

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

Faculty of Social Sciences

Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies

European Studies

Karin Kivipõld

**CONSTRUCTING EUROPEAN UNION IN THE ALTERNATIVE MEDIA
CHANNEL OF THE EESTI KONSERVATIIVNE RAHVAERAKOND UUED
UUDISED**

MA thesis

Supervisor: Louis Wierenga (MA)

Tartu 2020

The author's declaration

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

Karin Kivipõld

/ signature of author /

The defence will take place on / date / at /
time /

..... / address / in auditorium number /
number /

Opponent Mari-Liis Madisson PhD, University of Tartu, Department of Humanities and Arts, Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics, Researcher in Semiotics

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public

I, Karin Kivipõld

(author's name)

(personal identification code: 49310300249)

1. herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to

reproduce, for the purpose of preservation and making thesis public, including for adding to the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright, my thesis entitled

Constructing European Union in the Alternative Media Channel of the Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond Uued Uudised,

(title of thesis)

supervised by Louis Wierenga.

(supervisor's name)

2. I grant the University of Tartu a permit to make the work specified in p. 1 available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives, until the expiry of the term of copyright.

3. I am aware of the fact that the author retains the rights specified in pp. 1 and 2.

4. I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe other persons' intellectual property rights or rights arising from the personal data protection legislation.

Done at Tartu on 18.05.2020 (date)

Karin Kivipõld

(signature)

Abstract

This Master's thesis studies the EU narratives in Estonian populist radical right (PRR) party's alternative media channel Uued Uudised, which serves as an ideological platform where Estonian Conservative People's party (*Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond*, EKRE) distributes news from their perspective. PRR movement is on the rise all over EU, but also in Western World in general. Their core ideology is combined with xenophobic nationalism – opposition to immigration, multiculturalism, political elite, while supporting authoritarianism claiming to represent the 'pure' ordinary citizens. Euroscepticism entered the agenda of Estonian discourse with the accession of EU in early 2000's, however, became a prominent actor during the refugee crisis, that occurred shortly after EKRE's electoral breakthrough in 2015 and has allowed EKRE to expand its discursive opportunities. However, Estonia was not hit by a wave of asylum seekers. EKRE's successfully mobilized their electorate through socio-psychological strategies and playing on people's feeling of security, comparing EU as the new oppressor after the collapse of Soviet Union. Strategical approaches, as relying on conspiracy theories, victim-attacker roles, attribution of blame and ability the push their favorable agenda to political discourse or public, highlight the PRR rhetoric as important tool implementing their nationalist imaginaries of less integrated EU and more sovereign Estonia. Based on this research is proposed a theory, that EKRE extensively uses specific EU narratives for scapegoating the EU through real and imagined fears and deepening the polarization of society in order to maintain their electorate. PRR rhetoric serves as a useful 'toolbox' of strategies for embedding these narratives.

Table of Contents

Introduction	7
1. The Growing Importance of PRR Parties In EU.....	15
1.1 The Rise of Populist Radical Right	16
1.2. PRR in Post-Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe.....	22
1.3. Xenophobic Nationalism with Euroscepticism as the Host Ideology	24
1.4. Rhetorical ‘Toolbox’ of PRR	29
1.5. Discursive Opportunities of the PRR	33
1.6. Uued Uudised and EKRE.....	37
2. Methodology: Grounded Theory and Qualitative Analysis	44
2.1. Grounded Theory as Methodology.....	44
2.2. Content Analysis: Sample and Coding.....	45
3. Empirical Findings from Coding	55
3.1. Opposing EU Will Save Nation States	56
3.2. EU Wants Ultimate Power	60
3.3. EU-mindedness Is Dangerous	63
3.4. The EU as an Organisation Does Not Work	66
3.5. Immigration Policy Breaks Up the EU.....	68
4. Analysis of the Findings	70
4.1. Contradictions in EU Narratives	77
5. Discussion and Conclusions.....	80
References to Sample	85
Bibliography.....	90
Appendix 1	97

Introduction

The liberal world order that has dominated in Western World over 20 years, is now more than ever being challenged by Eurosceptic political forces that the migration crisis of 2015 set in motion. The movement of populist nationalism in the Western World and the European Union need to be seen and studied as pathological normalcy (Mudde, 2016a: 3). Guiso et al., (2018) state that protectionism against immigrants, globalization and free trade is featured in the policy positions of the Trump administration in US, post-Brexit UK, in Southern Europe, the Italian Five Stars movement and the Greek and Spanish populist movements call for a guaranteed minimum income and other forms of short-term economic protection, while in continental Europe, populist radical right (henceforth PRR) movements stress protection from immigrants, often linking them with Islamic terrorism. In 19 EU member states out of the 27 PRR parties have gained a share of votes in last legislative election and in 8 countries PRR grabbed over 15 per cent of votes.

There are many arguments as to why PRR parties come to power, however a larger consensus exists that one of the most relevant facilitating factors for the emergence of the radical right is the political space made available by mainstream parties (Koopmans and Muis, 2009; Mudde, 2016a; Mudde, 2016b; Betz, 2018; Minkeberg, 2017; Bornschieer, 2016; Kriesi et al., 2006), since mainstream EU parties have withhold politicization of EU in the fear of causing irreversible reputational damage (Vasilopoulou, 2018: 1-2). Moving from the European Economic Community of the 1980s to signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, turned EU's course into more integrated union, which is when Euroscepticism started to rise (Mudde, 2016b), since with the social European Union, the 'permissive consensus' was no longer a given (Mudde, 2016b: 77) and the people unable to go along with the globalization were left behind (Bornschieer, 2018). Mudde (2016b: 78) claims that more than ever before there is a need for an open debate on European integration, but this time a debate that explores all options, including the return to a less integrated EU. The complexity of this lies in the specific rhetorical approach of PRR, since consensus nor compromise are usually acceptable outcomes for PRR (Greven, 2016).

Populist radical right parties are characterized by three main features: nativism, authoritarianism and populism, the key feature being nativism – an ideology which holds

that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the nation and that non-native element, such as persons and ideas, are fundamentally threatening to the nation-state's homogeneity (Mudde, 2016a; Mudde, 2016b; Rydgren, 2017). Populist claim that the society consists of two homogeneous groups, the common folk and the elite, they claim to represent the ordinary citizens (Mudde, 2007; Mudde, 2016a; Betz, 2018; Minkenberg, 2017).

Estonian Conservative People's Party (*Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond*, henceforth EKRE) qualifies as PRR party (Braghiroli and Petsinis, 2019; Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018; Petsinis, 2019; Wierenga, 2017; Wierenga, 2019), since PRR party's core ideology is combined with xenophobic nationalism – opposition to immigration, multiculturalism, political elite, while supporting authoritarianism claiming to represent the 'pure' ordinary citizens (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018; Wierenga, 2017). It emerged in 2013 and is led by a father and son duo – Mart and Martin Helme.

Eastern Europe countries carry with them a legacy of communism, which challenges the new liberal-democratic order, including the EU, and has in different ways effected the political culture, party competition and a general idea of politics and nation-building, where the legacy of former authoritarian regimes is often exploited by PRR parties (Minkenberg, 2017; Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018; Norocel and Szabo, 2019).

EKRE gained popularity by opposing the EU's immigration policy, Euroscepticism, driven by xenophobic nationalism ensured EKRE's popularity during and after the immigration crisis (Petsinis, 2019: 225; Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018; Braghiroli and Petsinis: 2019; Makarychev and Sazono, 2019; Wierenga, 2017; Wierenga, 2019). 'Euroscepticism' entered the agenda of Estonian discourse with the accession of EU in early 2000's, however, became a prominent actor during the refugee crisis, that occurred shortly after EKRE's electoral breakthrough in 2015 and has allowed EKRE to expand its discursive opportunities ever sense (Kasekamp, Madisson, Wierenga, 2018). Estonia's case, as well as Latvia's or Poland's, is characterized by successful mobilization of PRR electorate based solely on the threat of immigrants, since asylum seekers arrived in marginal numbers compared to other Southern states. Braghiroli and Petsinis (2019) call this a socio-psychological strategy interlinking

immigration to the collective memories of ‘colonization’ under the Soviet Union and the collective anxieties of becoming oppressed again.

Visibility in the public discourse, including both positive and negative media reporting, is crucial for PRR parties in order to gain popularity and increase support among voters (Norocel and Szabo, 2019; Norocel, Szabo and Bene, 2017; Koopmans and Muis, 2009; Koopmans and Olzak, 2013; Ellinas, 2009; Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018). By bringing in new topics and making it the key agenda in public discourse, PRR have been able to ‘light the fuse’ (Pytlas and Kossack, 2015) steering the discourse in a direction that is favourable to them. Journalists Afanasyev and Salumaa (2019) write: ‘The outcry is in style and the ears are locked. The war-cry of national debate, the pig-cry of liberal debate and children’s-cry on climate debate. /.../ Is pep-talk in a form of a meeting a demonstration or a debate? We think it is not. We think that things can be discussed emotionally, while maintaining rationality and listening to each other. Perhaps the debate is possible without excessive attacking, humiliation and gloating?’. In an increasingly polarizing world, keeping in mind the Brexit in the UK and Trump's rule in the United States, the opposition between left and right has reached Estonian mainstream (Gershkovich, 2019), further distancing the two major groups.

Uued Uudised is one of the most important centers of Estonian PRRs, as articles there are distributed and posted in large volumes on Facebook and blogs (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018). It is also one of the purest sources for understanding EKRE’s Eurosceptic discourse since the information there is provided from EKRE for EKRE’s supporters. It was created in 2015 – at a time when the immigration crisis was at its peak and EKRE support in Estonia started to increase very rapidly. On average, the portal is visited about 40,000 times a month in 2019.

It qualifies as an alternative media channel since it claims to promote freedom of speech, however, serves an ideological purpose of distributing EKRE’s political agenda and does not follow the three core principles that makes the news credible, that are: the author has to be objective and not include his or her own opinions, but rely on facts and statements of the interviewees, assessments are given by the interviewees; the news has to be balanced, which means interviewing both or more people to include different sides of the story and wording their statements as closely as possible in the article; the news has to be

punctual – facts need to be checked (Hennoste, 2008). Moreover, PRR ‘toolbox’ of rhetoric is widely used in Uued Uudised. The rhetorical tools in PRR discourse that help them achieve their goals, that consists of discursive strategies for implementing victim-attacker roles, stigmatization, confrontation, and construction of conspiracy theories (Wodak, 2015). Common is attribution of blame, verbal attacking, sexist, racist discourse, that is justified by ‘standing for identity’.

According to Madisson and Ventsel (2017) we live in an era where collaborative media can be regarded as the era of post-truth, where vernacular authority prevails, or truth is no longer a clear fact, but rather the truthfulness lies behind who makes the claim. Credible is the mouth of the people, not institutional authority such as the press, church or corporation – mainstream and elite are considered fundamentally wrong. However, this also leads to spreading of factually incorrect information. For example, Minister of Rural Affairs Mart Järvik (2019) said that Estonia has not benefited from EU funding, although in 2017 the EU contributed about 648 million euros to Estonia and Estonia only 154 million euros to the EU (European Union website, 2019). In 2018 Estonia paid 210.2 million euros to the European Union budget and received 759.4 million euros (Leas, 2019). Estonia receives 3-4 times more money from the European Union than it contributes. Euroscepticism is therefore in the so-called toolbox of the Estonian PRRs as a double-edged sword, that they try to present as one-edged.

The importance of EKRE’s Eurosceptic narratives lie in the importance of EU’s support, unlike other countries where the PRRs have come to power, such as the United States¹, Estonia is largely dependent on the support of the European Union and NATO. Narrative in political discourse means ‘construction of disparate facts in our own worlds that are weaved together cognitively in order to make sense of reality’ with its gravity lying in the effect they have in the construction of political behaviour, since people create and use narratives to interpret and understand the political realities around them as individuals but also in collective units, as nations or groups (Patterson and Monroe, 1998: 315-316).

¹ The ‘us versus them’ approach has been used by the Republican Party politicians for decades. Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. all played on racist sentiments of white voters and George W. Bush won 2004 election playing on heterophobia. However, this political opportunism did not turn the party into a populist one, the nomination of Donald Trump did (Greven, 2016).

European issues are raised by the PRRs in a sense that is useful to them at a particular moment, using a variety of rhetorical techniques. Political rhetoric can be seen as a mix of political argument, debate, communication or discourse and rhetorical strategies as serving a number of communicative functions simultaneously (Billig, Condor and Tieleaga, 2013).

In Hungary, liberal democracy has been replaced with radical right by the Fidesz government since 2010, so Viktor Orbán has even declared the country to be an illiberal democracy (Kondor, 2018). Also, Poland's national-conservative governmental party Law and Justice (PiS) inherited the radical right approach and the electorate from League of Polish Families (LPR) and is restricting the independence of the judiciary and public broadcasting in order to prepare further far-reaching reforms. (Minkenberg, 2017). Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán initiated and led a coalition of governments in the region in early 2016 which tried to establish a countermovement within the EU. In France, Marine Le Pen leads the National Rally party which for decades has had a right-wing extremist course, although Le Pen has worked towards a 'de-demonization' of the party in order to broaden its base by shifting from antisemitism to an anti-immigrant, Islamophobic position and a shift from economic liberalism to a policy of protection of the French people against globalization. Anti-EU nationalism and anti-elitism are mainstays of the National Rally program. (Minkenberg, 2017; Greven, 2016).

According to Vasilopoulou (2011), the European Union's opposition in the PRR narratives can be divided into three: complete adversary, conditional and willing to compromise. Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018) place EKRE in a conditional category because, while being Eurosceptic, the European Union is not as big an enemy as is Russia.

Being the third most popular party in Estonia, with 18% support (Erakondade Reitingud Webpage, 2020) and member of the government, EKRE has a clear influence on the thinking and behaviour of members of society, which should not be underestimated. According to a study by Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018) EKRE gained popularity in Estonia through four main subjects – anti-Russian attitudes, family values, refugees and Euroscepticism, that according to the authors, each subject still requires in-depth research. The goal of my research is to add a small amount of knowledge into

studying the PRR and more specifically into studying Estonian PRR EKRE, who because of being a relatively new party, has not been thoroughly studied (Kasekamp, Madisson, Wierenga, 2018; Wierenga, 2017). The aim of my thesis is to add some insight by exploring one of the main themes that ensured their popularity – Euroscepticism, driven by xenophobic nationalism.

The results of my research could be useful for the further academic research of PRR in Post-Communist countries, especially how they construct the European Union (EU). EKRE portrays clearly that there are two kinds of people – conservatives and EU-minded people. It is not possible to know, if EKRE leaders themselves believe in what they say, but more important is, what effect they have on their supporters and what effect EU narratives might have to their supporters understanding of EU and EU related topics, which means also on Western society. I argue that that emotions, like, fear, resentfulness and anger, play a significant role in the discourse of EKRE which is why EKRE uses a number of tools within the PRR's 'toolbox,' (Wodak, 2015) such as discursive strategies for implementing victim-attacker roles, stigmatization, confrontation, and construction of conspiracy theories.

According to Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018) mass media and social media both have served as convenient tools for PRR parties to showcase their agendas and engage the public. Moreover, they name the role played by media and public discourse as key aspect of the mainstreaming of the PRR. Wierenga (2019) says that the communication and rhetoric of PRR party family has changed due to the possibility of social media. Nowadays the social media plays a crucial role as medium for spreading political opinions and information directly to people without the intermediation of broadcast media.

Many articles have been written about 'politics of fear' towards 'the others' in recent decades in the European context creating stereotypical images of mostly Muslim immigrants – as homogeneous, fundamentalist, Anti-Western or pre-modern, authoritarian, violent – and exaggerated claims of an apocalyptic future, in which minarets have replaced church towers and Islamic majorities oppress 'native' minorities (Mudde, 2016b). I argue that PRR manipulative rhetoric – blaming, fear attribution and pressing on feeling of security – play a key role in EKRE's EU narratives. Prins and

Saharo (2010) claim that in Western Europe is gaining popularity a genre ‘new realism’ which is based on addressing and talking about thing as they really are, not as being constructed by the elite, this includes breaking taboos, speaking out frankly about societal ills, standing up for ordinary people and affirming the positive sides of the Western value system and of national identity. However, this should not be mistaken for EKRE’s style and rhetoric that seems straightforward and harsh. EKRE uses information in a way that is most useful or best for them while using PRR rhetoric, so it is not objective observation as described by new realism. Rather, it might seem like it due to the way the information is presented – clear cut statements attributed to authoritarian figures, for example Mart Helme.

To understand the role of Euroscepticism, driven by xenophobic nationalism, that ensured EKRE’s popularity, two research questions were developed:

Research question 1: **How the European Union is constructed in the alternative media channel of Estonian PRR Uued Uudised?**

Research question 2: **How xenophobic nationalism is used in EU narratives in the alternative media channel of Estonian PRR Uued Uudised?**

In my research I take a constructivist (interpretivist) approach. When positivist theory seeks causes, favors deterministic explanations and emphasizes generality and universality, then constructivist theory emphasizes understanding rather than explanation (Charmaz, 20016). My work focuses on interpreting Eurosceptic narratives in EKRE alternative media channel Uued Uudised, from where my sample consisted of 209 news posts. Coding means identifying and collecting claims, statements and assumptions made about EU and EU related topics and analysing them in depth with the coding scheme that was developed and named ‘Narrative tree’ (Appendix 1; Figure 3.2.), which gathers three levels of narratives – root, branch and leaf – that all emerge from each other. The coded posts date from April of 2015 to August 2019. Grounded theory was used as a qualitative research method that aims to generate well-grounded theory or hypotheses based on empirical data, this way scientific research is treated as a process of getting to know, in which knowledge evolves and expands with each new step. The results of my analysis show that EU is constructed in Uued Uudised through five main narratives: Being against

EU and EU-minded will save EU and nation states; EU wants to have (ultimate) power over its member (nation) states; Being and supporting EU-minded is dangerous; EU as an organization doesn't work; Immigration policy consequences break up EU.

1. The Growing Importance of PRR Parties In EU

We live on a time of fourth wave of PRR², where populism has reached the mainstream and is studied in addition to supply side (Mudde, 2016a; Mudde, 2016b; Minkenberg, 2017). Guiso et al (2018) and Minkenberg (2017) argue, that populist parties are more likely to emerge when countries are faced with a systemic crisis of economic security and the orientation choice of populist parties, i.e., whether they arise on left or right of the political spectrum, is determined by the availability of political space. Minkenberg (2017: 18) describes the collapse of the old long-lasting political and ideological regimes with a threefold outcome favoring the right-wing: a simple return to old and familiar socialist nationalist ideas that the ‘losers’ of modernization as right-wing groups (also Bronchier, 2018 and Kriesi et al., 2006) prefer; the complexity of the transformation process produces large ‘transformation costs’, which can benefit the radical right, since the democratization has impacted economic and social aspects of life a lot more than after the II World War in Italy and Germany; the change of the social system has been accompanied with social disorientation and the socio-cultural conflict resulted in a divide or cleavage that issued political competition (also Koopmans and Muis, 2009).

While populist ideology has much deeper roots in the US than in (Western) Europe, key elements are clearly linked to fundamental values of Western societies in general – populists argue that the common sense of the people should always take precedence and cannot be curtailed by ‘undemocratic’ institutional constraints such as constitutional protection of minorities, claiming elitism and pluralism as enemies (Mudde, 2016b). Minkenberg (2017: 18) states that simple solutions offering political entrepreneurs appeal to ‘the people’ or the nation rather than a universal vision of progress.

