“Sometimes I tell others about this childhood and they cannot believe that we were allowed to do such things, some maybe played only house and with dolls. Even I cannot still believe that we were allowed to do these things and nothing happened.”

Childhood experiences are also connected to danger but this connectedness is also perceived as a positive thing. For instance one of my interviewees stressed how they searched for dangers. Bad happenings are being reevaluated as positive because of the lessons they taught. Several youth stressed how growing up in Lasnamae has given them insider knowledge like knowing what kind of people to avoid looking into eye in the streets, recognizing criminals, not being afraid criminals anymore etc. Respondents emphasized that thanks to negative experiences they are not so naive anymore and have seen “the real life”. All above can be seen as youth way to give positive meaning to negative image Lasnamäe has. youth thus try to make sense what it is like to grow up in Lasnamäe. They try to unite dominant discourse with their own experiences and thus make inbetweenness a special category, they try to empower themselves and make use of their inbetweenness.

Many of the youth also contested dominant negative images about Lasnamae. The most usual comment used was “it is not that bad”. The aim was not so much to convince others that Lasnamae is good, but to challenge the stereotypes. A lot of people commented how the big crime rate Lasnamäe has is caused by the fact that it is the biggest district. Also many used statistics as a way of defending, showing that according to statistics Mustamäe is actually worse, not to mention central town. This became a struggle over who has the right to speak about Lasnamae. Insiders found that their understandings of Lasnamae should be more authentic and thus they should have right to form dominant ideas about Lasnamae. Such struggle is further on exemplified by the fact

that several of the interviewees mentioned how they cannot stand others lambasting Lasnamae, whereas their own image of it was not the best either and they actually criticized it a lot. This can be compared to young Somalis in Denmark, who insist on having the right for self-definition rather than being positioned by Danish society (Valentine et al., 2009).

Defending Lasnamae can be seen as the first sign of Lasnamae's identity. This identity then is based on negative differentiation and comparison. But picturing Lasnamae as a positive place should not only be seen as a reaction to a dominantly negative image. Many youth also described their childhood with very emphatic words and their attachment with the place was clearly visible.

For instance:

“My childhood went by in the middle of big houses having picnics, listening to larks, eating strawberries and walking to the Botanical Garden, later climbing in half destroyed buildings, what good times.”

Russian image

“It was pretty spooky to read a Estonian national novel in Lasnamae.”

Although Lasnamae's Russianess and othering from Russian community in Lasnamae has come up a lot in connection with other images (criminality and national ideals for living), I have not yet

described the ways two communities separated themselves as seen by youth and also defining Lasnamäe as borderland needs to be discussed. As mentioned earlier self identifying Estonians in Lasnamäe feel sometimes left out, feel that they are living somewhere they do not belong. This is placing Lasnamäe clearly as diaspora space for them, where they feel like inhabiting the space of other. Picturing Lasnamäe as Russian place comes out in many ways. Firstly as already mentioned it is not perceived as ideal living place for Estonians, whereas Russians are believed to remain there and not only remain but also enjoy living there. One of my interviewees mentioned that she thinks for a wealthy Russian it is the matter of honor to live in Lasnamäe, whereas rich Estonian would never even consider such possibility. Russians are thought to have more social life and better sense of community. youth refer to Estonianness and being out of place in many ways like: “We live in Russian community.” and “The feeling of Lasnamäe is when you hear only Russian.” Language in that sense is most important marker of someones belongingness and also way of othering. For instance several interviewees mentioned how they were unable to play with Russians because of the language problems. Thus language separated two communities already early on when they were unable to communicate with each other, parallel societies formed during Soviet times, continued to exist. In that sense living in Lasnamae did not help to erase borders between two communities, but rather enforced those. My interviewees gave many examples of how language was one of the main separators, for instance:

“Russians did not want to speak Estonian when independence came. You always had problems in shops when you asked something in Estonian and they did not understand. When you tried to show it or say it in Russian they looked at you like they wanted to kill you.”