There has been much research on many of the populist radical right (PRR) parties throughout Europe, yet this party family is vastly understudied in the Baltic region,

² The first wave lasted roughly from 1945 till 1980, was mostly historical and descriptive, and focused on the historical continuity between the pre-war and post-war periods, the second wave of studies (roughly 1980-2000) saw an infusion of social science literature, in particular various forms of modernization theories, where scholars studied almost exclusively the demand, not the supply side and the third wave took off at the turn of the century, as scholars started to focus increasingly on the supply-side of populist radical right politics (Mudde, 2016a; Mudde, 2016b).

especially Estonia's case³, even more so when it comes to scholarship on political leadership (Wierenga, 2019). Betz (2018: 139-140) states that despite growing academic attention to populism in recent years, there is little agreement as to its nature and in media, populism has increasingly been conflated with demagoguery, political manipulation, the provision of simple solutions to complex problems and the promotion of a black-and-white view of politics and the world in general and populism's association with the radical right has further muddied the waters. In this research populism is approached as an understanding or belief that society consists of two opposing homogeneous groups the pure common people and the corrupt elites. To embed this PRR parties use different rhetorical tools, which will be introduced in the subchapter 1.4 Discursive Rhetorical 'Toolbox' of PRR.

In this chapter and subchapters The rise of populist radical right as a movement is described in the Western world, but even more detailed description is given about Central and Eastern Europe, including Estonia's case, taking account the specialities of post-communist countries need for sovereignty due to unfinished nation-building and long history of oppressors. Introduced are the PRR rhetorical tools common in their discursive strategies and the discursive opportunities that they have due to their unprecedented rhetorical style in public sphere. At the end of the chapter an overview of Estonian Conservative Party's reaching to power and their alternative media channel Uued Uudised is given an overview.

1.1 The Rise of Populist Radical Right

On both sides of the Atlantic, the Western world is facing an unprecedented wave of populist politics and populist rhetoric – protests towards inequality and capitalist institutions, leading to left-leaning policy demands matched by similarly oriented populist supply (Guiso et al., 2018). According to Betz (2018: 150-152) initially, the focus of

³ Daniel Robert Jarosak's (2019) MA Thesis 'Euroscepticism and EKRE: How Nativism Influences the Euroscepticism of Estonia's Largest Populist Radical Right Party' concluded that while Eurosceptic party EKRE consistently opposes the construction of the EU and believes that the organization is fundamentally flawed, it does not have to advocate for Estonia's exit. This was read as an input for this thesis.

radical right-wing populist mobilization was mainly economic, however after the migrant flow into the job market was clamped down, the left concentrated on defending the rights of and integrating the immigrants and in response to that, the PRR focus shifted away from migration toward the question of integration of those migrant populations already in the country, which in turn resulted in huge and complicated and emotionally charged issue, opening a great possibility for populist mobilization. Guiso et al., (2018) state that protectionism against immigrants, globalization and free trade is featured in the policy positions of the Trump administration in US, post-Brexit UK, in Southern Europe, the Italian Five Stars movement and the Greek and Spanish populist movements call for a guaranteed minimum income and other forms of short-term economic protection, while in continental Europe, PRR movements stress protection from immigrants, often linking them with Islamic terrorism.

Populist radical right parties are characterized by three main features: nativism, authoritarianism and populism, the key feature being nativism – an ideology which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the nation and that non-native element, such as persons and ideas, are fundamentally threatening to the nation-state’s homogeneity (Mudde, 2016a; Mudde, 2016b; Rydgren, 2017). (Mudde, 2004: 165-166) states that populism is a thin-centred ideology that unlike other ‘full’ ideologies, such as liberalism, socialism or conservatism, focuses on the polarization between the people and the elite. PRR claim society is divided into two antagonistic sides – the vast majority being ordinary, honest, good people and a relatively small group of people who control much of society’s economic, political, social and cultural resources (Betz, 2018: 144). The ideas under its command are of limited scope and complexity, but applicable to both the left and the right, the main difference between them is whom they exclude, which is largely determined by their accompanying ideology – nationalism or socialism (Mudde, 2016b: 59). The radical right distinguishes from extremist right due to the latter being opposed to democracy whereas the former opposes only liberal democracy (Mudde, 2018). Authoritarianism, a core staple of conservatism, is the love towards a strictly ordered society in which infringements of authority are to be punished (Mudde, 2016b: 7).

Common for PRR parties is the gradual role of the charismatic, father-figure like, authoritarian leader, with the exception of France's right-wing French political party National Rally lead by Marine Le Pen, the daughter of the former male leader Jean-Marie Le Pen. Viktor Orban secured his third term being the Prime Minister and is also the leader of the Alliance Fidesz–KDNP, which received 49 per cent of votes in 2018. Matteo Salvini the leader of Italian PRR party, the League is often seen as one of the main nationalist actors in European PRR politics. According to McDonnell (2015: 719-720) the charismatic role of populist leaders lies in how the leader is seen as they present themselves as saviours and are able to rouse the crowds in public, the key aspect being 'making the politics personal and immediate instead of being remote and bureaucratic', without the one specific charismatic leader, the party can be seen as 'faceless'. Communication skills, media savviness and appealing as ordinary and down to earth as the common people in the streets but at the same time having unique charismatic force in them that can be perceived as a political intelligent by the supporters, making relationship between the populist leaders and their follower asymmetric (McDonnell, 2015). The 'firm hand of the father figure' is demonstrated in leadership. The members and supporters of Forza Italia, the party of Silvio Berlusconi, said that anyone who did not agree with or like Berlusconi's leadership was immediately out – if you like, you stay (McDonnell, 2015: 726). EKRE is also lead by father and son duo – Mart and Martin Helme. Similarly to Berlusconi, EKRE dismissed Kaimar Karu, Minister of Foreign Trade and Information Technology, that had just few months back replaced the the former minister Kert Kingo, saying⁴ 'We expect all our party ministers to act in accordance with the values and views of party supporters, including on issues such as immigration, migrant labor, e-elections and the provision of postal services in rural areas.' Overall, populist nationalism and opposition to immigration are on the rise (Table 1.1.) (Guiso et al., 2018, Greven, 2016; Mudde 2016a; Mudde, 2016b; Norocel and Szabo, 2019) and needs to be seen and studied as a normalcy (Mudde, 2016a: 3).

⁴ Uued Uudised webpage. (2020). *EKRE kutsub minister Kaimar Karu ametist tagasi*. Visited 10.05.2020, <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/ekre-kutsub-minister-kaimar-karu-ametist-tagasi/>

Table 1.1. In 19 EU member states PRR parties have gain a share of votes on last legislative election and in 8 countries PRR grabbed over 15 per cent of votes⁵:

EU Member State	PRR party	Share of votes	Year of election
Hungary	Fidesz–KDNP	49 %	2018
	Jobbik	19 %	
Austria	Freedom Party	26 %	2017
Switzerland	Swiss People’s Party	25,6 %	2019
Estonia	Conservative People’s party	17,8 %	2019
Finland	The Finns	17,7 %	2019
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	17,6 %	2018
Italy	The League	17,4 %	2018
Belgium	New Flemish Alliance	16,3 %	2019

There are many arguments as to why the PRR comes to power, however a larger consensus exists that one of the most relevant facilitating factors for the emergence of the radical right is the political space made available by mainstream parties (Koopmans and Muis, 2009; Mudde, 2016a; Mudde, 2016b; Betz, 2018; Minkeberg, 2017; Bornschieer (2016); Kriesi et al. (2006); and others). Radical right-wing parties in Europe and elsewhere owe their electoral success to a significant extent to strategic and programmatic decisions that constitute a decisive break with the past (Betz, 2018: 139), which runs aside of the shift in voter behaviour – the political significance of social class has been declining and the relevance of issue voting increasing (Vasilopoulou, 2018: 1-2). Koopmans and Muis (2009: 646) claim that immigration and cultural diversity resulted in a new cleavage on the demand side of political arena. For example, the unexpected and rapid popularity of Pim Fortuyn⁶. According to Betz (2018) and Mudde (2016b) the side of politics must also be considered, they argue that the lower classes abandoned the traditional left, due to ignoring their concerns and worries, populism being the illiberal democratic response

⁵Europe and right-wing nationalism: A country-by-country guide. (2019). *BBC News*, 13. November. Visited 5.05.2020 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006>

⁶ Koopmans and Muis (2009) discovered that before PRR leader Pim Fortuyn rose to power in 2002 in Netherlands, there was already for a long time an electoral potential for an anti-immigration party.

to undemocratic liberalism. Although the populist radical right trinity of issues – corruption-immigration-security – are shared to a great extent, these primarily on socio-economic issues have not dominated the political debate in western democracies (Mudde, 2016b: 10).

Bornschieer (2016: 326) and Kriesi et al. (2006: 926) claim that both the rise of the New Left and the New Right are the result of globalization, former shaped by education, latter by inability to manage new issues that globalization brought along, naming them ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of modernization. The New Left cultural and political agenda centres safeguarding and equality, advancing women’s, gay, minorities rights which also correlate strongly with educational achievement, whereas The New Right being those who disapprove of universalistic principles, defend authoritarian and traditional values and monocultural conceptions of community (Bornschieer 2018: 318). Kriesi et al. (2006: 921) researched the supply side of electoral politics Western European countries – Austria, Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland – and concluded that the former dimensions had been transformed into two dimensional national political spaces, different from the traditional class and religious cleavages. Kriesi et al. (2006: 926) claimed that two intimately related dynamics will rise from this structural opposition: the basic structure of the national political space will transform and the political parties will strategically reposition.

According to Greven (2016: 1) many parties sometimes use appeals to the people or claim to represent general interests versus the interests of a specific group, the occasional use of these strategies does not make a party populist, but rather the consistency of these tactics. Rydgren (2017) argues that calling right-wing parties in Europe populist, is misleading, since populism is not the most pertinent feature of this party family and that their discourse they are primarily preoccupied with questions pertaining to national identity and national security, where elites are seen responsible for a cultural and political threat against their idealized image of their nation state. Labelling the radical right as populist, focusing on their black and white world view of simple solutions can take away attention from what is said to how it is said. However, populist elements accompanied with PRR rhetorical tools must also not be ignored, since they serve an important role in political mobilization, political culture and discourse and overall course of polity,

dragging it against and challenging core values that, for now, still dominate the western world that are best described in The Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (2012) paragraph two: ‘The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.’. The root of the problem with the News Right as opposed to the New Left lies in the ability to be considerate towards each other’s differences – while left-wing recognizes everybody’s equal right for freedom and individuality to choose who they are, where is their home, who they want to follow and what to believe, than right-wing acknowledges the rights of certain nationalist groups over others, denying the liberties for some people that left sees as fundamental for everybody, therefore excluding a large part of the society. The PRR in-group out-group criteria (Table 1.2.) demonstrates the certain ‘right’ group of people’s right to superiority that comes at the expense of the other group(s) through justification.

Table 1.2. According to Minkenber (2017) and Heitmeyer (2005, through Minkenber, 2017: 15) there are in-group/out-group criteria in right-wing radical discourse, that results in the presented assessments.

Criteria	Definition	How it expresses in PRR discourse
Racism	Inferiority of the ‘other’ on the grounds of biological difference	‘natural’ hierarchy
Anti-Semitism	Special case of racism	here understood as modern as opposed to traditional anti-Semitism
Ethnocentrism	Superiority of own collectivity on the grounds of cultural and economic achievements	developmental differentiation
Xenophobia	Defensive reaction against ethnic and cultural ‘others’	fight for resources, fear of ‘cultural mixing’

Nativism	Special case of xenophobia	in immigration countries the rejection of foreign influences regardless of ethnicity
Religiocentrism (Fundamentalism)	Superiority of own collectivity on the grounds of a particular faith and exclusionary access to ‘truth’	
Heterophobia	Intolerance to deviation from mainstream norms	unacceptability of moral ‘others,’ also within own ethnicity

Müller (2018: 39) argues that the idea of PRR is a disastrous political idea since democracy cannot be improved with anti-pluralism. The claim that the society is pluralistic is a fact, not an assessment to be argued over. PRR parties however want an ethnocracy for real and pure ordinary citizens they claim to represent (Betz and Johnson, 2004: 312). According to Müller (2018: 52) and Minkenberg (2017: 14) populism is a peculiar moralistic, romantic ultra-nationalist imagination or a myth where morally pure and completely united nation stand against corrupt and morally petty elite, however completely fictional. Populism’s monistic views and uncompromising stand leads to a polarized society and its majoritarian extremism denies legitimacy to opponent’s views and weakens the rights of minorities. Populists disrespect various legitimate norms, for example they redefine otherwise universal human rights as a priority right of the indigenous people as the actual victim in their homeland. Their discursive rhetoric is ripe with attacks and racist insults that they claim is freedom of speech that the other side is just trying to muzzle – rejecting respect for differences completely.

1.2. PRR in Post-Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe countries carry with them a legacy of communism, which challenges the new liberal-democratic order, including the EU, and has in different ways effected the political culture, party competition and a general idea of politics and nation-building, where the legacy of former authoritarian regimes is often exploited by PRR parties (Minkenberg, 2017; Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018; Norocel and Szabo,

2019). Most of Eastern Europe was subject to multinational empires, that is the Habsburg, the Russian and the Ottoman empires, where the dominant pattern was the emergence of a national identity without the nation-state after World War I, that was soon again replaced by authoritarian dictatorships in the interwar period and communist regimes after World War II (Minkenberg, 2017: 144-145). They tend to proclaim nostalgia for the old despotic regimes and the ethnic and territorial conception (Minkenberg, 2017: 144). Therefore, territorial revisionism and identity politics are important in the agenda of many PRR parties, including EKRE.

With the EU's enlargement in 2004 and 2007, the process of political transformation in Eastern Europe took a turn where systemic opposition was marginalized and the radical right was far from being a serious political force (Minkenberg, 2017). However, the past few years have been a period of growth for most PRR parties in Europe. The success of this party family, as well as their organizational structure, ideology, influence and support base, has somewhat differed between Western and Eastern Europe. In Western Europe, immigrants, especially Muslims, are the primary target, in Eastern Europe, historical memory has been one of the driving forces, along with the legacy of state socialism and issues that arose from the transformation (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018; Minkenberg 2015; Minkenberg, 2017). In central and eastern Europe, so-called Visegrád countries – Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland – are governed by populist parties that are attacking core liberal institutions such as the independent judiciary and free press. including Viktor Orbán's Fidesz in Hungary and Jarosław Kaczyński's Law and Justice in Poland. In many of these countries exists groups that use symbols of the fascist movements and regimes of the 1930s and 1940s, such as Hungary's Arrow Cross movement or anti-Western ultra-Catholicism in Poland (Minkenberg, 2017: 76).

With the refugee crisis of 2015, however, the key differences between the PRR in Eastern and Western Europe diminished and Islamophobia took hold in Eastern Europe as well. The exception being the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik), the Slovak National Party (SNS) and the Latvian National Alliance, PRR parties in Central and Eastern Europe have not enjoyed the same success as their Western counterparts (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018). While Estonia was not the subject to heavy immigration flow, opposition to immigration was and is one of the main topics of EKRE's political

discourse during the immigration crisis and after. In elections of 2019 EKRE came in third getting 17,8 per cent of votes. President Kersti Kaljulaid gave the opportunity to form a government to the Reformist Party, that won the election with 28,9 per cent of votes. However, the Center Party, that came in second with 23,1 (Parliament Elections Webpage, 2019) per cent of votes, who Reformists invited to form the coalition with, rejected the proposal. Kaljulaid had to propose the formation of the coalition to the Center Party, which then formed the coalition with EKRE and Pro Patria. EKRE's chairman Mart Helme received the position of minister of the interior and Martin Helme as the minister of finance.

Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018) state, historical legacies have influenced Estonia and the PRR through the role of ethnic minorities, most of which arrived in Estonia during the Soviet occupation, which makes this party family in the region different from its counterparts in Western Europe. Trumm (2018: 333) explains EKRE reaching power based on other countries similar experiences through four categories – PRR have been successful in countries with proportional electoral systems, where media has given PRR most coverage, where voters distrust of politicians is based on historical legacies and availability for political space.

Many parties in the populist radical-right family publicly appraise Russia as an ideological alternative to a decadent and crumbling EU, for example the PRR in Hungary. This is not the case for EKRE and indicates a major difference with the majority of other PRR parties. EKRE sees an alternative to a Brussels as elite-driven EU in the form of a nationalist and conservative alliance of European nationalists (Kasekamp, Madisson, Wierenga, 2018: 55). Despite the successful integration of the new post-communist democracies into the European Union, the quality of democracy has suffered setbacks in some countries (Minkenberg, 2017: 1), however Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018: 50) argue it is not the case in Estonia, as EKRE does not pose a direct threat to democracy.

1.3. Xenophobic Nationalism with Euroscepticism as the Host Ideology

According to Mudde (2007; 2016a) and Rydgren (2017), xenophobic nationalism is one of the most important keys to the success of the PRRs. Wodak (2015: 2) argues that PRR

parties across Europe and beyond combine different political imaginaries from nationalist pasts in the form of identity narratives – parties in Austria, Hungary, Italy, Romania and France recapture fascist and Nazi pasts; parties in Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland focus on a perceived threat from Islam; in Hungary, Greece, Italy and the UK parties pursue propaganda perceived by the threat from minorities and migrants; and in US traditional Christian, fundamentalist approach is in the agenda of parties. Betz (2018: 151) and Minkenberg (2017) say that over the past few decades, the PRR has advanced a number of reasons why migration poses a fundamental threat to society, ranging from simple economic ones to relatively complex cultural justifications, calling nativism ‘an ideology of exclusion supported by a narrative of justification’. The concept of ‘nativism’ is a version of xenophobia directed at all threats – imagined and real – to the native population’s identity and homogeneity (Mudde, 2007: 18–19).

‘Today’s EU is a very different beast than the European Economic Community of the 1980s,’ says Mudde (2016b: 104) and elaborates that the Great Recession of 2008 brought into the bright daylight what the European values – integration and solidarity – really mean. Mudde (2016b: 77) claims that for decades European integration was an elite-driven process supported by a ‘permissive consensus’ of the masses, while the masses were hardly involved in shaping the process. The signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 brought with it a rise of ‘Euro scepticism,’ since, the treaty transformed the mainly economic European Community into a much more political and social European Union, so permissive consensus was no longer a given (Mudde, 2016b: 77), this was followed by the rejection of the European Convention in 2005 by France and the Netherlands that held referendums. While Euro scepticism has for long been limited to minor parties on the political fringes, notably on the radical left and right, it has well established itself in today’s political mainstream (Mudde, 2016b: 77). Before Brexit and during the seventh term of European Parliament the European Conservatives and Reformists was the third largest group with 77 MEP’s⁷.

The PRR, including EKRE, perceive EU as ‘a supranational entity, governed by the guiding principle of postmodern multiculturalism, which often endeavours to import

⁷ However, due to British Tories leaving European Parliament, European Conservatives and Reformist gained 61 MEP seats in 2019 elections and are now the sixth-largest group in the parliament.

‘alien’ cultural norms into the two societies’ (Braghiroli and Petsinis, 2019: 7). Vasilopoulou (2018: 1) states that PRR parties might adopt dissimilar positions on the principle, practice and future of European integration, but they all tend to criticise the EU from a predominantly sovereignty-based perspective justified on ethno-cultural grounds and they increase emphasis over these positions over time. Although immigration as a driver for supporting PRR parties is has been established as a problem in both the Western and Eastern Europe, portraying immigrants as the scapegoats, Eastern Europe tends to focus more on seeing the ethnic minorities as victims, which was also the most important narrative for EKRE’s 2015 election campaign (Trumm: 2018: 341).

Bornschieer (2018) argues that the PRR and their electorate are the outcome of the ‘losers of modernization’ unable to go along with the economic and global transition for Central and Eastern Europe, because they tend to disapprove of universalistic principles and defend authoritarian and traditional values along with monoculturalism. The PRR are seen as leaders of counterrevolution against social changes brought on by the new left. Petsinis (2019: 225) argues that an emerging nexus appears to be strongly knitted inside the Eurosceptic and anti-establishment narratives of PRR parties in Central and Eastern Europe, which is based upon domestic ethno-politics, regional geopolitics and ‘new’ identity politics. Bornschieer (2018: 319) claims today’s PRR of Western Europe got inspiration from the French *nouvelle droite*, a far-right political movement that emerged during the late 1960s that rejected being characterized as fascist. This can be applicable to characterize far-right in Eastern and Central Europe today.

The nativist narratives in PRR EU agenda are especially appealing in Estonia, rather than elsewhere in the EU, due to the historical and sociocultural specifics that help render this socio-psychological strategy (Petsinis, 2019: 225; Wierenga, 2017). EKRE qualifies as PRR party (Braghiroli and Petsinis, 2019; Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018; Petsinis, 2019; Wierenga, 2017; Wierenga, 2019), since PRR party’s core ideology is combined with xenophobic nationalism – opposition to immigration, multiculturalism, political elite, while supporting authoritarianism claiming to represent the ‘pure’ ordinary citizens (Mudde, 2007; Mudde, 2016a; Betz, 2018; Minkenberg, 2017). Moreover, EKRE gained popularity by opposing EU’s immigration policy, Euroscepticism, driven by xenophobic nationalism ensured EKRE’s popularity during and after the immigration

crisis (Petsinis, 2019: 225; Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018; Braghiroli and Petsinis: 2019; Makarychev and Sazono, 2019; Wierenga, 2017; Wierenga, 2019). EKRE's youth organization the Blue Awakening (*Sinine Äratuse*) describes the ideal world as Intermarium⁸ – a widespread idea among Eastern European nationalists of a geopolitical union of countries between Russia and Western Europe, extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea (Wierenga, 2017). In order to achieve that forces, need to be united between Poles and Ukrainians, Hungarians and Romanians, Croats and Serbs to stand against the Eastern enemy – Russia – and against the Western enemy – the EU.

Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian PRR parties signed Bauska declaration⁹ in 2013, just one year after EKRE emerged, by which they affirmed the supremacy of the sovereignty of their peoples over supranational institutions and opposed any attempt to include their independent nation states in the United States of Europe, setting up framework of cooperation of PRR of Baltic states in order to maintain and protect nationalism and conservative values. EKRE and National Alliance affirmed their struggle for national sovereignty against supranational institutions and opposition to postmodern values such as LGBT rights or multiculturalism (Braghiroli and Petsinis, 2019: 15; Wierenga, 2017: 11). This way EU is portrayed as the enemy standing for everything opposite of EKRE and everything that could possibly go wrong, like even further loose of sovereignty through immigration and integration politics. However, the Latvian For Fatherland and Freedom/National Alliance falls under third 'compromising' category and became much more pro-EU from 2006 to 2014 (Vasilopoulou, 2018: 8). Latvian National Alliance and the True Finns are parties with whom EKRE has the closest relationship with, therefore placing them between Nordic and Eastern Europe, that Wierenga (2017: 7, 10-11) claims makes them even more of a unique case.

Braghiroli and Petsinis (2019: 6) base EKRE's Euroscepticism as three-dimensional: geopolitical, socio-cultural, and economic – the latter being most irrelevant with only

⁸ Sinine Äratuse webpage. (2017). *Ruuben Kaalep intermariumi konverentsil: Ida-Euroopa peab ühendama jõud*. Visited 10.05.2020, <https://sininearatus.ee/2017/04/28/ruuben-kaalep-intermariumi-konverentsil-ida-euroopa-peab-uhendama-joud/>

⁹ EKRE webpage. (2020). *The Bauska declaration*. Visited 4.05.2020, <https://www.ekre.ee/bauska-deklaratsioon/>

attempt to interlink the economy with national survival, where criticism is focused on bailing other EU states. Their main argument lies on demographic issues – ‘older’ historical legacies from the Soviet era, as well as ‘newer’, the refugee question aspects, of identity politics (Braghiroli and Petsinis, 2019: 6; Petsinis, 2019). According to Vasilopoulou (2011), the European Union's opposition in the PRR narratives can be divided into three: complete adversary, conditional and willing to compromise. Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018) place EKRE in a conditional category because, while being Eurosceptic, the European Union is not as big an enemy as is Russia and because they are willing to cooperate with EU institutions so long as they do not compromise national sovereignty.

However, the nativist discourse of EKRE claiming to stand for indigenous Estonians is in some ways ‘muddy’ and there seems to be contradicted due to different understandings, which past is the past that is longed for and tried to re-create. An example is minister Mart Järvik’s¹⁰ vision to bring back agriculture and rural economy of the 1930’s, when ‘The farms flourished due to using various tricks and I also hope to start the countryside so that people who have gone to the city or to Finland, Sweden and Norway would also like to return to the country’.

Makarychev and Sazonov (2019: 454) interviewed a Russian-speaking member of ‘Blue Awakening’, who suggested that conservatively oriented Russophones might be sympathetic to views expressed by right-wing nationalist, Jaak Madison admitted that residents of the mostly Russian speaking districts of Lasnamäe and Maardu in the Tallinn metropolitan area, being under the influence of Russian propaganda, distrust Muslims and refugees. Wierenga (2017: 14-15) had conducted similar research two years prior to Makarychev and Sazonov by interviewing Keskerakond (The Middle Party) and EKRE politicians and reaching the same crux, that EKRE’s EU narratives that go hand in hand with Russian EU narratives (Wierenga, 2017: 9). This can be named one of the main issues, other mainstream parties tend to exclude EKRE. Arvo Aller, the Minister for Rural

¹⁰ Uued Uudised webpage. (2019). *Uus maaeluminister Mart Järvik: näen Eestit sellisena, nagu 1930. aastatel, kui erinevate nippidega pandi maaelu kihama*. Visited 8.05.2020, <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/uus-maaeluminister-mart-jarvik-naen-eestit-sellisena-nagu-1930-aastatel-kui-erinevate-nippidega-pandi-maaelu-kihama/>

Affairs, said in an interview that due to the restriction of foreign labour, students could be sent to fields to gather the agricultural products. ‘/.../ we find high school students, schoolchildren, students /.../ all opportunities must be used. Each new is a reminder of the old’, said Aller and added that the high school student should always have the opportunity to help [in agriculture], be it picking potatoes, picking cabbage, which gives good physical exertion (Sildam, 2020). This setting is similar to times Estonia was under the Soviet Occupation and working in collective farms as much as normalcy as obligation in order to serve the country.

EKRE sees Estonia as a victim of both EU liberalism and Russian imperialism, portraying the EU as ‘the other’ in its discourse (Makarychev and Sazonov, 2019: 462-463). The Euroscepticism of EKRE and a number of other PRR parties in the European Union might be largely due to the disappointment in the EU, which has failed to tackle immigration problem that derives from the principle of open borders for people to move freely (Wierenga, 2019). However, Central and Eastern Europe, including the Baltic States, did not experience largescale immigration from outside of Europe due to the migrant crisis of 2015, the numbers who arrived in Estonia and Latvia were incredibly low. Therefore Wierenga (2019) argues that only the threat of potentially large numbers of migrants from Africa and the Middle East arriving in countries with a small population was used by radical right actors.

1.4. Rhetorical ‘Toolbox’ of PRR

In this research political discourse and rhetoric are defined through van Dijk’s and Condor’s, Billig’s and Tieleaga’s definitions. A discourse can be studied as contextual functionality of text and talk, in political discourse the main actors and authors are politicians themselves, however political discourse as a whole includes numerous actors and recipients since the ‘interaction’ takes place in public sphere among huge audiences and therefore bringing in media discourse and opinions of numerous people with numerous views (van Dijk, 1998). Political rhetoric is a mix of political argument, debate, communication, or discourse serving a number of communicative functions simultaneously (Condor, Billig and Tieleaga, 2013). When looking at the political rhetoric of a PRR political platform, the course of the discourse is mostly definite.

intentional. In political discourse narratives serve as constructions of facts that bound together in order to interpret political reality and therefore play a crucial role in political decision making individually and in different collective units Patterson and Monroe (1998: 315-316).

Wodak (2015) states that PRR actively use a 'toolbox' of rhetorical tools in their discourse that help them achieve their goals, that consists of discursive strategies for implementing victim-attacker roles, stigmatization, confrontation and construction of conspiracy theories. Greven (2016: 1) claims, that PRR strategically and tactically use negativity in political communication, tools ranging from the calculated break of supposed taboos, disrespect of formal and informal rules, emotional appeals and personal insults, conspiracy theories and violent metaphors alongside with refusal of compromise and demand on radical solutions. Conflicts are something PRR parties thrive upon in order to gain room and attention in the political arena, a certain conflicts potential being country specific (Bornschier, 2018: 326). PRR political narratives are discursive constructs that respond to three key questions: what went wrong, who is to blame and what is to be done to resolve the situation (Betz, 2018: 140). The attribution of blame and the stand 'us versus them' have been central and enduring features of populist discourse.

Playing with people's fears, is another strategy of PRR, such as fear of losing their job to an immigrant or fear of depriving an independent state of self-determination (Wodak, 2015) in order to gain people's sympathy. Thousands of articles have been devoted to the 'politics of fear' towards 'others' in recent decades where stereotypical images of immigrants being authoritarian and violent and causing an apocalyptic future of Islamising Europe and oppressing national people (Mudde, 2016b: 79).

The racist discourse that the PRR call 'right to identity' serves as a rhetorical tool to counter charges of xenophobia, racism and extremism (Betz, 2018: 152) claiming to be and represent the 'true' democrats (Betz and Johnson, 2004: 311-312). Emotion, especially resentment has been argued to have important role in political mobilisation of PRR supporters (Betz, 2018: 143). Braghiroli and Petsinis (2019) compared EKRE's and its Latvian counterpart National Alliance's socio-psychological campaigns, which both interlinked immigration to the collective memories of 'colonization' under the Soviet Union and the collective anxieties of becoming oppressed again. They argue that this

served as a socio-psychological key strategy that enabled both parties to augment their public appeal.

The themes in EKRE's discourse in Uued Uudised are seen as the main topics through which EKRE addresses the EU. According to Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018: 49-52) negative attitudes toward membership in the EU and European integration are most important themes in Uued Uudised sub-themes, while reluctance to help the countries that suffered from the European debt crisis; strong opposition to refugee quotas; optimistic visions of an Intermarium as an alternative to the EU related to European integration, are the sub-themes. The themes, geopolitical and sociocultural approach, which are tightly bound with identity politics and were named relevant characterizations for EKRE's Euroscepticism by Braghiroli and Petsinis (2019: 6) were also considered.

The topic of the refugee crises is most explicitly articulated by relying on the frame of conspiracy theory, EKRE media content expresses conspiracy theories that construct a pyramid-shaped system of conspirators – at the top level of this system is the secret and extremely powerful decadent elite that aims at undermining nation-states (Kasekamp, Madisson, Wierenga, 2018: 55). Madisson (2016: 192) claims that conspiracy theories give extreme rightists a chance to translate their feelings of intolerance, fear, anger and moral superiority into a more tangible and explicit language so it serves as a handy rhetorical tool and a 'connector of the idea of decadent forces, acting in secret, with timely topics and actual unpleasant events'. More specifically, according to Madisson (2016: 194-195) the New World Order conspiracy theory – about dreadful acts of political elite whose goal is to create global centralized regime, in order to undermine and ridicule PRR sacred values and markers, like race, national sovereignty, nativism, Christian values, moral, traditional family values and gender roles – 'roofs' most conspiracy theories of right extremists. She adds that in Estonian Vernacular Web¹¹, in 2014, Estonia's government was already seen as a powerless sub-branch of the huge decadent system (Madisson, 2016: 194-195).

¹¹ Estonian Vernacular Web is a blog for Estonians with right-extremist views. See more: <http://rahvuslane.blogspot.com/>

Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018: 55) explain, that the all-embracing explanatory frameworks attract disseminators because they offer a simple and more-or-less coherent explanation of the extremely complex state of affairs and adopt the standpoint of a moral victim of the manipulations of malicious forces, offering an empowering position of becoming a debunker of a systematic plot. Even more, they unite into their syncretic explanation most of the key topics of radical-right discourse: the subversion of nation-states and family values, the dark deeds of local and global elites, the corrupt nature of the mainstream media and the educational system, the decadent foundations of liberal and left-wing ideologies and the danger posed by Muslim immigrants with mainstream journalism understood as the tool that conspirators use for retarding the critical thinking of citizens (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018: 54).

PPR claim to speak honestly and straightforwardly, this should not be confused with ‘new realism’. Prins and Saharo (2010) say ‘new realism’ as a genre in Western Europe is gaining popularity, that which is based on addressing and talking about things as they really are, not as being constructed by the elite – this includes breaking taboos, speaking out frankly about societal ills, standing up for ordinary people and affirming the positive sides of the Western value system and of national identity. PRR use the brutally straightforward approach, however in a way that is most useful or best for them, often twisting and changing the meaning of their sayings later claiming others understood them wrong – which it is not objective harsh observation as described by new realism. Atton (2006: 574, 586) researched the discourse of The British National Party and concluded that it uses the tropes of multiculturalism, equality and freedom to maintain an ideological space where racism and repression may appear natural and common-sensical, while actually being anti-multicultural, anti-equality and anti-freedom perceiving the racist discourse as a normal one.

PPR parties claim mainstream media, as one of institutions, to be under the control of the elites, therefore not trustworthy and even hostile against them due to their controversial values. Science Journalist and PhD Journalism Professor Marju Himma (2019) states that the politicians are undermining the role of media because do not want it to monitor and publicly reveal their, often dark, actions. Himma (2019) adds that the press needs to serve as an institution alongside the legislative, executive and judicial branches and act as a

fourth power constantly monitoring the first three and to providing the public with information, criticism and debate about them. She (2019) adds that the main problem that politicians undermining media, bring along, is losing the trust between media consumers and journalists questioning whether the public, or the people, still know and understand the importance of what the press is doing for them. Himma (2019) argues that as journalists distance themselves from their readers, viewers and listeners, the idea of doing this work disappears, saying ‘The closer the press is to power, the further it stands from the people.’. I argue that PRR manipulative rhetoric – blaming, discursive strategies, fear attribution and pressing on feeling of security – serve as important actors in EKRE’s discourse about EU.

Mainstream media might be considered a victim of its own principles, which so far had served it well, however, now are being exploited in their advantage by right-wing populists. Journalism Scientist Tiit Hennoste (2008) names seven core values, that makes the reporting newsworthy: freshness, geographical and emotional closeness, influence, prominence, conflict, topical/timely and uniqueness. The more the values, the more important and relevant the news piece. PRR discursive rhetoric is ripe with these categories. EKRE politicians coarse, racist, sexist, angry, conflict provoking, etc. discourse in mainstream media is also a precedent as it is new and unique, but also prominent since EKRE is a relatively new party that reached power very quickly, even though they didn’t win the election, but came in third, in 2018. Since EKRE has minister seats and is the implementor of day-to-day politics, that affects everyday life of Estonian people, emotional and geographical closeness lies with both supporters and non-supporters of EKRE.

1.5. Discursive Opportunities of the PRR

Visibility in the public discourse, including both positive and negative media reporting, is crucial for PRR parties in order to gain popularity and increase support among voters (Norocel and Szabo, 2019; Norocel, Szabo and Bene, 2017; Koopmans and Muis, 2009; Koopmans and Olzak, 2013; Ellinas, 2009; Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga; 2018). Moreover, their electoral success depends on the number of channels and the amount of ‘screen time’ that the PRR actors are given (Norocel and Szabo, 2019). Ellinas (2009:

209-210) says that the media helps extreme-right parties overcome their organisational or financial deficiencies, because media enables them to reach much broader audiences, than through their own smaller platforms. Nowadays with a growing apathy towards mainstream politics, market pressures compel journalism to continuously search for political actors that would generate public interest and attract new audiences, to which unconventional rhetorical style of PRR, is perfect (Ellinas, 2009: 220).

Unarguably media has played an important role and is partially responsible for the radicalization of public discourse by covering the ‘groundbreaking’ topics that the PRR parties provide, since PRR are able to exploit the negative coverage to their advantage (Norozel and Szabo, 2019: 4). Koopmans and Muis (2009) studied the rise of right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands in 2002 and concluded that discursive opportunities significantly affected Fortuyn’s successful election, since until 2002 no party with anti-immigration stance had come to power. The key components for winning 17 seats in the parliament were the competition for voter support and him dominating media discourse – both positive and negative publication helped to diffuse his viewpoints and to become the main political opinion-maker during the turbulent election campaign (Koopmans and Muis, 2009: 642). It is important to emphasize the fact that immigration figures were relatively stable during the 1990s and had been declining since 2000 and the country’s economy was healthy (Koopmans and Muis, 2009: 642). Similarly, EKRE was the most the party that got the most media coverage in 2019¹², the year when Parliament elections in Estonia took place. Also, Mart and Martin Helme were named 2nd and 4th most influential Estonian people in 2019 by Eesti Päevaleht¹³, naming Mart Helme more important than Estonian President, Kersti Kaljulaid, who was put on 2nd place. Also, in 2016, while EKRE had a few seats in the Parliament in the opposition and was known for voicing against immigration and had a lot media coverage, at some point Mart Helme was named as the most popular candidate for President of Estonia by people (Pärgma, 2016).

¹² Kõige enam tähelepanu saanud erakond oli möödunud aastal EKRE. (2019). *ERR*, 31. December. Visited 7.05.2020, <https://www.err.ee/1019118/koige-enam-tahelepanu-saanud-erakond-oli-moodunud-aastal-ekre>

¹³ Eesti mõjukad 2019. (2020). *Delfi*. Visited 12.05.2020, <https://epl.delfi.ee/z/mojukad2019/>

At worst, there may become a link between violence and public discourse, as happened in Germany, where media attention and public visibility, resonance and legitimacy of right-wing violence affected the rate of violence against different target groups, like ethnic minorities (Koopmans and Olzak, 2004). Some incidents, where ethnic minorities have been attacked either during a protest¹⁴ or just in public¹⁵, EKRE's public discourse has not been directly violence provoking. However, EKRE annually holds the Big Torchlight March in the evening of Estonian Independence Day, 24th of February, where hundreds of people take part marching through Tallinn. The goal of this, according to Mart Helme, Chairman of the Conservative People's Party, is to 'show that freedom and the right to decide our own lives are important to us' and that the torch is a symbol of light and freedom, which are very much needed in these difficult times¹⁶.