We can see how separation in language level was also transmitted to other spheres. Thus Russians

were seen as having different habits, for instance:

“When I ride on the bus then there are a lot of Russian gangs with different temperaments and I am disturbed by it. They listen music loud and talk in loud voices. I would like to be left alone and ride calmly. If I did not live here, I would not have to stand them so much.”

Thus Lasnamae cannot only be seen as diaspora space for Estonians, but also as borderland, where two self-identifying communities meet. It functions as a space of encounter, but sometimes only in ways that help to strengthen negative stereotypes about each other. Often Lasnamae as a meeting space of two communities created walls and borders. As said by one of the interviewees, “Lasnamae is like oil and water”. Therefore we can assume, that there exist strong bordering practices among Lasnamae Estonians as diaspora community. When trying to connect with Estonianess they find themselves othering from Russians, alienated from host culture (see Duarte, 2005).

However, there were also people who found themselves standing inbetween because of their skills of Russian. Often Russian knowledge was being described as necessity which was caused by the fact that one was the only Estonian child in the courtyard or one had friends among Russians etc. Russian skills were also seen as important because of the community over there being predominantly Russian. For instance one of the interviewees stressed that he had much safer feeling after he learned how to communicate in Russian. We can see how Russian was seen as cultural capital (see Hage, 1996) that was necessary to become a Lasnamae`an. Thus Lasnamae was placed as a Russian space even by insiders, among whom some used the term ghetto to refer mainly to Russianess, ghetto in that sense denoted to unEstonianess. Together with seeing

Lasnamae as Russian also feelings of exclusion were experienced.:

“Events that take place in Lasnamae are directed towards one nation. When they celebrate Midsummer day 5 performers out of six are Russian. It is strange that I live in my own country but somehow never have a feeling that I want to stay. If I had a chance, I would go away.”

Thus this interviewee feels that he is inhabiting Russian space, which makes him sense alienation, feel like not belonging to Lasnamae and ultimately longing for “Estonia”. We can see very strong othering coming across among insiders as well.

However, the importance of nation and national stereotypes were also confused by some of the interviewees who mentioned that Russians in Lasnamae are different from other Russians. Russians in Lasnamae were described as unfriendly and arrogant. Several interviewees described how in general they have nothing against Russians and how they have several friends among Russians, but how in Lasnamae it is different. Thus not only were there borders between Estonians and Russians, but also between Russians in Lasnamae and Russians outside, Russians in friends circle. It can be assumed that this differentiation is partly connected with the fact that it is far easier to apply stereotypes to population who one does not know, than to ones friends. Conflicts in Lasnamae have caused the situation when not having direct relationships with Russians, Estonian youth start to see them in very unified way and negative experiences are being generalized all over the group. We can see that through unifying forces, it becomes easier to other oneself from Russians in Lasnamae. Russians are not seen according to individual meetings, but through stereotypes, that help youth to lower them and thus picture themselves still as Estonians. Such stereotyping was also referred by one of the interviewees through exemplifying how when having

problems with concrete people it becomes vital to stress that they are Russians and how all the Russians are bad, whereas having problems with Estonians it is only this particular person. Thus nationalistic politics and general attitudes in society have made Lasnamae a politicized space, rather than a space of encounter, it is a space of detachment.

Whereas most Estonians in Lasnamäe tried to find ways how to self-identify as Estonian, they were othered by the rest of the population, who saw them as Russianized. This is exemplified by one of my interviewees who moved to Lasnamae as a teenager:

“When you see youth in the city, I am quite sure I can tell who are from Lasnamae. This slutty attitude and especially the girls dressed like Russian chicks, cheapness, this comes from Lasnamae. Arrogant attitude, dirty words. For Russians it is normal to wear a lot of make up and shoes with leopard skin. In think youth in Lasnamae are so Russianized, being in gangs, hip hop culture, acting rowdy.”

Thus outsiders saw Estonian youth in Lasnamae as having the characters of Lasnamae, it means being Russian and nonEstonian. youth experienced similar situations with many immigrants, who find themselves identifying through their current society, however their identification is not recognized by others. For instance when young Somalis in Denmark find themselves Danish, then mainstream discourse still sees them as Somalian (see Valentine et al., 2009). This creates a situation where one does feel that he/she cannot connect to either of the societies. Thus inbetweenness becomes a burden, that is experienced daily. youth in Lasnamäe can be seen as marginalized twice over, first they feel they are excluded in Lasnamae, because being outnumbered by Russian community, whereas the rest of Estonia sees them as Russianized (see

also Rabinowitz, 1997).

What does home mean?

All these competing images about Lasnamäe come together when youth try to make sense of their connection with home, which is clearly complicated.. The notion of home for them is connected with counter identity and dominant discourse at the same time, with positive feelings of childhood and negative experiences that connect Lasnamäe`s image with hegemonic paradigm. Identifying with home is difficult and not a straightforward feeling and although some generalizations can be made, it still remains to be very individual. Home and how it is perceived is connected with how dominant discourse interacts with personal experiences and understandings. What however seems to unite all the experiences is the fact that youth feel and are expected to justify their attachment to Lasnamäe. Lasnamäe as nonEstonian place is perceived as space that Estonians should not share connection with. This makes feelings of home highly connected with resistance identity, when youth challenge dominant ideas about Lasnamäe as nonhome:

“ I do not know a more beloved area and when there are stories of criminality, I even do not believe those.”

Often showing signs of resistance identity and contesting the image of Lasnamäe as not home, does not however mean that the respondent himself is attached to the place. The need to contest its dominant image again reflects the conflicts over who should be able to speak about Lasnamäe. So referring to the possibility that Lasnamäe can be home, room is made for such understanding, for a

belief that there is someone who feels oneself at home.

Yet if youth feel Lasnamae is home, they usually reflect it in a manner “regardless of everything”. Thus they feel strong pressure to justify, dominant understandings are not entirely ignored, but they are present in this feeling. For example:

“I fought all the time with Russian guys, who came to our courtyard asking for trouble. I have also been robbed, my bicycle has been stolen, but still my home is dear and lovely to me.”

and one haiku:

“These giant houses hold in themselves people who have warm hearts.”

Feeling “at home” often meant mixed and confusing feelings. Although youth shared ideas about Lasnamae being violent, unEstonian etc, they still “could not help feeling at home”. It can even be said with exaggeration, that feeling at home caused guilt. We can see how like for diaspora communities also youth identities can be described through copresence of here and there. Although they clearly identified themselves through Estonianess, they also connected with Lasnamäe. This placed them inbetween, inbetween in accepting the dominant discourse and forming resistance movement. We can see how youth formed new kinds of identifications (Duarte, 2005) that existed outside the national time/space. These formations can be seen as a burden, when youth try to fit together their Estonianess and Lasnamäe`ness, thus having to deal with competing national, cultural, and ethnic discourses from both Estonian society (dominant discourse) and Lasnamäe. The notion of home for youth in Lasnamäe is strongly connected with national definition and Lasnamäe`s image. However these two images did not seem to contradict for

everyone. Some of the youth thus were able to both identify with Estonia and have strong warm feelings towards Lasnamäe.

“I moved away 4 years ago but it is still home and when I come here, I still have a longing for home. Now and then I wish to be back because all good childhood memories are here. Often I find myself in tune with other people from Lasnamae.”

What remains a question is: “Does Lasnamae'an identity emerge?” Through my analysis I have suggested that it is emerging. Its existence for outsiders can hardly be set to question, because Lasnamäe is openly declared as nonEstonian, criminal, sleeping district etc. However I also pose that it is present among Lasnamae'ans themselves, mainly as resistance movement, but also through many others feelings that are being shared by insiders. It can be suggested that Lasnamäe`ans form imagined community, where they are yet unaware of their bounding links with each other, but such links are being established and internet forum that I analyzed is only one of the means how youth form communities.