Vasilopoulou (2018: 1-2) says that mainstream parties across EU have long refrained from politicizing EU in order to not have to deal with EU's reputational damage. This has made room for the PRR to engage in issue competition – bring new topics into political agenda claiming it to be core of their agenda – making EU as central to such entrepreneurial strategies (Vasilopoulou, 2018: 1-2). Moreover, Pytlas and Kossack (2015: 129) proved based on their research on four Central and Eastern EU countries – Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Romania – that 'successful PRR parties have the power to place their core issues of identity politics on the agenda, frame them according to their ideology and force other parties to react and position themselves on these issues.'. Calling it 'lighting the fuse' (Pytlas and Kossack, 2015) and keeping it 'lit'. Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018: 48) say that EKRE's presence in parliament has brought a so-called domestic war into the discourse of what is politically correct and have unorthodoxly

¹⁴ EKRE's picket in front of the Parliament became violent when Estonian MEP Indrek Tarand was forcibly pulled off the stage and he was kicked. Rudi, H. (2018). Galerii ja video: EKRE piketil rünnati Indrek Tarandit. *Postimees*, 26. November. Visited 13.05.2020, <https://poliitika.postimees.ee/6462211/galerii-ja-video-ekre-piketil-runnati-indrek-tarandit>

¹⁵ Pihl, A. (2019). Politsei algatas ränderaamistiku meeleavaldusel toimunud intsidendi peale menetluse. *ERR*, 6. February, Visited 8.05.2020, <https://www.err.ee/907980/politsei-algatas-randeraamistiku-meeleavaldusel-toimunud-intsidendi-peale-menetluse>

¹⁶ EKRE's webpage. (2016). *Fotod: Vabariigi aastapäeva auks korraldatud tõrvikurongkäigul osales ligi 2000 inimest*. Visited 9.05.2020, <https://ekre.ee/fotod-vabariigi-aastapaeva-torvikurongkaigul-osales-ligi-2000-inimest/>

voiced their opinions loud, clear and straightforward on topics, such as same-sex unions in 2014 and European refugee crisis in 2015. That way creating an unprecedented new style of discourse. Which resulted in creation of multiple anti-immigrant blogs, information portals and social media groups (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018: 48).

Communication and rhetoric of PRR party family is changing and the use of social media is unprecedented for politicians reaching their audience, circumventing the traditional medium of broadcast media, however mass media and social media both have served as convenient tools for PRR parties to showcase their agendas and engage the public (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018: 47; Wierenga 2019: 140). Through social media any political actor can circumvent the mass media and, with a tweet or Facebook post and directed to the 'right people' (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018).

Madisson and Ventsel (2017) claim, that the era of collaborative media can be regarded as the era of post-truth, where vernacular authority prevails, or truth is no longer a clear fact, but rather the truthfulness lies behind who makes the claim – credible is the mouth of the people, not institutional authority such as the press, church or corporation because mainstream and elite are considered fundamentally wrong. This plays well in the hands of the PRR actors, since two out of three of their key components laying their foundation, are authoritarianism as a belief in a hierarchical society and populism as claiming to speak for the common folk. The undermining of the mainstream media and journalists, as well as other people from 'elite' based on the assessment of EKRE political actors, is seen in Uued Uudised, where a news article or an interview from mainstream media, often portraying one of EKRE's important political actors, is 'dissected' and 'trounced' with insults, 'punch lines' and down playing the content of the news and its authors.

The characterisation of EKRE's discourse is supported through Geroge Kirsberg¹⁷ (2014: 20-23) approach that in order to be a successful politician, one has to come up with a new idea that people could believe in, for example, the slogan 'Estonia to become one of the

¹⁷ G. Kirsberg wrote a book on political psychology and is a member of the EKRE, however not a prominent one. Kirsberg, G. (2014). *Poliitika psühholoogilised alused: Mida on vaja poliitika mõistmiseks, Kuidas me oma riike mängu paneme*. Läänetasandiku OÜ.

five richest states of EU' was never doable. Whether the idea is realistic or doable, makes no difference, since politics is nothing but an invention of a religion, that matches with the electorate's mental development stage and relates to associative-analogical network. McDonnell's (2015) study on charismatic populist leaders – Bossi, Berlusconi and Blocher – also showed that the ability to believe, have faith and hope towards the leader is common among PRR parties' supporters. Kirsberg (2014: 24) concludes, that when a religion is too profoundly obeyed, sense of the world will come deprived and a person will interpret the world around him inadequately.

According to Thomas Greven (2016), PRR parties in the government may momentarily cool down in their activities but may also take a dominant position and lead the country towards authoritarian and non-liberal arrangements, as happened in Poland and Hungary. Since EKRE came to power they have not exactly withdrawn from their aggressive negative rhetoric, however, have not been able to push the country towards authoritarian and non-liberal style either. EKRE as the only PRR party in Estonia, has 'a monopoly' in the Estonian political arena, which provides them a lot room for distributing their ideas (Petsinis, 2019: 225; Makarychev and Sazonov, 2019: 453). Studying the 'new' wave of populist rightwing parties in Central and Eastern Europe trying to explain electoral support for EKRE, Trumm (2018) found that the two key factors for the party's success in 2015 elections were intense campaigns in the areas and among conservative voters that already held resentment towards the establishment and ability to produce an acceptable campaign of 'right kind of disillusionment'. The refugee crisis that occurred shortly after EKRE's electoral breakthrough has greatly expanded the party's discursive opportunities, even though 'Euroscepticism' entered the agenda of Estonian discourse with the accession of EU in early 2000's. EKRE's EU discourse bases its concerns on national sovereignty, especially as it relates to the European migration crisis. (Kasekamp, Madisson, Wierenga, 2018).

1.6. Uued Uudised and EKRE

EKRE was founded in 2012 with its predecessor being the People's Party (*Rahvaliid*) and the Estonian Nationalist Movement (*Eesti Rahvuslik Liikumine*). EKRE quickly went from having no seats to seven seats out of 101 in the 2015 national elections and from

seven to 19 in the 2019 national elections (Wierenga, 2019), defending traditional family values arose as the key issue that propelled EKRE into the Estonian parliament in 2015 (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018). Two of the main tactics that have granted them to such popularity are grassroots activism and social media engagement (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018).

With their first year in the coalition EKRE's ministers have often intervened in other Ministries areas of governance, for example defence¹⁸. While in power, creating scandals claiming to broaden the boundaries of political debate, have been constant. For example, insulting the new largely female Finnish government, calling it the lipstick coalition'. Also, trying to demolish Estonia's 'deep state' – the dismissal of Estonia's Attorney General, Lavly Perling, and Deputy Secretary General for Internal Security in the Ministry of the Interiors, Erkki Koort, the attempted dismissal of the Director General of the Police and Border Guard Board, Elmar Vaher, and the constant criticism directed towards Estonia's public sector administration institutions, like Ministries and Boards. The routine political discourse with EKRE in government includes offensive and aggressive statement from EKRE ministers, regardless of several calls for order from the President and Prime Minister. Being the third most popular party in Estonia, with 18% support (Erakondade Reitingud Webpage, 2020) and member of the government, EKRE has a clear influence on the thinking and behaviour of members of society, which should not be underestimated.

Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018: 48) argue that Uued Uudised is one of the most important centres of Estonian PRRs due to being a grass-root channel and having a big role in distributing information about the party's anti-immigration events and petitions, they have increased the party's visibility and influence among the audience that does not follow or trust mainstream media and because articles there have been shared in social media numerously. It is a relevant channel for studying EKRE's EU narratives because it is about how the EKRE sees EU functioning and how it portrays itself to its

¹⁸ Kuusk, J-K. (2019). Mart Helme: kui riigikaitstes on teistel ministritel ajusurnud suhtumine, siis tuleb ohjad enda kätte haarata. *Õhtuleht*, 25. November. Visited: 17.05.2020, <https://www.oh tuleht.ee/984417/mart-helme-kui-riigikaitstes-on-teistel-ministritel-ajusurnud-suhtumine-siis-tuleb-ohjad-enda-katte-haarata>

supporters. It was created in 2015 – at a time when the immigration crisis was at its peak and EKRE support in Estonia started to increase very rapidly. At the same time, an average of 3–8 news posts are written per day, which means that visitors know that they can expect more news in a day and therefore may visit it more.

EKRE's Uued Uudised is rather unique and most actively content producing platform compared to the other Estonian parties' that exceeded the threshold of 5 per cent in 2019 in Parliament elections. The most similar in content production volume sense, is the news outlet Kesknädal¹⁹, produced by the second most popular party, the Middle Party (*Keskerakond*), with 24 per cent support, that is also printed in paper and in Russian, their webpage has 4-7 new news posts a day. Also, the party Fatherland (*Isamaa*) with the support of 5-6 per cent has their own news portal, called Eesti Uudised²⁰, where 2-3 news posts are produced and which still almost two times less than in Uued Uudised, where news are posted up to 7 or 8 times a day. Social Democrats (*Eesti Sotsiaaldemokraatlik erakond*), with the support of 8 per cent, post 3-5 news per day on their party's webpage news section²¹ and Estonia 200 (*Eesti 200*) with their 7 per cent support usually makes 2-3 posts a week also in the news section on their party's webpage²². The most popular party, with almost 32 per cent support, Reformist Party (*Eesti Reformierakond*) posts news in their party webpage²³ the most rarely, sometimes leaving up to 10 days between news posts. However, the party's chairman Kaja Kallas writes an online blog²⁴ for political topics where approximately 50 posts have been made since 2010.

However, the social media and other channels should also be taken into consideration when looking into the relevance of party's political discourse outside mainstream media and public sphere. Compared to others, EKRE overwhelmingly dominates this area of discourse in number of channels and likes and followers on social media. The Conservative People's Party Facebook page has 17 600 likes, Uued Uudised Facebook

¹⁹ Kesknädal webpage. (2020). Visited 14.05.2020, <http://kesknadal.ee/>

²⁰ Eesti Uudised webpage. (2020). Visited 14.05.2020, <https://eestiudised.ee/>

²¹ Eesti Sotsiaaldemokraadid webpage. (2020). Visited 14.05.2020, <https://www.sotsid.ee/uudised/>

²² Eesti 200 webpage. (2020). Visited 14.05.2020, <https://eesti200.ee/teemad/uudised/>

²³ Reformierakond webpage. (2020). Visited 14.05.2020, <https://www.reform.ee/uudised/>

²⁴ Kaja Kallas Blog. (2020). Visited 14.05.2020, <https://kajakallas.ee/postitused/>

page almost 18 000 likes and its youth assembly, The Blue Awakening (*Sinine Äratust*) Facebook page, over 3000 likes. On Facebook Reformist Party has 12 000 likes with no youths' page, Social democrats 9000 and Young Social Democrats (*Noored Sotsiaaldemokraadid*) 2100 likes, Fatherland 7500 and Middle Party 6400 and Middle Party's Youth Assembly (*Kesknoored*) Facebook page around 1000 likes. Estonia 200 has 1800 and its youth assembly Young Estonia 200 (*Noor Eesti 200*) 210 likes. On top of that, EKRE hosts its own radio show 'Räägime asjast' in TRE radio channel and is a regular guest visitor in Christian Family Radio²⁵. This can be compared to Radio Maryja, a Polish Catholic Church radio station that sends strong political messages which combine anti-liberal, anti-Western and sometimes anti-Semitic messages with conspiracy theories and ultranationalism (Minkeberg, 2017: 71).

EKRE's importance in dominating in media's and social medias discourse, is also supported by the alternative media webpage, that EKRE often refers to in Uued Uudised, Objektiiv²⁶, with a Christian focus. Objektiiv was not chosen for analysis because it is almost twice as less visited then Uued Uudised, 400 thousand²⁷ a month compared to 200 thousand a month²⁸. Uued Uudised attendance can be compared to the attendance of

²⁵ Tartu Pereraadio describes itself as a Christian charitable organization that is politically independent and guided in its activities by the laws in force in the Republic of Estonia. The association is a non-profit association founded in 1994, which coordinates the production and distribution of the Christian-educational format radio programs 'Pereraadio', 'Semeinoje Radio' and 'Radio Eli'. The political independence is however questionable, since regularly the shows include Varro Vooglaid, Markus Järvi, the Helmes and other actors with highly political positions and statements. Pereraadio webpage. (2020). Visited 14.05.2020, <http://www.pereraadio.ee/uus/>

²⁶ Objektiiv is a alternative news and opinion portal, with a large amount of similar content to Uued Uudised, however created by the Foundation for the Protection of Family and Tradition in 2015 that describes itself as a platform for views that are in line with the fundamental conservative values of our culture, which are severely under-represented in the narrow-minded liberal and left-leaning mainstream that is taking over the Western world. Objektiiv webpage. (2020). Portaalist. Miks on portaal Objektiiv ellu kutsutud?. Visited 14.05.2020, <https://objektiiv.ee/portaalist/>

²⁷ Similarweb. (2020). Uueduudised.ee. Visited, 15.05.2020, <https://www.similarweb.com/website/uueduudised.ee>

²⁸ This number consists consuming the digital content both through desktop and mobile devices in order to understand a site's overall digital presence and performance. Bohm, J. (2020). Total Traffic for Any

portal Eesti.ee²⁹, which provides government information and e-services for a citizen, for an entrepreneur and for an official. It holds notarial documents, health information, financial support and employment information, etc. that can be accessed through logging in with social security number or ID. Also, Estonia is the second country in the EU after the Czech Republic with the highest number, almost 60 per cent³⁰, of people who identify as unaffiliated with a religion. Furthermore, around 54 per cent of Estonians believes in some sort of higher power, however only 18 per cent of Estonians believes in the existence of God (Heelas, 2013: 179).

Although Uued Uudised webpage design may leave an impression of a regular news portal, since it has different divisions, Front Page, Opinion, Shows, Estonia, World, Economy, etc. its name is 'National Conservative News and Opinion portal'. It qualifies as an alternative media channel of PRR. Alternative media's central value is to close off certain other abilities to speak in order to sustain a community with closure (Couldry, 2002, through Atton, 2006: 574). Uued Uudised news posts are only made by EKRE or its chosen supporters, so only they can voice opinions, which in a way adds to the plurality of channels that defines democracy, although is undemocratic in nature because is not pluralistic in content. Atton (2006: 586) states that 'democratized creativity', a little space for the sharing or exploration of ideas and arguments, is important in alternative media formations. Under the posts in Uued Uudised is possible to leave a comment, so there is a possibility for argumentation and comments, but no forum. EKRE's news posts also include none of the core principles of writing news, which is why it is not comparable to mainstream media and qualifies as alternative. According to Journalism Scientist Tiit Hennoste (2008) a classical news piece has to follow three core principles: the author has to be objective and not include his or her own opinions, but rely on facts and statements of the interviewees, assessments are given by the interviewees; the news has to be

Website and Fresh Mobile Web Data. Visited 14.05.2020, <https://www.similarweb.com/corp/blog/total-traffic-for-any-website-and-fresh-mobile-web-data/>

²⁹ Similarweb. (2020). Eesti.ee. Visited 13.05.2020, <https://www.similarweb.com/website/eesti.ee#overview> ; Eesti webpage. (2020). Visited 13.05.2020, <https://www.eesti.ee/et/>

³⁰ Religions in Europe webpage. (w.y). Religions in Europe. Visited 13.05.2020, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=c82b53d543794fc281fadf2dccef812a>

balanced, which means interviewing both or more people to include different sides of the story and wording their statements as closely as possible in the article; the news has to be punctual – facts need to be checked. Uued Uudised describes itself on the webpage very briefly, however thought through: ‘Uued Uudised is published by the Estonian Conservative People's Party. Uued Uudised considers the freedom of expression important. This means that the views expressed in the Uued Uudised may not coincide with the views of the Estonian Conservative People's Party.’³¹ This means, that Uued Uudised is the information channel for EKRE claiming to represent freedom of speech, which can be seen as democratic value, however leaving room for possibility of withdrawing from responsibility, by saying the content may not coincide with the views of EKRE.

Uued Uudised can be defined as an ‘echo chamber’. This means a closed community where already existing beliefs and views are reinforced with repetition, sometimes unconsciously, which makes this community live in an information bubble and become more polarized (Grömping, 2014; Törnberg, 2018). This is common for alternative information seekers and believers, often conspiracy theory believers, like anti-vaxxers community, flat earth believers, but also for polarized political views. Social media is an opportunistic networking tool for making the content go viral by spreading it (Törnberg, 2018), supporting the narrative of media and social media being the fuse (Pytlas and Kossack, 2015) giving a kick to information virality. One main argument in EKRE’s discourse is that they are suppressed by mainstream media that is under the strict propagandist control of Brussels and wants to destroy Conservativists, keeping their supporters from consuming and believing any other information that they don’t want to. Castells (2009: 23) claims the online environment to be crucial for the survival of PRR ideas because of its three most relevant features: flexibility – the ability to change components and reconfigure, scalability – ability to expand and shrink, survivability – networks run by multiple nodes and are very hard to take down.

The aim of my thesis is to try to understand, without any appraisal, what lies behind EKRE's European narratives, which are unquestionably powerful and try to establish the role of nativism and populism in this discourse. My aim is to look into the first posts about

³¹ Uued Uudised webpage. (2020). Visited 10.05.2020, <https://uueduudised.ee/>

EU starting from the year 2015 when EKRE was established up to the year 2019, which unarguably play key aspect in EKRE becoming to power, since Euroscepticism is one of their key subjects.

2. Methodology: Grounded Theory and Qualitative Analysis

In this chapter the methodological steps to carry out empirical analysis are covered – grounded theory as the methodology and content analysis as the method that was chosen for conducting this research are introduced. Explained is, how the research questions and the various theoretical approaches, described in theoretical chapter as well, helped me analyse the EU related themes and topics in the news posts in Uued Uudised. Justification for the chosen channel and the explanation for the sample is also provided along with elaborating how the coding is carried out with the help of the coding scheme developed simultaneously with the empirical coding.

2.1. Grounded Theory as Methodology

Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves (Charmaz, 2006: 2-3). Grounded theory that aims to generate well-grounded theory or hypotheses based on empirical data, is used because compared to other PRR parties in the world, EKRE has been little studied (Wierenga, 2017) and understudied are also their European narratives (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018), so this is the best approach to give in depth descriptions in order to understand what is said. An important methodological principle of grounded theory is that scientific research is treated as a process of getting to know, where every new step tests the knowledge from the previous step and adds a new one with simultaneous data collection, coding, analysis and theory development (Lepik, Strömpl, 2014).

In my research I am taking a constructivist (interpretivist) approach. When positivist-inspired research theory seeks causes, favours deterministic explanations and emphasizes generality and universality, then constructivist theory emphasizes understanding rather than explanation (Charmaz, 20016). Since my work focuses on understanding how the EU is constructed through xenophobic nationalism and populist rhetoric, I go by the definition of Charmaz (2006: 126) 'interpretive theory calls for the imaginative understanding of the studied phenomenon. This type of theory assumes emergent, multiple realities, indeterminacy, facts and values as linked, truth as provisional and social life as processual'.

As stated in theory (subchapter 1.3) in this research political rhetoric is defined through Condor, Billig and Tieleaga (2013), as a mix of political argument, debate, communication, or discourse serving a number of communicative functions simultaneously. However, because the contextual functionality of text is produced by the main actors of only one side, EKRE's representatives that write the posts in Uued Uudised, the recipient side, the readers of Uued Uudised, is not studied or included in this research.

Thereby I study what is being said and what are, possibly hidden, stories as narratives in the texts that reflect the understanding of EU, that the writers of Uued Uudised want to project upon their supporters. Patterson and Monroe (1998: 315-316) define narrative in political discourse as a 'construction of disparate facts in our own worlds that are weaved together cognitively in order to make sense of reality' and claim that narrative plays a critical role in the construction of political behaviour, since people create and use narratives to interpret and understand the political realities around them as individuals but also in collective units, as nations or groups. I go by Patterson's and Monroe's definition of narratives which are identified with the help of content analysis³² and qualitative approach. Qualitative coding attaches labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about – coding distils data, sorts them and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other segments of data (Charmaz, 2006: 3).

2.2. Content Analysis: Sample and Coding

The aim of my thesis is to add some insight to the study of the Estonian PRR party, EKRE, by exploring one of the main themes that ensured their popularity – Euroscepticism, driven by xenophobic nationalism with the help of two research questions.