Conclusion and discussion

In the thesis I have discussed how borderland can exist outside of the institutional border and how the boundaries of the nation should be seen as spatial as well as symbolic. I have also showed how the production of borderland outside the administrative border becomes possible through discursive practices. My main attention however has been on how people identify themselves in

borderlands and how their self identification can be seen as a dialogue between the dominant and the resistance discourses. In borderlands othering is the main way of making sense of oneself, and there are many more others than only one. Borderland is not a borderless world, it is a world where borders are encountered in everyday practices in every step, where borders are important part of the daily life. Borderlands are spaces where feelings towards home cannot be defined in unidimensional way and also home becomes a point of confusion. It seems that some other term, like between home is needed. Borderlands are also spaces where people have multiple identities at the same time, these multiple identities may very well be opposing and still exist in different parts of people`s brain without any conflict, however they might be the source of anxiety as well when one cannot ever fit to the dominant categories, or define itself in unidimensional way. Borderlands are the places where old is reinforced at the same time as new is born. Borderlands are the spaces of contradiction and paradoxes. Lasnamae can be seen as a place where population acts as a border, as borderland that stands between Estonia and Russia, as a region of separation and dialogue between Estonians and Russians, also as a diaspora the space, where Estonians find themselves in space that is characterized as Russian.

Lasnamae is only one example that helps to contest the idea of nation and state being married together. Being situated in Estonia, it yet comes across as an unEstonian place, as a place that stands inbetween Estonia, Russia and Estonia's Soviet past. It's unEstonianess comes out in many ways, for instance being reflected in the media discourse, but also in dominant opinion. Its unEstonianess does not stand in its Russianess alone, but is pictured through Lasnamae's image as poor and sleeping district as well. All these images however seem to connect eventually to define Lasnamae as outside, as other. Picturing Lasnamae as a sleeping district constructs it as not home. Together with very strong private house ideal in Estonian society, Lasnamae's image as sleeping

district defines it as not an ideal or even good place for living for Estonians. Then again representing Lasnamae as poor and criminal helps to other it from the rest of the Tallinn, thus also class borders become important in defining what Lasnamae is and how it comes across in the dominant narratives. Therefore it can be claimed that all three images: poor, sleeping district and Russian work together to define Lasnamae as nonEstonian.

Lasnamae's image as nonEstonian however is also transmitted to its inhabitants. This is for instance reflected in the ways how Lasnamae'ans were described by outsiders: adapting Russian style, listening Russian like music and forming gangs. Whereas outsiders differentiate themselves from Lasnamae'an Estonians, Estonians in Lasnamae tend to see themselves as a contrary to Russians. Russians for example were seen as not taking care of the space outside their apartment, often as also criminal, having “different mentality” etc. So instead of dissolving boundaries between Russians and Estonians, living in Lasnamae often instead helped to recreate them. Estonians in Lasnamae adapt general stereotypes about Russians and contact between two nations is scarce. Therefore we can claim that parallel societies established during Soviet period are still maintained in Lasnamäe. It can be suggested that in some ways by bordering themselves against Russians, Lasnamae's Estonian population aims to recreate themselves as Estonians and claim their right to identify themselves with Estonia.

Connecting themselves with Estonia however proves to be more difficult than just othering from Russians in Lasnamae. In their everyday reality youth still have to face the “fact” that they are living in nonEstonian place. Thus by not finding their culture represented in the dominant discourse and by not fitting in to the typical idea of Estonianess makes youth try to find alternative ways of identifying. Like diaspora communities, they can be seen as displacing the binary logic of

difference, culture, and identity, as challenging the categories of ethnicity. They do not fit to any ready made category, inhabiting borderland and diaspora space at once, they are situated inbetween.

Youth identities and relationship with Lasnamae cannot be explained in one word, since there are so many different levels. As I already explained otherness is strongly embedded in youth self definition, otherness from Russians and othering by rest of Estonia. Bordering from outside has however lead to othering by youth as well. They challenge the negative exclusion by the dominant, whereas still maintaining the borders, try to identify themselves in positive means. This is reflected for instance in the ways how youth describe their childhood experiences as something different, as exotic and something that others had no chance in experiencing. youth in some ways find themselves excluded from both, Estonianess and Lasnamäe`ness.

However there also exists strong urge to erase the borders between them and the rest, since youth engage strongly in the public images of Estonianess. For instance youth have also adapted the private house ideal and see it as an ideal place, similarly as diaspora community holds myths about ancestral homeland as final place of return. Moreover youth also adapt dominant ideas of Lasnamae as poor, Russian and sleeping district. However as many of them also saw together with such images Lasnamae as home, it suggests that some pictures of Lasnamae exist in the separate levels. Thus there are identities that are maintained in separation and bordered from each other. Yet such bordering does not prove to be successful all the time and sometimes these images collide and conflict, causing feelings of confusion. For instance several youth although they identified Lasnamae as home, at the same time also saw it as violent, this however made them confused about the exact place of Lasnamae in their life as well as the meaning of home. Also the

relationship between Lasnamae and private house was often being negotiated to the extent, that youth could not decide, where they would like to live.

youth also tried to contest their inbetweenness by erasing borders between Lasnamae and the rest. They searched to change Lasnamae`s image, by stating that its public image is worse then the actual situation. However often such a contestation was also argument over who has the right to define Lasnamae, youth searched the ways to empower themselves and decide over the image of their home district.

youth in Lasnamae are inbetween and do not belong to any of the category that is readily usable. Instead they have to deal with their self identification and identity conflicts in themselves. Estonian youth in Lasnamae can be seen as trapped, as excluded twice over. They are excluded in some ways from the rest of Estonian population for becoming such a criticized, poor and Russian place and in Lasnamae they are seen as minority by themselves and self identifying Russians. However besides seeing them as victims of inbetween state, we can also see them as forming new and temporary formations of identities, that have the possibility to liberate them. Although their identities seem to in some ways contradict with the dominant discourse and already their being challenges Estonian-ness, they are at the same time engaged in reproducing the same dominant ideas. However not only, they are also bounding ideas of home, Eston-nianess, Russian-ness in new ways, they are in the crossroads of multiple nations. They offer ways for dialogue, for reevaluation of Estonian identity, they have a word to say about Estonian identity crisis. Their existence challenges the whole idea of Estonians as majority and Russians as minority. In some ways Estonian youth in Lasnamae can be seen as a minority, since they are outnumbered by Russians, yet Russians in Lasnamae are minority as well, since they are situated outside of the

place they identify with. Thus the borders between minority and majority are contested, the borders of nationalities are contested and Estonians in Lasnamae stand inbetween of all this. They have to figure out who they are, fight for the legitimization of their identity.

Implications

A lot has been discussed lately about the dissolution of national borders and diminishing of nationality. One argument used to justify such claims is the amount of diasporic communities we have these days. Rather than packing the claim of dissolving nationalities, I suggest current definition of diaspora nationality in very essentialist manner and thus helps to reinforce the idea of nationalism. National identity and territory in the definition of diaspora are being linked interchangeably. Thus one is national if living inside the borders and opposite, if moving out, then one contests the idea of nationality. I suggest that the way diaspora and diasporic identities are understood currently is helping to essentialize nationality. One precriteria for becoming part of the diasporic community is crossing national border. This however makes a link between nation and state: one is national when being located inside the state territorial borders and when leaving, one's becomes diasporan with problematic identity, since he/she is inhabiting a new legal territory. I suggest that there are non national spaces also inside the legal borders of state and that not all people living in the country are considered nationals. If so, then how do I define national space? I claim that national space is defined through two characters: first, how dominant national discourse determines the space and second, how inhabitants living in this area define themselves. Dominant national discourse works through different mechanisms such as educational system, media, national literature, cultural events etc. These mediums help to determine what is national and what is not, the latter as a matter of fact is often more important since nationality is created through

othering practices and in comparison with its opposites. In my thesis I have concentrated on how media creates national narratives. Estonian-ness was defined for example through history, architecture and othering from Russians. As it happens Lasnamäe proved to be a good example of what was non Estonian and was used as an other inside the legal borders. Borders were created between Estonians and Lasnamäe`ans, who were less so since they lived in Lasnamäe.