Research question 1: **How the European Union is constructed in the alternative media channel of Estonian PRR Uued Uudised?**

³² The researched is carried out with content analysis, not discourse analysis, that might seem to have also been considered, since discourse analysis deals with uncovering how those meanings are constructed through language. However, in this research content analysis was used in order to identify what the meanings are by systematically describing the nature of the material.

Research question 2: **How xenophobic nationalism is used in EU narratives in the alternative media channel of Estonian PRR Uued Uudised?**

EKRE sees Estonia as a victim of both EU liberalism and Russian imperialism, portraying EU as ‘the other’ in its discourse (Makarychev and Sazonov, 2019: 462-463). With the help of the first research question ‘**How the European Union is constructed in the alternative media channel of Estonian PRR Uued Uudised?**’ is analysed, whether EKRE’s EU critical narrative is based upon the financial crisis, anti-elitism and migration, as Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018) claimed. Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018: 49-52) also stated that European integration as a theme in Uued Uudised consists of predominantly negative attitudes toward membership in the EU, for example that the EU is taking more and more control over the member states, while the most important sub-themes related to European integration are: reluctance to help the countries that suffered from the European debt crisis; strong opposition to refugee quotas; optimistic visions of an Intermarium as an alternative to the EU. Through coding are established narratives, how the EU and EU related topics are constructed for the readers and what are the dominant narratives used most often. Braghiroli and Petsinis (2019: 6) state that EKRE’s Euroscepticism stands on two main pillars, geopolitics, sociocultural, which are tightly bound with identity politics.

Xenophobic nationalism is the host ideology of most PRR parties in EU and the main institution scapegoated for denying them their sovereignty is EU. PRR parties have advanced several reasons why migration poses a fundamental threat to society, ranging from simple economic ones to relatively complex cultural justifications (Minkenberg, 2017). The PRR rhetorical strategies therefor play an undeniably important role in the EU narratives. The second research question ‘**How xenophobic nationalism is used in EU narratives in the alternative media channel of Estonian PRR Uued Uudised?**’ helps me to untangle the usage of nationalism, identity politics and imaginaries from nationalist past (Wodak, 2015: 2) knitted into the EU narratives. Perhaps through coding it is possible to bring some clarity into the ‘muddiness’ of EKRE’s nativist discourse, as there seem to be different understandings, which past is the past that is longed for and tried to re-create – is it the one in between the World Wars or something more recent. Although Estonia

was not the target country for large numbers of asylum seekers (Wierenga, 2019), interlinking immigration to collective memories of ‘colonization’ served as a socio-psychological strategy of victimising Estonians and portraying EU and the forced immigration policies as the new oppressors who try to re-colonize Estonia, helped EKRE to mobilize its electorate in 2015 (Braghiroli and Petsinis, 2019; Petsinis, 2019; Trumm: 2018: 341).

Therefore playing on people’s anxieties and feelings of insecurity and emotion overall, as Betz (2018: 143) argued, play important role in political mobilisation of PRR supporters. Taken into account are Wodak’s (2015) ‘toolbox rhetoric’ of discursive strategies for implementing victim-attacker roles, stigmatization, confrontation and construction of conspiracy theories (that also Madisson (2016) described), as well as playing on people’s fears and feeling on security scapegoating immigrants (also Mudde, 2016b), that PRR use to achieve their goals. Greven’s (2016: 1) claim of PRR strategically and tactically using negativity – tools ranging from the calculated break of supposed taboos, disrespect of formal and informal rules, emotional appeals and personal insults, conspiracy theories and violent metaphors alongside with refusal of compromise and demand on radical solutions in political communication. Bornschier’s (2018: 326) argumentation that PRR parties thrive upon country specific conflict to get attention; Betz’s (2018: 140) statement that PRR political narratives are discursive constructs that respond to three key questions: what went wrong, who is to blame and what is to be done to resolve the situation, since the attribution of blame and the stand ‘us versus them’ have been central and enduring features of populist discourse. Also, the role of the emotion and resentment in general as Betz (2018: 143) argued plays important role in political mobilisation of PRR supporters, moreover whether the socio-psychological approach for victimising nativist in the fear of re-colonization (Braghiroli and Petsinis, 2019) appears. Also, whether the racist discourse that the PRR justify with ‘right to identity’ serves as a rhetorical tool to counter charges of xenophobia, racism and extremism (Betz, 2018: 152) perceiving the racist discourse as a normal one.

Sample

According to Charmaz (2006: 17) the quality and credibility of a study starts with the data, so the depth and scope of the data make a difference and a study based upon rich,

substantial and relevant data stands out. Uued Uudised, not interviewing EKRE members or supporters, was chosen because one of their main narratives is that everybody besides them are corrupt, not trustworthy and want to take them down. I could not have been sure that the interviews would be honest and unbiased conversations rather than scepticism towards me, the interviewer who is ‘serving the elite’, therefore the outcome of my research might have not been credible. Moreover, EKRE researchers and scientists, like Louis Wierenga, Leif Kalev, Vello Pettai³³ and others have been publicly ‘condemned’ by EKRE as the servers of the other elite side of polarized society. Uued Uudised articles are written by EKRE members and supporters for their members and supporters, therefore they do not need to try to convince new, possibly different-minded people who might disagree with them, but rather keep their followers with spreading certain information the way they are used to. That makes Uued Uudised the purest source with most reliable data and grounded theory the most accurate method for my small-n research.

In Uued Uudised averagely 3–8 news posts are written per day, which means that visitors know that they can expect more news in a day and therefore may visit it more. My work focuses on interpreting Eurosceptic narratives in Uued Uudised, where approximately

³³ EKRE accuses Wierenga of being in service of the elite, therefore making up the argument that immigrants are bigger enemy than Russians with alleged argument that Russians too have white skin colour. EKRE compares this with other scientist James Sherr, who argues that Russians and immigrants are equally big enemies and concludes that scientist are unprofessional because are not able to agree on EKRE’s biggest enemy. Leif Kalev and Vello Pettai are condemned for saying that EKRE had a weak voice in opposition, which according to EKRE was not true. *‘There is one important moment in this whole story - it shows what kind of ‘friends’ we have, such as Louis Wiering (or the new Hartleb) ‘EKRE researcher’ of the University of Tartu, and our own professors who play games of ‘disappearing Estonian reputation’.* Uued Uudised webpage. (2019). Delfi leidis taas ühe meediakanali, kes võtab “EKRE-uurijatelt” vastu kõike, mis aitaks Eestit mustata. Visited 12.05.2020, <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/delfi-leidis-taas-uh-meediakanali-kes-votab-ekre-uurijatelt-vastu-koike-mis-aitaks-eestit-mustata/>

*Florian Hartleb was the Eesti 200 member and Tallinn’s University professor who lost his temper during the demonstration against immigrants in Freedom Square since he as an immigrant felt he was verbally attacked. Tark, I. (2018). Odini sõdalast nüginud Eesti 200 liige avaldas kahetsust ja esitas avalduse erakonnast lahkumiseks. *Postimees*, 14. December. Visited 12.05.2020, <https://www.delfi.ee/news/paevauudised/eesti/odini-sodalast-nuginud-eesti-200-liige-avaldas-kahetsust-ja-esitas-avalduse-erakonnast-lahkumiseks?id=84757487>

3,900³⁴ news posts were found when searching for ‘Europe’ on the Uued Uudised portal. To have a wide cross-section sample, encoded was every tenth news post since April 27, 2015, when the first post including the word ‘Europe’ was made, so the rough sample consisted of 300 posts, which was approximately 7.7% of all posts. The first round of coding stopped reaching 300 due to data saturation – no new narratives or original statements had occurred within the last 50 posts, the last post coded was dated 5th of August 2019. Out of these 300 posts, 209 posts included one or more narrative relating to EU. These posts were re-encoded in depth with the help of memo-writing and coding-scheme, which was improved throughout both rounds of coding, in-between the codings and also after the second coding.

Coding

Coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes and accounts for each piece of data, so the codes show how to select, separate and sort data to begin an analytic accounting of them, which is the first step in moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic interpretations (Charmaz, 2006: 43). In this case a code is a statement about the EU or relating to the EU. For example, when EU is just referred to as a geographical area and nothing more, then it is not a statement about the EU, however when the EU is called unfair or corrupt multiple times, then it is a statement reflecting an attitude towards the EU and therefor may be part of a narrative, make up a whole itself or fall under a bigger narrative. The goal was to highlight the hidden meanings by using *in vivo* (*alive*) codes, where the phrases representing the parts of the text are worded as closely as possible and open codes are derived directly from text through active reading of text as well as analytical techniques used in grounded theory (Kalmus, Masso, Linno, 2015). *In vivo* codes serve as symbolic markers to give meaning to what is said and need to be subjected to comparative and analytic treatment. Although the terms may be catchy, *in vivo* codes do not stand on their own in a robust grounded theory and need to be integrated into the larger theory (Charmaz, 2006: 55).

³⁴ This was the result in October of 2019, when I started the research.

I use inductively deductive coding, which means that the texts are read and some initial codes are created based on them, at the same time the text is searched for snippets of text that match the codes (Kalmus, Masso, Linno, 2015). This approach was used in both rounds of coding, more inductive in the first round and then more deductive in the second round of coding, since by then the memos and a coding-scheme were developed that could be relied on. Inductive approach was used to map the EU narratives down as closely worded as possible to original statements to then develop main narratives and then coding scheme from them. Inductive approach was useful since the Euroscepticism of EKRE is not much studied (Wierenga, 2017).

INVITATION TO GROUNDED THEORY

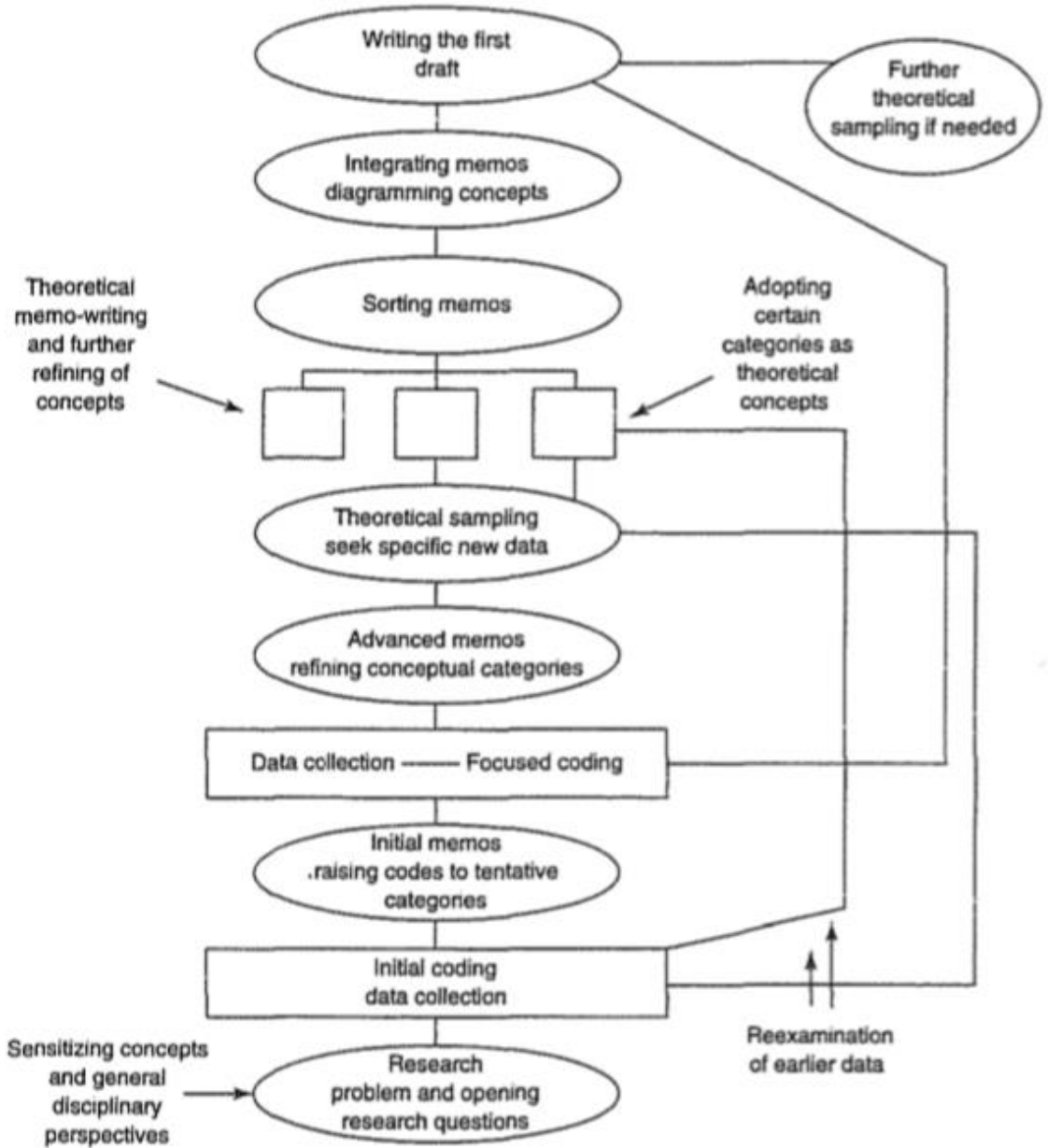


Figure 2.1. The grounded theory development process by Charmaz (2006: 4).

The first round of coding (Figure 2.1.) all the news post in the final sample of 209 posts were read through alongside with writing out all statements relating to EU and snippets that help characterize these statements. According to Charmaz (2006: 82) memos should

be written from the beginning of and throughout the research, since ‘memos spur you to develop your ideas in narrative form and fullness early in the analytic process’. I started making comments about the snippets and statements that helped characterize the context the statements were used in simultaneously with the first round of coding, which served as memos. I went through the collected statements and snippets and tried to establish main categories as narratives, which were constructed from similarities and based on relationships between the statements found from the first round of coding. Patterson and Monroe (1998: 315-316) state that ‘narrative refers to the ways in which we construct disparate facts in our own worlds and weave them together cognitively in order to make sense of our reality’ and claim that narrative plays a critical role in the construction of political behaviour, since people create and use narratives to interpret and understand the political realities around them as individuals but also in collective units, as nations or groups.

For example, statements 92, 94 and 95 from the text all support the third level narrative ‘Estonia should stand with and look up to its Allied nation states (Hungary and Poland, US) rather than EU’: *‘The European Commission is conducting criminal proceedings against Poland over the reform of the country's judicial system, and Estonia must now stand on one side of the front line with Warsaw.’* (92), *‘Viktor Orbán threatened to veto the EU's budget plan, which penalizes countries that refuse immigrants’* (94) and *‘So what to do? Our cartel parties - the Reform Party, the Center Party, the Social Democrats and the IRL - have all shown in power that they do not stand in the way of liquidating the nation state and replacing the people. Consequently, there is only one way to stop this madness - to give the Estonian Conservative People's Party such an overwhelming mandate in the next elections that EKRE would be able to prevent national, economic and social destruction. Just as the standing governments of their nations in Poland and Hungary have done. As the governments of Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are doing, following the example of these two countries.’* (95).

Third level narratives, like ‘Estonia should stand with and look up to its Allied nation states (Hungary and Poland, US) rather than EU’, ‘Leaving EU leads to freedom of the nation state’, ‘Leaving will do good for economy’ and ‘People should stand up against immigration policy’ – all support the bigger second level, branch narrative, which is

‘Leaving EU or/ and not following its orders is good’. Some statements go under many narratives. For example, the following statement ‘*Tim Sebastian's seemingly motivating desire to portray Martin Helme as a typical lying populist, as the mainstream narrative teaches, also seems to have inspired DW. He is not interested in what Martin Helme really has to say, but he attacks the interviewee with the obvious aim of trapping another extremist racist politician.*’ (165) falls under two leaf narratives – ‘Anything that’s mainstream, like media, is under the control of Brussels and is used to destroy conservatives’ and ‘EU and EU-minded people want to prohibit Conservatives freedom of speech, judge them and lie about them, because EU-minded aren’t real democrats’.

The second round of coding a focused coding, which’s goal is to determine the adequacy of those codes by shifting through the data, analysing it and rearranging initial codes to categorize the data incisively and completely (Charmaz, 2006: 57-58). I read through all the EU statement included posts concurrently using and developed my memos and coding scheme. I compared all narratives, aka categories named branch and leaf narratives, to see if it was possible to establish main narratives, as ‘root narratives’, under which all other smaller narratives and statements could allocate. The third level leaf narratives support the second level branch narratives, which support the third level root narratives, smaller narratives originate from wide root narratives. The bigger narratives were therefore constructed from similarities and based on relationships between the smaller narratives. For example:

2. Only conservatives can help save EU and/ or Estonia (37 posts)

- *Only conservatives know and can give people what they really want because are real democrats (12 posts)*
- *Conservatives have the solution for stopping terrorism caused by immigration in EU (8 posts)*
- *Everybody else but the ones that support conservatives is in subordination of Brussels (4 posts)*
- *New conservatism is truth; left liberalism is false (4 posts)* (Appendix 1).

The reason 12+8+4+4 does not equal 28, but 37 because four narratives may have occurred in up to nine common news posts, which are counted as one news post not ten different news posts, or that root narrative ‘Only conservatives can help save EU and/ or

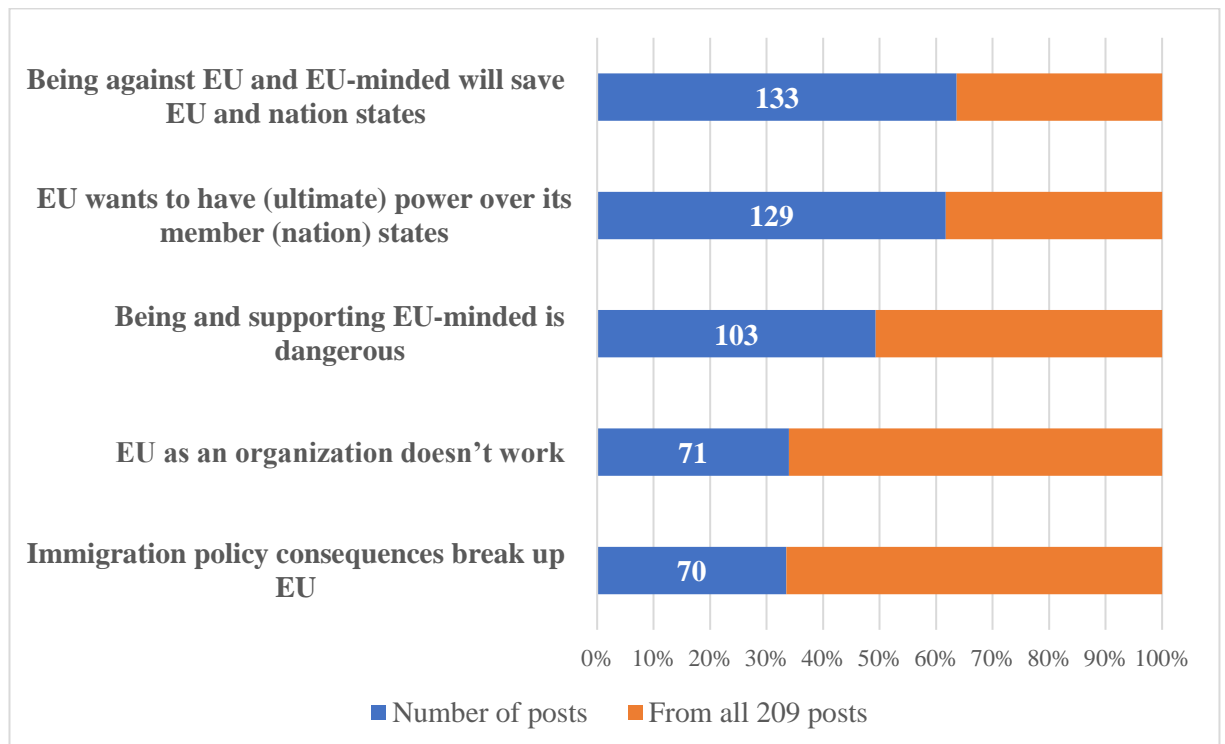
Estonia’ may have occurred in some posts that the four smaller narratives did not and these posts did not make up a separate leaf narrative under which they could form. For example, a news post about the Mayor of Võru joining EKRE: *‘According to Kaver, the Social Democrats are one of the biggest supporters of mass immigration both in Estonia and in Europe, which is why it is necessary to oppose it. ‘EKRE is a party that can put an end to this wave,’ the mayor of Võru noted.’* (75). This did not fall under any of the leaf narratives, but clearly has a message that only EKRE can make things right again for Estonia and EU. However, this was rather an exception than the rule. The same logic applies throughout the coding scheme (Appendix 1).