I suggest that Estonians living in Lasnamäe can be seen as a diasporic community. As I have already suggested, crossing national borders should not be as the determinant of whether one is living through diaspora or not. So, what defines diaspora then? I suggest that diasporic identities should be seen as inbetween national identities. As several authors have suggested they should be perceived as alternatives to the essentialization of belonging. The only way they can be seen as such however, is when reframing the concept of diaspora. I thus suggest that we should understand diaspora as a situation when the way individuals are defined by the dominant national discourse and the way they identify themselves do not fit. Thus diasporic identities contain in themselves constant struggle and negotiation, they are identities that articulate the elements of existing discourses together in the new and temporary formations. Such understanding of diaspora does not assume the marriage between state and nation and leaves room for nonnational spaces inside the legal borders of the country.

I claim that people in Lasnamäe can be compared with return immigrants. Tsuda (2001) has given an example of how Japanese Brazilians who are returning to Japan, that they perceive as their ancestral homeland, are seen as Brazilians by the Japanese society. Similarly as well Estonians from Lasnamäe are seen as Russianized and nonEstonian. Thus both groups are not recognized by the dominant national paradigm as belonging to the nationality through which they identify themselves. Also Japanese Brazilians in Japan felt themselves alienated and started to develop

stronger ties with Brazilia, as youth from Lasnamäe are starting to evolve Lasnamae' an identity for instance through youth forum. The reason why I would like to compare my case with return immigration is the fact that also in Lasnamäe the dominant national discourse belongs to the country that individuals should be connected with, the mythic place of return, however when having direct contact with the mythic place, estrangement can take place. The feelings that youth showed towards Estonia were strikingly similar with the feelings diasporic communities show to their ancestral homeland.

When analyzing diasporic identities, the main question becomes, how people negotiate between the dominant national discourse and their own self identification? In my case study I found out that we cannot easily understand diasporic identities as resistance movements to dominant discourses as they are often perceived. Instead my interviewees in many ways celebrated the dominant discourse, either by accepting widespread ideas of Estonian-ness and feeling out of place in Lasnamäe because it was not Estonian or creating stories of unsuccessful others in Lasnamäe, who were to be seen as nonEstonian, whereas they through othering became more Estonian. Of course also resistance was enacted, but it was not so simple in its form as often referred by the literature. People were resisting the dominant discourse in many ways, for example often people stressed that Lasnamae is not so bad.

Through such statement youth tried to win the right to speak about Lasnamäe and tried to present their visions as more authentic. youth also practiced alternative cool identity, through which borders between Lasnamäe and Estonia were redrawn and Lasnamäe was pictured as exotic and wishful other. The ways youth negotiated between these identities differed as well. Some for instance had separated Estonian-ness and Lasnamäe-ness in their minds, they could at the same

time identify with the dominant Estonian narrative of private house as an ideal place for living, but still consider their block house in Lasnamäe homey as well. Dominant ideas and resistance identities also contradicted and caused confusion, which was especially notable when youth tried to identify Lasnamäe as a home and at the same time partly accept dominant narratives of Lasnamäe as criminal. Finally there was also open negotiation between being Estonian and Lasnamäe`an at the same time.

There are some arguments whether diaspora space should be seen as a hybrid space or as bordered. I suggest that along with this we should identify for whom it is hybrid and for whom it is bordered. I claim that for Lasnamäe`ans Lasnamäe is clearly placed somewhere inbetween, whereas for the rest of Estonians it is clearly an other, it is strongly bordered. I also propose that the extent to which we can consider being in diaspora deliberating or enstraining depends on the attitude taken by the dominant discourse but also on the ways diasporic communities use their position. As Estonian national discourse is very unidimensional and strongly bordered, not leaving any room for inbetweenness, it makes it very hard for Lasnamäe`ans to see their identity as liberating and inbetweenness as a possibility. Such cases as Lasnamäe strongly refer to the need to reconfigure Estonian-ness and current very narrow national identity discourse. I suggest that Estonian national identity needs to be more inclusive and more considerate of differences. I also think that my case study helps to bring research closer to common sense as researchers have already for decades suggested that nationality is produced: however, such knowledge has not yet spread outside of academic circles. When however demonstrating nationalists that also self-identifying Estonians can feel othered inside Estonia, it can cause them to question current national narratives.

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