As Charmaz (2006: 82; Figure 2.1.) suggested, throughout the coding some emergent categories were taken apart and broken into smaller components in order to further develop them through memo-writing. For example, I had first written out a statement: *‘French President François Hollande has admitted to sending weapons to Syrian rebels in 2012, according to a book to be published in France in May. At the time of the arms dispatch, Syria was subject to an EU embargo.’*(2) and worded a possible narrative ‘EU is not uniform, even large Member States do not comply with EU agreements or laws’ and added a comment that this statement was about one of the biggest EU member states – France – admitting breaking its own laws, which could mean that member states are not solidary and lie. This statement, along with other similar statements made up a branch narrative in the final coding scheme ‘EU is not an honourable or honest organization’ which was supported by leaf narrative ‘EU or its MS break its own laws’, which made up the fifth root narrative ‘EU as an organisation doesn’t work’. Before I started coding for my thesis, I read Uued Uudised posts daily for about three months to familiarize myself with the texts and the style of the posts.

3. Empirical Findings from Coding

In this chapter are represented the findings, narratives, with the help of the coding scheme, a three level ‘Narrative Tree’, with comments and explanations. The five most dominant narratives (Figure 3.1.) that emerged from the findings are allocated to subchapters: ‘Being against EU and EU-minded will save EU and nation states’ supported in 133 posts, ‘EU wants to have (ultimate) power over its member (nation) states’ supported in 129 posts, ‘Being and supporting EU-minded is dangerous’ supported in 103 posts, ‘EU as an organization doesn’t work’ supported in 71 posts and ‘Immigration policy consequences break up EU’ supported in 70 posts. Figure 3.1. shows there are two strongest narrative, one as a middle one and again two milder ones.

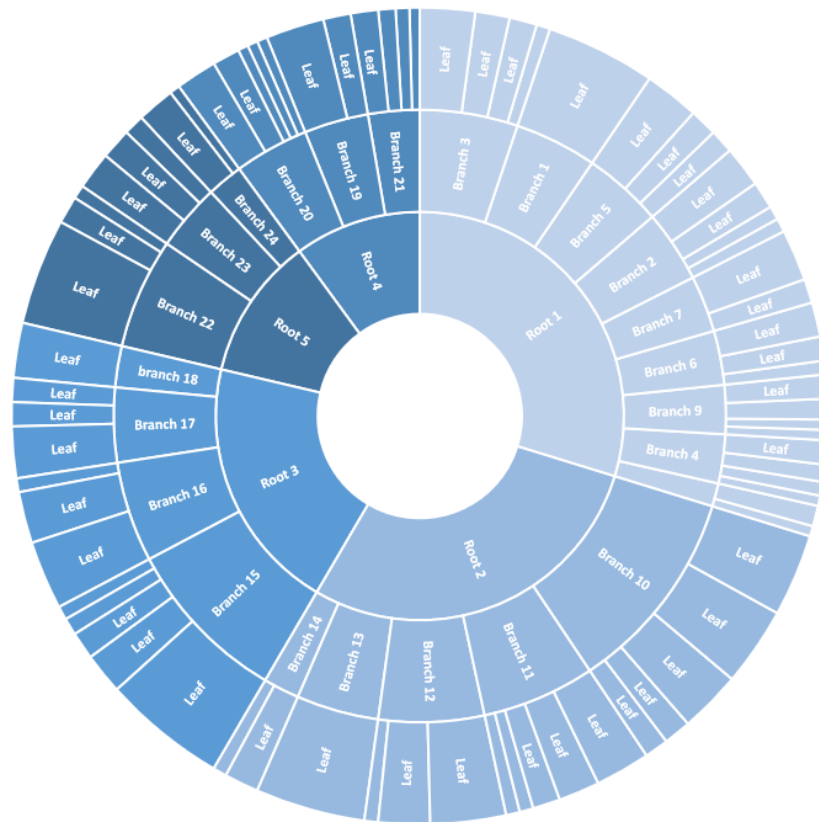
Figure 3.1. The representation of five biggest narratives out of all 209 posts coded.



All five narratives are obviously similar because are negative towards EU and the first three narratives are more emotionally loaded, for example ‘Being and supporting EU-minded is dangerous’ is clearly an attempt to affect people’s feeling of security.

The five root narratives were supported by 24 branch narratives (Figure 3.2.). For a statement to become a leaf narrative it had to be supported by statements in at least three different news posts. The minimal amount forming a leaf narrative occurred 9 times out of altogether 74 leaf narratives.

Figure 3.2. Visual representation of the narratives and their allocation in the narrative tree (Appendix 1).



3.1. Opposing EU Will Save Nation States

Root narrative ‘Being against EU and EU-minded will save EU and nation states’ was supported by the most – 9 – branch narratives. The most occurred branch narrative ‘EU-minded won’t be able to destroy conservatives, although they try to’ was supported in 42 posts. This example from a news post that presents strongly this root as well as this branch narrative, because is based on strong presumption that there are two ‘homogeneous’ groups, however, one of good conservative people and other, bad EU-minded people – it

is common populist approach, which might be used for mobilization of the electorate: *‘/.../ if Estonia and Europe want to survive, they must pursue national conservative policies and resist pressure from the left and liberals /.../ conservatism as a concept and ideology has a reputation problem and it is clear where it all comes from: all kinds of opinion leaders cultivate attitudes in the media and the general public to be modern, to be ashamed of Estonia and to dismantle the nation state, to be liberal, to love gays, immigrants and multicultural. Otherwise, we are not real Europeans and our allies do not understand us.’* (110) In order to ‘help’ deepen the polarization, the nativist minded people are shown at the same time as the repressed ones as heroes standing for the right thing that will win eventually, as describes by socio-psychological strategy that helped EKRE gain electorate pre-election: *‘Such brainwashing does not change a person's heart, but it is safer to put on a ‘modern mask’ in public. /.../ It seems that just as conservative ideology is gaining strength in the West, it is possible that Estonian administrators will also be able to use literature introducing conservatism.’* (110).

The previous news post also strongly supports the second strongest branch narrative – in 37 posts – ‘Only conservatives can help save EU and/ or Estonia’, since it clearly states *‘if Estonia and Europe want to survive, they must pursue national conservative policies and resist pressure from the left and liberals’* (110). The explanation or description of the plan to how they would save EU or Estonia was rarely or never given, the focus was on opposing.

The third branch narrative ‘Leaving EU or/ and not following its orders is good’ serves as rebellion encourager and was strongly supported by a leaf narrative ‘Estonia should stand with and look up to its Allied nation states – Hungary, Poland and US – rather than EU’ sending a message that EU does not help improve Estonia’s geopolitical security status. *‘ ‘They voted against Hungary in the European Parliament, ie. they supported a resolution that can impose sanctions on our Ally,’ said Jaak Madison, EKRE's envoy. ‘Hungary is Estonia's friend and ally in NATO, Hungary has contributed more than a billion euros to protect its external borders, the external border of the European Union, which is also part of our security. /.../ According to Madison, Hungary has every right to decide on its reforms, whether the European left likes it or not.’* (122).

This branch narrative that rebelling against EU is good, was also somewhat contradictory and confusing mainly because this did not completely align with the branch narrative ‘EKRE doesn’t want to leave EU but reduce its power over nation states’. At the same time EKRE applauded leaving and resisting EU, however the idea that EKRE wants Estonia to leave EU was ridiculed. One main topic was supporting Great Britain’s Brexit and saying it leads to freedom of the economy and nation state: *„Jaak Madison: The British took a step closer to independence! /.../ This means that at the end of March, they will have total freedom to establish trade relations with both the United States and other major economies.* (149), Another example portrays EU as the huge monster who wants to suppress nation states sovereignty and at the same time alluding that they are the fighters for this sovereignty as standing opposite to the elites: *‘The British lit a fuse, which can no longer be extinguished. The British have said their word. Freedom is the most precious asset and independence cannot be given to foreign bureaucrats, who would shave the beards of all European men the same and turn children into mere monsters.’* (19). This would lead to think EKRE wants Estonia to leave as well, however, only in one post it was sort of indicated that Estonia should consider leaving EU: *‘/.../ if Britain, which has now survived Brexit, sees that there is no economic benefit from being in the European Union, but the loss of symmetry is noticeable, they will leave the EU. In principle, Estonia faces a similar choice. After 2020, we will see that the euro money that we have built roads for will disappear.’* (70).

Many posts included contradictory narratives with trying to empower the will of the people and promising that conservatives take it over with their ‘steady hands’: *‘/.../ if the federalized EU turns Estonia into a European province, the people must decide to take part in it /.../ The result is the strengthening of conservative, anti-national and anti-immigration forces in Europe, which are likely to take over the determination of the future after the European elections.* (148) and at the same time ridiculing the idea of leaving EU: *‘Do you believe this self-invented nonsense, as if we were going to close theatres by the government, expel the Russians from the country and build walls around Estonia? Would we leave the European Union and NATO and join the CIS?’* (141)

The branch narrative ‘Conservative minded have good and EU-minded bad qualities’ was supported by different assessments made towards the two opposing groups. For example,

a leaf narrative ‘EU-minded prefer immigrants to national people’ because are cold-hearted was in a post that reported of eviction of 70-year old Swedish resident, who was allegedly evicted from home to make room for asylum seekers (3). ‘*The possible victory of the leader of the national front Marine Le Pen in the French elections has alarmed all sorts of socialists, federalists, so-called conservatives, liberals that they are ready to give power to even Arab immigrants rather than to leading favorite in popular alternative polls Le Pen*’ (47) – this shows preferring immigrants as well as urging people to trust alternative, rather than mainstream.

Another branch narrative ‘Being pro EU means being pro Russia, the oppressor’ was supported by leaf narratives that left-wing people are Kremlin minded and therefore traitors and that West-minded people accuse conservatives of being Kremlin agents, but are actually that themselves: ‘*Imagine: Martin Helme is either an idiot or a Putin agent! Unfortunately, Tsahkna relies on Raul Rebane and Eerik-Niiles Kross, who rely on their own political and propagandistic beliefs, to say all this. I have no doubt that all three are commissioned and all three are subject to the rule that the thieves themselves demand the loudest apprehension.*’ (113) – this is a great example of discursive counterstrategies, backfiring the accusations, however, again without any real argumentation. The narratives under this branch, are best described with the as a tactic ‘best defence is verbal attack’.

Branch narrative ‘If don’t support conservatists, bad things will happen’ had two main sub-narratives behind it that both played on peoples feeling of security – a primal need for human existence. Firstly, if one doesn’t support conservatives, immigration from the South will turn Estonia into euro province which is after that conquered by Russia and Estonians will go extinct: ‘*In all likelihood, the further escalation of the situation (or the continuation of mass immigration) will mean a civil war situation in Western European countries, the current excesses are only a prelude. However, if Europe is weak and plagued by internal contradictions, the likelihood that our old familiar eastern neighbour will take advantage of the situation will increase significantly. If the green men act here, will the controversial United States now come to our aid with weapons? Or would it be more sensible for a country so far geographically and mentally to make a deal with the Russian ruler?*’ (144), secondly, if don’t support conservatist, Estonians will go extinct:

‘This is how they want the share of Estonians to decrease, the nation-state to disappear and a European province to emerge,’ Helme resented.’ (96).

Branch narrative ‘EU punishes the ones that don’t follow EU’s orders’ was supported by sub-narratives that EU uses not following the rule of law as an excuse to invade home affairs and that EU won’t sign the Brexit deal as punishment to Great Britain for leaving: *‘Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán warned on Friday that Budapest could veto the European Union’s next seven-year budget plan, which seeks to link funding to adherence to alleged democratic standards. The plan is seen as an attempt to limit the ‘reversal of the separation of powers, the rule of law and other democratic principles and values’ in countries such as Hungary and Poland, but in practice they are a punishment for disobedience to Brussels’ orders. (94).*

The last branch narrative under this root is ‘The real and right EU people are white with conservative values’, they don’t want immigrants and are indigenous, this often briefly referred to Christian values: *‘If God wanted the whole world to be a mess of nations and races, He would not have created the world in such a way that white people in Europe and some darker people in Africa.’ (138).*

3.2. EU Wants Ultimate Power

Two of the most occurred branch narratives in my research fell under the second root narrative ‘EU wants to have (ultimate) power over its member (nation) states’, which clearly demonstrates interlinking immigration and integration to the collective memories of ‘colonization’ under the Soviet Union and the collective anxieties of being oppressed again, as discovered by Braghiroli and Petsinis (2019). An example: *‘Friday marks 30 years since the adoption of the Estonian Declaration of Sovereignty - unfortunately, Estonian sovereignty is under attack again. At the time, it was a protest against the Soviet empire, which arrived with fire and sword - the new empire in the form of the European Union is more insidious, it is infiltrating quietly, but it is already clear that it feels confident enough to threaten and demand. (134).*

The most occurred branch narrative according to my research was ‘EU wants to make one big EU nation (The United Nations of Europe) and demolish sovereign nation states’

was supported in 61 news posts, an example: *‘Similarly, behind the current migration crisis, when we look at mass immigration as a whole, there are always liberal politicians and their supporters in the media and academia who dream of a world where we are all happy consumers in a warm bath of rainbow-colored multiculturalism.’* (8) demonstrating hatred towards liberal ideology and immigration, that the liberal-minded have brought along. The second strongest branch narrative ‘EU-minded people and establishments care for money and power, not people’ was supported in 55 news posts.

The narrative of EU wanting to The United Nations of Europe was mostly supported by two narratives, that immigration policy is used to take away states’ sovereignty and that EU wants to kill traditional values. *‘Today, five years ago, the leaders of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian nationalities met in Bauska, Latvia and signed the Bauska Declaration. It stated, among other things: ‘We reaffirm the primacy of the sovereignty of our peoples over supranational institutions and we oppose any attempt to include our independent nation states in the United States. We are following the immigration policies of Western European countries as a warning. Our demographic situation does not allow any new mass immigration into our countries. We regard the family and the homeland as core values, despite the emerging ideas of cultural Marxism, postmodernist multiculturalism and destructive liberalism.’* (119). Also, EU was referred to as a federation or wanting to become one.

The narrative ‘EU-minded prefer immigrants to nationals’ from first root, also supports the branch narrative of EU wanting to make one big EU nation. *‘The national, immigration and labor market policies of the entire Estonian state seem to be increasingly aimed at one goal - to lose the nation state, push Estonians, their language and culture into the background or force them to emigrate, exchange indigenous people for immigrants and create a multicultural euro province.’* (98). EU was said to use its ‘values’ like tolerance, solidarity and fake humanism in order to demolish nation states. The following example portrays EU as inhuman: *‘The ideology of ‘keeping up with the times’ is nothing more than surrendering to a revolution - a movement full of heresy or false teaching, which tries to uproot the human soul from its own body and forge a ‘new person’ in the course of globalization. All this is being done under the slogan of tolerance, solidarity and hypocritical false humanism, which is particularly irresponsible and*

criminal because it exploits the trust of benevolent people. (124). This is also supported by sub-narrative that EU wants to Islamize nation states/ EU will Islamize.

The branch narrative 'EU-minded people and establishments care for money and power, not people' is supported by narratives that EU legislation, values and money are instruments of political subordination and power, EU-minded governments and establishments are corrupt, deep states and EU establishments don't understand or care what people want. *'For a long time now, it has seemed to anxious Estonians that the state makes everything possible for the sake of relative prosperity and this is reflected in the immoderate construction of large industries, highways and mines. I personally believe that EKRE voter has been made so thoughtful by the policies of governments facing Europe that is over-measuring nine times before cutting. Those who immediately go on a cheer with each project will see hefty euro rolls in every such object.* (82). The example is clear-cut polarization of two groups that ends with 'a pat on the back' for EKRE's supporters affirming they are on the right track.

The branch narrative 'EU has propagandistic nature' is strongly supported by sub-narratives that anything that's mainstream, like media, is under the control of Brussels and is used to destroy conservatives and EU is the same as or worse than Soviet Union. The following is a snippet from the post made after Martin Helme gave an interview to a news outlet Deutsche Welle carried out by journalist Tim Sebastian: *'Both Tim Sebastian and Postimees follow the narrative of the so-called lying populist and try to do everything to portray Martin Helme as a misleading populist politician. By manipulating the figures and distorting what is being said, they are trying to show that Helme is exaggerating (i.e. lying) /.../ Ideological workers who, because of their worldviews, are eager to expose a 'lying populist' should not work in the press and should not call themselves journalists. Nor should the ideological output they produce be considered a press.* (165).

Also 'EU wants to repress not EU-minded because is afraid of losing its supremacy' is supported by that EU-minded people want to prohibit conservative's freedom of speech and judge them, because they are not real democrats, but conservatives are, the left just does not understand it: *'The main units of the Estonian media (Delfi, Reporter, etc.) have started accusing Estonians with a more conservative worldview of inciting foreign hatred and hate speech, racism, etc. Of course, there are emotionally charged comments and*

sayings and the media often doesn't hold back on amplifying them. However, it is completely misleading to draw general conclusions about the Estonian people on this basis, because Estonians defend their sense of home, ie their rights as an indigenous people. /.../ repulsive and angry expressions about uneducated immigrants express more than racism based on narrow-mindedness and superiority. Thinking about what is behind people's fears and despair, it turns out that it is not just a person's primitive ego. (7). This is a pinpoint example of the racist discourse that the PRR call 'right to identity' serving as a rhetorical tool to counter charges of xenophobia, racism and extremism claiming to be and represent the 'true' democrats as described by Betz (2018: 152) and Betz and Johnson (2004: 311-312).

3.3. EU-mindedness Is Dangerous

The third root narrative 'Being and supporting EU-minded is dangerous' can be summarized with two main concepts – EU-minded people's physical safety and wellbeing is at risk and also EU-minded people are victims of the ideology or religion of Europe. It's well described in the following statement: *'Ghettos with an Islamic population, no-go zones, burning cars, gangs, violence, bombs, terrorism and the constant harassment of women / girls by immigrants, sexual crimes, mosques and the removal of crosses from churches. In Malmö, no more Christmas is allowed, only winter holidays. The crazy situation in mixed schools, the shortage of police and the exodus of indigenous peoples. The same violence has already been experienced by the Estonian people'* (150). This shows pressing on the safety of more 'fragile' society groups, as women and children and bringing in sexual violence, which could be the worst thing after death that a person can imagine happening to him or her. Playing on people's fear is clear in this example, however completely fictional, since, Estonia was not 'hit' by the wave of immigrants. In addition, EU-minded establishments, including Estonia's left-wing liberal establishment, decision-making was blamed for this violence: *The story again reaches the migration pact and migrants, to whom the Estonian authorities gave the green light. However, a harsh warning came across the Gulf about the long-term rape of young Finnish girls aged 10-14 by a gang of migrants and this is no exception, but is already a 'new norm' in Finland. Estonian male politicians do not think about the safety of their daughters /.../ it happens*

in masses, as the experience of Western Europe shows. Why don't Estonian politicians understand or see how globalization deprives our children of a peaceful life here in their own country? (139). Also: 'We have to ask ourselves, are the young women living in Tallinn ready for ghettos that could be raped in our capital due to immigrants? Such a world is brought to us by the socialists' commitment to multicultural ideology. Elsewhere in Europe, socialists have proved that they are ready to sacrifice all their other favorite minorities - women, gays, minorities - on the altar of multiculturalism.' (63).

From the previous examples may be falsely concluded that when it comes to women, the discourse is always based on 'protecting the more fragile gender', on the contrary, women are portrayed according to how the situation needs – they claim childless women should not talk about the rights of the women, since only being a mother captures the existence of womanhood: *'/.../ how is it possible to stand up for women's rights if a woman does not know what it means to be a mother? She is a representative of pretentious career women, not of the whole gentler sex! Childless women tend to shout the most about the right to abortion and the right not to have children at all, for which they should not be criticized (although it is the offspring that form the basis of our retirement) - and at the same time they tend to speak for all women. The same is true of the leader of the new project party [Kristina Kallas – K. K.], whose life fluctuates in the barren waters of globalism and Sorosity.'* (139) However, a woman with children can also be heavily criticised for her 'womanly' politics based on soft values, for example president Kersti Kaljulaid or counsellor Angela Merkel.

One sub-narrative that supported this branch narrative, was that EU may try to gain power by using force – aggression and violence – for example with the help of the European Army: *'The European Union's own army plan is very dangerous in many ways,' explains Martin Helme /.../ There is also a danger that such an army could be used in the future against reluctant Member States who do not obey the Commission, for example in relocating immigrants.* (34) and in contrast, taping on the strength of conservatives: *'In addition, Gräzin said that Europe should never have an army, as it will certainly force the resistance movement in the Member States.'* (123).

The second important branch narrative was 'EU-mindedness is blind religion, ideology (Religion of Europe)', which was mainly supported by that Estonian Government

worships and obeys Brussels due to which makes bad decisions and that EU-minded people are brainwashed, can't think on their own, are afraid and have bad qualities: 'European countries must admit that they have imported millions of foreign cultures who are violently attacking Europe's indigenous peoples because of the distorted ideology of multiculturalism. (52) and 'Multicult brainwashing in schools is in full swing, cinema propaganda has also been used. Since both the previous Reform Party-led government and the current Ratas government have apparently decided to replace the people with strangers in our beloved homeland, Estonia, on the 'warm recommendation' of Brussels, national conservatives cannot agree with such multicultural propaganda. /.../ It is especially disgusting when this is done by the so-called tear-pulling method of arousing compassion.' (38).

People were often denigrated and labeled EU-minded simply for disagreeing with EKRE, which shows again the attempt to polarize people into two opposing groups, as simply as saying that the conservative minded are wise and leftist are slow-minded liars. For example: 'It is strange that an educated (or rather pointless in education?) White European no longer understands basic things. Prosperity, consumer insanity, amenities, teen-oriented television, buzzing media, aggressive propaganda of violence and sex, pornography and computer games, declaring perversions normal, lying and greedy politicians, destroying the natural environment. A terrible list, of course, a person who has lived in such a greenhouse can no longer really, naturally think, he can only see the world through a narrow slit. Or through dirty greenhouse glasses. A wise man can recognize the rays of wisdom from the great darkness... But a fool, wise man does not listen. He argues. With demagoguery. What else does he have to offer against wisdom?' (5). Also, journalists are called *child journalists* (150) and *snowflakes* (150) and again that elite is worried because of the powerful doings of conservatists: 'Raul Rebane, a former sports commentator, has now been thrown out against national conservatives, and he usually shows up when cartel politicians situation gets sour' (145). The narrative that EU-minded people have bad qualities somewhat overlapped with the narrative from the first root's 'Being against EU and EU-minded will save EU and nation states' branch narrative 'Conservative minded have good and EU-minded bad qualities' (see Appendix 1).

The branch narrative ‘If don’t support conservatists, Estonia’s sovereignty and its people’s freedom is at cost’ largely overlapped with the branch narrative ‘If don’t support conservatives, bad thing will happen’ under the first root narrative. It included sub-narratives that if one does not support conservatists, immigration from the South will turn Estonia into euro province which is then conquered by Russians and Estonians will go extinct. However, the sub-narrative of EU-minded people preferring immigrants to nationals also supported this branch narrative, which supported the branch narrative of ‘Conservative minded have good and EU-minded bad qualities’ under the first root narrative.

The branch narrative ‘due to following EU, Estonia can’t be friends with its important Visegrad Allies or US, who would help Estonia when its independency is at stake’ was supported by one main sub-narrative, which was that Estonia should stand with and look up to its real Allies – Hungary, Poland and US – rather than EU. *‘Estonia's path runs in the same direction as Poland, a straight-backed ally, not against it. /.../ Estonia cannot afford that the Poles, seeing our backstroke at a time when they needed help, will never turn their backs on us. All the more so as in the event of any conflict with Russia, Poland, which comes into contact with Lithuania and the Kaliningrad enclave of Russia, will certainly be immediately involved in the war and will be able to help us most quickly.’* (92) and *‘/.../ we do not support a federal Europe, but the Visegrad Quartet and their allies /.../’* (80). Much effort is put to saying that the Visegrad countries, especially Hungary, has real democracy that EU wants to suppress, for example: *‘Martin Helme pointed out that the Estonian mainstream media tried to talk less about the whole Hungarian story, because it is not really a matter of Hungarian democracy, but of its absence in the EU - the European Union is demolishing social institutions within itself.’* (123). This can be interpreted that EKRE appraises the countries where PRR have reached power as examples to Estonia.

3.4. The EU as an Organisation Does Not Work

The root narrative ‘EU as an organization does not work’ had three strong branch-narratives. The first ‘EU is no longer democratic’ was supported by that immigration policy is forced and undemocratic and did not include the will of the people with the

endeavor for direct democracy: ‘*With the support of these signatures, we demand a referendum where people can express their opinion on whether they agree with our country's participation in the European Union's refugee resettlement program,*’ said Martin Helme, /.../ *The Estonian people must also have the right to decide how much we accept immigrants.*’ According to Helme, one of the goals of the Conservative People's Party is to introduce a people's initiative and other mechanisms of direct democracy in Estonia.’ (15). Also, that fundamental freedoms are no longer free, for example freedom of speech is now racism or hate speech and complimenting or enjoying beauty of women is now sexism. ‘*The so-called ‘European values’, especially extreme feminism and gender neutrality, also make matters worse. Let only a few ‘white middle-aged men’ try to smile at some of the amazons who took part in the ‘women's march’ - this ‘pervert’ and ‘chauvinist’ are immediately striped for sexual harassment!*’ (159) and ‘*If we recommend that the currently developed Europe start fighting ethnic migration, it will certainly be hit by an avalanche of accusations of inhumanity, racism, xenophobia and many other sins.*” (93), also ‘*An ideology that formally protects the rights of ‘minorities’ but actually deprives society of freedom of expression and punishes victims instead of criminals can be boldly called liberal fascism.*” (31).

Secondly, that ‘EU isn’t an honourable or honest organization’ was mainly described by sub-narratives that stress the bad qualities of EU – being bureaucratic, lying, weak, cowardly and so on. ‘*Liberal Europe will not fight, it will not be able to execute its mass murderers through the death penalty, but it will now turn its butt in front to make it easier for strangers to beat and throat to make it easier to cut through.*’ (93)

Thirdly, ‘EU’s politics are bad for member states or member states’ economy’ was supported by narratives about EU politics, for example, economic and agriculture politics are not reasonable. This is an example of how EU is to blame for extinction of Estonian rural life in Kallaste: ‘*Previously, the town had its own high school and vocational high school, where mechanics, electricians and salesmen were trained. Today, only the 9th grade school remains. About a dozen previously operating industrial companies have also been liquidated. Fishing and selling fish has been made almost impossible for the locals. The traditional onion and cucumber cultivation along Lake Peipsi has also become obsolete due to the European Union's policy of destroying local agriculture.*’

(26). The least prominent second-level narrative criticises EU's economical politics, showing some argumentation behind the narrative.

3.5. Immigration Policy Breaks Up the EU

The fifth root narrative 'Immigration policy consequences break up EU' was used both ways, as the policy will break up EU or has already done it. The main branch narrative is 'EU does not realize the bad that comes with immigration and helping developing countries' which was supported by narratives, that immigration brings violence and terrorism – which also supported the narrative under the third root, that being EU-minded is dangerous – and that EU isn't able to control immigration flow and terrorism flow into EU. Also, that EU funds terrorism without knowing it. The branch narrative 'EU doesn't see that immigrants have their own agenda' was supported by narratives, that immigrants do not want to/ will not integrate, but to take over EU, Immigrants aren't really refugees, but come here for good economy and they think badly of EU's culture and values. *'It is no longer a secret that this 'escape' across the Mediterranean is big and dirty business. In the process, those killed have either been confused or have had to take into account that the criminal affair may have a sad ending for them. And they paid for it themselves. /.../ Human traffickers take them aboard the coast of North Africa and force them into random pilots in international waters. All in order for European ships, including the foundations of voluntary associations, to be 'legally' picked up. In essence, these 'blue-eyed associations' are, in fact, involved in international crime, as Laura Huhtasaari, the indigenous Finn's representative in the European Parliament, has just said. Please note: most 'refugees' are full-blooded, young men at their best. But those who drown are more women and children, because those 'men' save themselves first, not the poorer fellow travelers.'* (206)

The last branch narrative was 'Immigrants will not integrate, so EU's plan to make a big EU nation won't work' which was supported by that immigrants don't want to/ won't integrate, but to take over EU and Negroes and Muslims will get out of hand: *'An intolerant and militant religion has established itself in the Old World and when it grows up, it begins to make its demands and pay for itself. This is a time when Islam is no longer subject to the rules of democracy. By eating, however, appetite grows and a democratic*

society already abandons its principles because it fears violence by strangers when it comes to creating order. But it will not save him, because strangers despise the enemies - soon a democratic society will be brought to its knees and will still die.' (153).

4. Analysis of the Findings

My research results confirm, as Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018) claimed, that the main four themes of EKRE – anti-Russian stance, Euroscepticism, family values and refugees – are often blended together. The narratives that were established were infested with conspiracy theories, including ‘The New World Order’ (Madisson, 2016). For example, the second biggest root narrative as conspiracy ‘EU wants to have (ultimate) power over its member (nation) states’ was supported by branch narrative ‘EU wants to Islamize nation states’, where conspiracies on EU’s bad intentions were constructed through Euroscepticism and migration. A branch narrative that being pro EU means being pro Russia, the oppressor, which was supported by leaf narrative that EU-minded people are Kremlin minded, demonstrates using anti-Russian stance and Eurosceptic themes to support the conspiracies.

The results of my research affirm EKRE’s three-dimensional Euroscepticism – geopolitical, sociocultural and economic, with the latter least important (Braghiroli and Petsinis; 2019: 6). Therefore, financial crisis, as reluctance to help the countries that suffered from the European debt crisis, as claimed to be the third most important topic in EKRE’s EU critical narratives, next to anti-elitism and migration by Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018: 49-52), no longer dominates. Economic problems were rather seen through unfairness of EU politics, for example unjust agriculture development funding. EKRE continuously opposes EU’s immigration policy and can be still seen as Eurosceptic party that is driven by xenophobic nationalism (Petsinis, 2019: 225; Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018; Braghiroli and Petsinis: 2019; Makarychev and Sazono, 2019; Wierenga, 2017; Wierenga, 2019).

To answer the first research question, ‘**How the European Union is constructed in the alternative media channel of Estonian PRR Uued Uudised?**’, it is mainly constructed through agitation and polarization. EKRE puts much effort on furthering of the right people from wrong, as simply as ‘Conservative minded have good and EU-minded bad qualities’. Often rhetorical tools, common in PRR discourse, were used. In most narratives, fear and playing on people’s security, dominated heavily, calling the EU-minded people are brainwashed victims of the religion of Europe, EU-minded people are secret agents for Putin, with saying that anything mainstream from journalism and

establishments to education and liberal values are the propaganda of Brussels trying to turn EU member states into United Nations of Europe, as a 'grey mass' that is easier to control, which was to be achieved by Islamizing EU. EU itself was said to use to be democratic, but not anymore.

Power and money were said to be the main drivers of EU-minded people for why they try to destroy the nation states. EU-minded people, based on the empirical findings, were portrayed as blind followers of the values that are set out in the Treaty of European Union (2012) paragraph two – respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. However, in a much more negative way – which is common for PRR parties (Greven's, 2016: 1) – in a sense that they prefer 'Europeanness' to 'Estonianness' and turn the EU's integration to dangerous course, both physically and culturally. EU-minded person approves immigration policy and the demolition of nation states while preferring immigrants to national people. They want to abolish national values and culture, are brainwashed by the leaders of EU, while also secretly agents for Kremlin. Especially important is, that EU-minded people do not really care about the indigenous people. EU-minded people oppose Conservatists and want to suppress them in any way possible, such as using mainstream media as tool for propaganda and taking away their freedom of speech. They are traitors with bad human qualities, for example are dumb, naïve, cruel, coldhearted and even hate children.

Inversely, conservatives were portrayed as the saviors, who EU-minded people try to oppress through every possible way – denying them common freedoms, as freedom of speech, lying about them, using the liberal values, like tolerance and equality, in order to muzzle the conservatists, the rebels not following EU were punished with the help of EU legislation, as was the case for Hungary or Poland, where EU interfered in domestic affairs. However, conservatist were portrayed as the beacon of light that can turn the EU on the right course and a worthy opponent that the left-wing is much afraid of.

My results confirm, as Braghiroli and Petsinis (2019: 6) claimed that EKRE's Euroscepticism is tightly bound with identity politics, since EKRE sees Estonia as a victim of both EU liberalism and Russian imperialism, portraying EU as 'the other' in its discourse (Makarychev and Sazonov, 2019: 462-463). The socio-psychological strategy

of victimising Estonians and portraying EU and the forced immigration policies as the new oppressors who try rob Estonia from its sovereignty (Braghiroli and Petsinis, 2019; Petsinis, 2019; Trumm: 2018: 341), is still very strongly present in EKRE's EU narratives. EU, EU-minded people and establishments were described as unjust forbidders the long longed-for freedom.

The second research question was '**How xenophobic nationalism is used in EU narratives in the alternative media channel of Estonian PRR Uued Uudised?**'. In EKRE's discourse 'us' represents the pure, conservative, common, often with rural roots nationalist Estonians and 'them' the people and minorities that EU-minded liberal people approve of, like immigrants and other national minorities, Russians, Ukrainians, also sexual minorities, like LGBTQ people, feminists and other that contradict with conservative values.

The 'right to identity' served as a justification for xenophobia, racism and extremism (Betz, 2018: 152) perceiving the racist discourse as a normal one often using counterattacks as a tool. Mart Helme stated in Uued Uudised news post, that not EKRE, but left radicals are to blame for turning Estonian society angry and intolerant: '*You are the ones who, with your ideological stamps, automatically attach forehead labels to those who disagree – racist, Nazi, fascist, Putinist, xenophobic, hater, extreme nationalist, far right.*' (141). In another news post one of the regular writers Malle Pärn states the same adding that '*EKRE tries to protect the people from you. Fear and evil are sown by the attacker, not the defender.*' (138). Strategically and tactically using negativity Greven's (2016: 1) – disrespects, personal insults, violent metaphors, refusal of compromise and demand for radical solutions – characterized the discourse on EU.

At the same time emotion and resentment, as Betz (2018: 143) argued, played important role in political mobilisation. Pressing on the painful sentiment of the past and justifying it with angrily protecting the newly achieved independence and sovereignty with strong emotions, claiming to fight for, what is the rightfully 'ours': '*How does it surprise anyone that Estonians are not in favour of the migration agreement? Let's look at our history. Constant subjugation, killing and tax collection has been going on here. Imagine life a few hundred years ago at the end of November: sitting in a smoky shack in the light of a torch, spinning the yarn, family having fun, telling fairy tales and parables. From time to*

time, someone goes to the manor to work and/or get beaten. And then there's a war /.../' (125).

Nationalism, identity politics and imaginaries from nationalist past (Wodak, 2015: 2) were tightly knitted into the EU narratives, again through opposition, for example a narrative 'EU wants to kill traditional values, like family, culture and Christian values. However, these were rarely expounded. Christian values were often mentioned, but what was meant by Christian values, was hardly explained. The same goes for integrating nativist ideas into today's society. Often were mentioned the simplicity of rural times and appraised the sobriety of peasant thinking, but how this would fit into nowadays society and politics, left much empty space for interpretation.

The authoritarian approach, fighting for direct democracy and praising the rural common people as the hard-working 'real' Estonians that the strong leader Mart Helme vows to represent, might draw similarities to much resent times under the oppression of Soviet Union. However, in Uued Uudised, this was not the case. It is only possible to conclude, that this could be due to the unknown, but perhaps small number of the same people that write the posts in Uued Uudised and therefor keep producing the 'same' stories. Whereas in mainstream media, every politician speaks for themselves, as was the case with Arvo Allers suggestion to send the children to work on the fields, therefor saying things EKRE's leadership might not approve of, reflecting the different understanding of which nationalist past is being tried to create.

Although the ideal EU of nation states with more sovereignty, was mentioned often, no solid description – which policies should be more sovereign and how it would work, in which areas or establishment there should be direct democracy, what should the specifics of this kind of establishment be – was provided. The idea of Intermarium, as Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018) said, was clearly present in EU narratives, however, again on a rather abstract level. For example branch narrative 'Due to following EU, Estonia can't be friends with its important Visegrad Allies or US, who would help Estonia when its independency is at stake' was supported by a leaf narrative 'Estonia should stand with and look up to its real Allies – Hungary, Poland and US – rather than EU'. EKRE appraises the countries where PRR have reached power. The vision of a union of nation states was present, but represented through opposition, focusing on EU's obstructive role.

All five root narratives can be seen as carriers of PRR nativist appeals, where EU is described as the enemy counteracting to Estonia's endeavour towards sovereignty. However, PRR rhetorical 'tools' always accompanied the statements and claims therefor becoming a part of the narratives. The PRR rhetoric, especially the rhetoric that is used to fuel the ideas and narratives of xenophobic nationalism, have tremendous role and importance in regard to portraying EU and EU related topics. It is important to note that Estonia was not hit with waves of immigration, through which in the news posts was portrayed the possible doom of sovereignty of nationalist Estonia. Racism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, nativism, religiocentrism and heterophobia (Minkenberg (2017) and Heitmeyer (2005, through Minkenberg, 2017: 15) are all wrapped into the Eurosceptic narratives in order to show the importance of distinguishing 'us' from 'them' as the scapegoated minority, that manifests as a phenomenon of 'politics of fear' (Wodak, 2015) Playing on people's fears and sense of security appeared in all the root and branch narratives. The third root narrative 'Being and supporting EU-minded is dangerous', which itself is already fear provoking, was supported in half of the encoded posts. The fear occurred in narratives as:

- fear for one's safety or one's family, since immigrants bring violence and terrorism, worries about women's safety because they will be the victims of sexual violence;
- the fear of losing Estonia's sovereignty after Russian aggression, which was said to follow after EU-minded turn Estonia into euro province;
- the fear of losing fundamental freedoms, like freedom of speech, since EU-minded suppress not conservative-minded people's freedoms;
- fear of replacing values, like family values, as marriage between man and wife and the importance of children, but also Christian values with feminism, liberal LGBTQ and violent Islamic values;
- fear of losing 'Estonianness' since EU wants to make one big EU nation, which if necessary, is filled with immigrants, since they might prefer them to indigenous people, also fear for the future, since Estonians might go extinct with current EU policies;
- and over all fear and anger towards 'the other' – EU-minded people, who are to blame for everything that's bad in today's society starting from violence that the

immigration policy brings, to brainwashing children in school without questioning the 'Blind religion of Europe' and also who are actively trying to make conservatives lives miserable.

Therefore, I propose a theory that EKRE regularly uses specific EU narratives for scapegoating the EU in order to maintain power through the support of the 'pure' group and keeping the society polarized by using the PRR rhetoric, blame and fear. EKRE pictures EU are as a scapegoat firstly for keeping Estonia from sovereign decision making and secondly for immigration and integration that obliterates nationalism. Their usage of conspiracy theories, playing of people's fear, attribution of blame and other discursive strategies and elements, like verbal attacking, racism, sexism and heterophobia, often presented through factually incorrect information they claim as truth, as simple as EU wants to destroy 'Estonianness', when in fact EU has allocated hundreds of millions of euros to help better the rural and social life, which directly effects the wellbeing of large amount of EKRE supporters.

Posts in Uued Uudised often had a certain structure, where at the beginning a general idea would be stated, for example, '*EKRE has been drawing attention to Estonia's neo-Russification for some time, but it must also be seen in the context of European federalization.*' (125). This statement was followed by tension building focusing on all the bad things that left-liberal people and the EU are doing and how indigenous people are suppressed, '*The globalist Estonian cartel society uses Russification to destroy the nation state and turn Estonia into a European province. /.../ Here, however, globalist-minded people lose their sense of reality because they hope to control these processes, but because the plans involve uncontrollable forces (the Putinist part of the Russian community in Estonia, Muslims in Western Europe), things can soon get out of control.*' (125). And at the end of the post EKRE comes out with a soothing message, that the world order could be saved and everybody safe, but only when choosing EKRE, '*Left-wing liberals therefore want to destroy such societies by encoding in them conflicts arising from multiculturalism - in order to gain control of them by force. In Estonia, such processes will come to an unfortunate end as soon as EKRE comes to power*' (125). It is common for communities that act in echo chambers to embed already existing beliefs through repetition (Grömping, 2014; Törnberg, 2018).

PRR rhetoric of discursive strategies for implementing victim-attacker roles, stigmatization, confrontation and construction of conspiracy theories, as well as playing on people's fears and feeling on security scapegoating immigrants, but also the socio-psychological strategy that helps to mobilize through fear of re-colonization that PRR use to achieve their goals, are crucially important to consider in EKRE's discourse. News posts with certain structures appearing regularly, shows regular usage of fear as tool of manipulation for keeping their supporters 'inflamed'. As no thorough factual explanations, as stated in theory, appeared for most of the narratives or even statements. For example, how or why EU-minded people are Kremlin agents, only was said that they have bad qualities, they want to demolish nation states and that they care for power or money. Some argumentation was found regarding EU policies that supported the branch narratives that EU is no longer democratic, and its policies are bad for member states and their economies. The strongest leaf narrative here was that immigration and integration policy are not democratic but forced. Also, economic politics of EU were criticized in eight posts. However, all this often did not appear together in one post. Rather every post had a spec of some narrative(s), so these fragments came together as a whole narrative – making the argumentation given by EKRE insufficient.

This shows that the xenophobic nativist appeals that mobilize people with the help of PRR rhetorical tricks, are the drivers in EKRE's EU critical discourse. Moreover, the Echo chamber (Grömping, 2014; Törnberg, 2018) theory, of repetition of the same information in closed community, helped to assure the already existing narratives. The era of post-truth and vernacular authority (Madisson and Ventsel, 2017) only strengthens the opportunities for spreading alternative information and for people to believe it. The element of authoritarianism was seen in news posts where Mart Helme was quoted, or where he was the author – in most posts the authors were not added – included the most and strongest narratives and statements. For example, a news post where Helme commented a terrorist act that had happened in London and how it means a radical change in politics is needed towards conservatism and immigration policy, included statements that supported 15 narratives, including leaf, branch and root narratives, which shows the importance of authoritarianism through the charismatic strong father-figure leader, that often for PRR parties determinates the course of the party. Keeping their electorate incited

and at the same time vowing to keep them secure serves as an effective rhetorical approach in EKRE's EU narratives.

4.1. Contradictions in EU Narratives

EKRE's media discourse is guided simultaneously by some norms of dominant political communication as well as by the provocative and controversial argumentation patterns of radical-right grass-roots social media (Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018). The main contradictions in the narratives were about the EU and EU-minded people and defence. There was little inconsistency, since they were named both dumb victims of the EU religion who take everything that comes from Brussels over without questioning because are spineless. At the same time, the EU-minded had great plans of demolishing nation states and spread EU propaganda for money and were secret agents for Putin, which would make the reader interpret that they need to be quite clever. The same inconsistency applied for statements and narratives about EU. The EU was a victim of immigration, violence and Islamization, because wanted to help refugees due to soft values, like tolerance solidarity and humanism. Simultaneously, EU planned the Islamization to gain power over nation states and used immigration policy for it, moreover, not following EU's orders could be punished by EU interfering member state's home affairs, for example Hungary or Poland.

Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga (2018) claim, that Europe is not as big of an enemy of EKRE as Russia. Even though this thesis did not focus on the party's Russian narratives or attitudes, the Soviet Union was regularly compared to EU as more pleasant and normal union than the EU. In the summer of 2019 Mart Helme gave an exclusive interview to Baltnews, which is propagandistic channel under the control of Putin, where according to Baltnews, he said there is no threat to Estonia from Russia (Eesti minister teeb..., 2019). Keeping in mind Mart Helme has served as a diplomat in Russia and therefore is aware of the consequences to giving an interview to a propagandistic media channel under the control of Putin. Moreover, EKRE politicians have agreed that their EU narratives are similar to Russia's EU approach (Wierenga, 2017). Based on the results of this thesis, in one post EKRE agreed that the narratives about collapsing Europe go in line with Russian Federation narratives about collapsing West. *'Maybe Russia really uses the same*

statements as EKRE, but that does not belittle the fact that Europe is in trouble with mass immigration /.../ (145). EKRE's stance on Russia needs further research.

EKRE politicians strongly oppose to the ideology of Putin denying any intentional similarities in narratives (Wierenga, 2017). Mudde (2016b) says that while the connections between the European far right and Russia deserve serious scrutiny, rather than wild speculation, they are not Putin's real Trojan Horse within the EU, rather they include former prime ministers of major EU countries, like Silvio Berlusconi, Tony Blair and Gerhard Schroeder, who still hold serious economic and political cloud and, most of all, they include political leaders like Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who is worth more to Putin than all far right parties together. Hungary is named as one of the main real Allies of Estonia in Uued Uudised, that has real democracy.³⁵

Another unclarity appeared around defence cooperation in EU. In an earlier post a statement was made that EU should engage in developing defence cooperation inside EU, however later posts included statements that collective defence in EU should not be developed. The number of posts discussing this was rather marginal. However, EKRE expressed clearly that the real Allies are Hungary, Poland and US. This made up a branch narrative 'Due to following EU, Estonia can't be friend with its important Visegrad countries Allies or US, who would help Estonia when its independency is at stake'. This characterizes claim made by Braghiroli and Petsinis (2019: 7), EKRE does not count much on EU for securing the geopolitical situation of Estonia.

Although EKRE is placed in the middle stage of Euroscepticism, not completely adversary nor completely on board, the subject of leaving or staying in EU was also quite 'obscure'. One of the branch narratives was that EKRE does not want to leave EU, but reduce its power over nation states, which was supported by statements in 25 news posts.

³⁵ One of the reasons why EKRE strongly looks up to its Hungary, is Hungary's response to immigration politics, more especially border control. Other radical and extremist right-wing parties also decided to 'join their forces', because of the same matter. For example, the Danish People's Party said they would never join a group with Le Pen because of her father's Anti-Semitist attitudes, however securing Europe's borders was the most important goal. And the Identity and Democracy far-right political group of the European Parliament, which includes nationalist, populist and Eurosceptic national parties from ten European nations, was formed, that EKRE also joined.

However, the leaf narratives that leaving EU leads to freedom of nation state and will do good to economy were presented in 18 posts. Mainly the examples were Great Britain's Brexit and Hungary opposition to immigration policy. Wierenga (2017) concluded from the interviews with key EKRE members, that although EU is one of the most undemocratic systems, citing penalties for not accepting EU mandates and rules, the party had ever said that they wished to leave the EU, though they did applaud Brexit. From this could be concluded that appraisal for Great Britain's leaving, which was said leads to freedom, was more of a way to express rebellion against EU, rather than a consideration for leaving.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Populist radical right parties are characterized by three main features: nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde, 2016a; Mudde, 2016b). While the populist ideology has much deeper roots in the US than in (Western) Europe, key elements are clearly linked to fundamental values of Western societies in general. Populists argue that the common sense of the people should always take precedence (Mudde, 2016b) and criticise the EU from a predominantly sovereignty-based perspective (Vasilopoulou, 2018: 1). EKRE sees Estonia as a victim of both EU liberalism and Russian imperialism, portraying EU as ‘the other’ in its discourse (Makarychev and Sazonov, 2019: 462-463). The party gained popularity in Estonia by opposing EU’s immigration policy and ensured it with xenophobic nationalism (Petsinis, 2019: 225; Kasekamp, Madisson and Wierenga, 2018; Braghiroli and Petsinis: 2019; Makarychev and Sazono, 2019; Wierenga, 2017; Wierenga, 2019). Fear that drives the EU narrative, as it pertains to the EU, makes the nature of EKRE’s discourse different from countries, as Germany, Hungary or Sweden, because one is dealing with a potential and the other with a reality.

My research set out to show how the EU was constructed in the alternative media channel of Estonian PRR party EKRE’s blog-like alternative news site Uued Uudised, where articles are written by EKRE for their members and supporters, therefore need not to try to convince new, possibly different-minded people who might disagree with them, but rather keep their followers with spreading certain information in an applicable manner. This makes Uued Uudised the purest source and grounded theory the most accurate method for my small-n research. I carried out two rounds of coding to identify and collect claims, statements and assumptions made about EU and EU related topics with the coding scheme concept named ‘Narrative tree’ (Appendix 1; Figure 3.2.), which consisted of three levels of narratives – root, branch and leaf – that all emerge from each other. My contribution to the study of EKRE through EU narratives, as well as the study of right-wing party family overall, lies in the final concept through which the meaning making evolved. The coding scheme ‘Narrative tree’ reveals a deeper meaning by providing an analysis behind the colourful words and assessments and unorthodox style of discourse. The narratives are rather simple. On the larger root level, the focus is on rough polarization, worded simply as ‘Being and supporting EU-minded is dangerous’ or ‘EU wants to have (ultimate) power over its member (nation) states’. The branch level goes a

little more into detail, for example ‘EU member states’ people are in physical danger due to EU-minded establishments decision-making’. The leaf level shows the most specific and detailed narratives and therefore are the most closely worded to original statements. For example, ‘Gays, women and children are sacrificed for Islamizing Europe’. This allows to see, based on the specifics of my research, a three-layered approach as a rhetoric through which EKRE mobilizes their electorate.

I used grounded theory as methodology for a content analysis to generate narratives based on empirical data in which knowledge evolves and expands with each new step. The weakness of the chosen method and methodology can be seen in that it is a single case study, so its ability to generalize is severely limited. Additionally, this is a single case study of a small country that has one of the smallest economies and populations in the European Union. Also, my study focuses on the discourse presented by EKRE, which means the narratives that were established through empirical analysis, may not be applicable to EKRE’s supporters – this would require further research. Despite this list of potential drawbacks, current thesis does address key issue – a single case study such as this helps prove that even in an open and relatively successful economy, a far-right party can still emerge and prey on cultural and societal fears.

The biggest narratives that occurred in the news posts, were ‘Being against EU and EU-minded will save EU and nation states’, ‘EU wants to have (ultimate) power over its member (nation) states’, ‘Being and supporting EU-minded is dangerous’, ‘EU as an organization does not work’ and ‘Immigration policy consequences break up EU’. My research shows that fear, in particular, was used as a driving concept throughout the narratives. Moreover, news posts with certain structures that played on peoples feeling of security and where only EKRE was said to be the one that can make the situation turn around, appeared regularly, which shows using fear – of immigrants, violence, sovereignty of the country, losing ‘Estonianness’ – as well as other PRR rhetorical strategies as manipulative tools. Based on my research I propose, that EKRE extensively uses specific EU narratives for scapegoating the EU through real and imagined fears and deepening the polarization in order to maintain their electorate. PRR rhetoric serves as a useful ‘toolbox’ of strategies for embedding these narratives. EU serves as an important actor as an enemy, through which the ‘rebellion’ is kept alive.

According to Mudde (2016b: 78) there is a crucial need for an open debate on EU's future including the return to a less integrated EU. However populist rhetoric and unwillingness to compromise hinders this efficient debate from happening (Greven, 2016). Mudde (2016b: 130-133) argues that all political minorities, should be allowed to voice their opinions unconditionally because that way democracy functions best, however actually changing EU to be a union of nation states would probably be very difficult to do inside the current European Union, because it means going after the core values of this Unions being, for example liberalisation brought in with Maastricht treaty. Mudde's argument makes sense from the democratic perspective, however, I doubt that freedom of speech serves as an efficient tool to tackle the polarization of two sides to bring back meaningful argumentation. PRR often dominate even in media sphere, due to the abundance of newsworthiness values. Emerging from my thesis, for, at least Uued Uudised, there is no intention for a dialogue – although they claim that the mainstream media does not publish their opinions and statements, they show no willingness for cooperation either. 'Lighting the fuse' is one strategy which the RR uses (Pytlas and Kossack, 2015) which does not necessarily mean that they want to be understood by the other side but cement their discourse in the political spectrum.

Mudde (2016b) claims, that the PRR ideas constitute a radicalization of mainstream ideas and whether they are liked, need to be seen as new normalcy. While in some cases populist agenda is taken over by non-populist party, for example Social Democrats in Demark or Austrian People's Party, then sometimes the anti-establishment rhetoric can be down toned. The PRR party of Latvia, National Alliance slowly, but steadily, watered down its anti-establishment rhetoric and progressively down-toned its degree of Euroscepticism in order to adapt to this new centrality in the Latvian party system (Braghiroli and Petsinis, 2019: 15), this does not appear to be the case for EKRE, at least not in its 'news' platform Uued Uudised. EKRE, despite its virtual nature often representing a shortcut to address complex issues such as multiculturalism, postmodernism, terrorism and national identity, has very vividly affected the political dynamics since 2015 (Braghiroli and Petsinis, 2019: 16).

Bornschieer (2018) claims that the 'losers' of modernization are running a counterrevolution against the current leftist establishments. These are the people caught

in between the gears of change. Joining the EU in 2004 turned Estonia's course toward integration inside EU. Over 35% of people had voted against joining, who were later in some ways left behind, since EU legislations basis is an ever-closer union. The rebellion, based on selective truths driven by ideology, is the keyword to describe EKRE's EU discourse. The inability to go along with globalization and the long ignorance of the Eurosceptics, Madissons (2016: 192-195) explanation on how New World Order conspiracy allows to explain how extreme rightists empower themselves through translating their feelings of intolerance, fear, anger and moral superiority to a handy rhetorical tool as a conspiracy about dreadful acts of political elite whose goal is to create global centralized regime, in order to undermine and ridicule PRR sacred values and markers, like race, national sovereignty, nativism, Christian values, moral, traditional family values and gender roles.

The exaggerations and twisting the truth do not able to see them as first-choice partners by other mainstream parties. The cleavage that Kriesi et al. (2006: 926) predicted the basic structure of the national political space will transform and the political parties will strategically reposition, has happened.

Populist politics disregard for longer-term consequences (Guiso et al, 2018). For now, EKRE's imagination of less integrated EU is a somewhat unrealistic ideology. To move forward towards less integrated Europe all aspects of realities need to be taken into consideration, which based on my research on EU narratives in Uued Uudised, is not done. For example, where should people with multicultural families belong and what defines nationality. Moreover, do the PRR comprehend the 'cost' of moving towards an ethnically pure society? Due to the usage of the PRR rhetoric and ignorance towards anything useful EU membership has brought along – for example the longest peaceful period in history of Europe – and the usage of socio-psychological strategies and manipulation with people's feelings, the rise of PRR might perhaps be more profoundly explained through political psychology. Or perhaps power theories, since leading the country to right direction by back the 'reins' of governance is their ultimate goal.

Populism tends to get ugly when it gets into power (Mudde, 2016b), however, populist progress has been accompanied almost everywhere by a profound redrawing of Europe's post-war political landscape and a continuing fragmentation of national votes. The

precedent of EKRE's rhetorical style in the public discourse of Estonia, has left its mark, as it has done in other EU countries with PRR reaching power. Although EKRE says, its goal is to make EU as a union of Nation States and not demolish it completely, the narratives of EKRE's Eurosceptic discourse are ripe with hatred towards everything and everyone connected to EU with no description to how the Union of Nation States should operate. Therefore based on the results it is hard not to agree with Müller (2018) on his argument that democracy cannot be improved by anti-pluralism, since society is pluralistic. Even further, I argue that emotions and fear play an important role due to the simplicity of the texts, unimportance of factual correctness, strong use of vulgar language filled with judgments. Fear might be the most important tool EKRE has, at least regarding narratives about the EU and keeping their electorate mobilized by keeping the 'rebellion' going.

In the future, qualitative research on the other three topics found in the research of Kasekampi, Madisson and Wierenga (2018) could be carried out by alternative media channels of the Estonian PRRs, such as Uued Uudised, Objektiiv and others. Also, the results of my research, EU narratives, could be tested on EKRE supporters to understand the level of these narratives impact on people. In addition, my research findings could be used as an input to help find a way to the community that lives today in the echo chamber. This could be done by conducting interviews with EKRE supporters to find out how much the narratives presented in this research are believed and why.

References to Sample

2. Uued Uudised webpage. (2015). *Ajakirjanik: Prantsusmaa relvastas Süüria mässulisi*. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/maailm/ajakirjanik-prantsusmaa-relvastas-suuria-massulisi/>
5. Pärn, M. (2015). *Inimene vajab eksistentsiks sobivat keskkonda*. Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/malle-pan-inimene-vajab-eksistentsiks-sobivat-keskkonda/>
7. Mürk, I. (2015). *Põlisrahva õigus vaimsele kodunemisele pole rassism*. Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/juhtkiri/polisrahva-oigus-vaimsele-kodunemisele-pole-rassism/>
8. Uued Uudised webpage. (2015). *Risttuuled on Eestis tagasi*. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/risttuuled-on-eestis-tagasi/>
15. Uued Uudised webpage. (2016). *Viimane võimalus liituda! Konservatiivse Rahvaerakonna petitsioonikampaania massiimmigratsiooni vastu jõuab lõpule*. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/viimane-voimalus-liituda-konservatiivse-rahvaerakonna-petitsioonikampaania-massiimmigratsiooni-vastu-jouab-lopule/>
19. Harry Raudvere. (2016). *Maailm ei ole enam endine*. Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/repliik/harry-raudvere-maailm-ei-ole-enam-endine/>
26. Uued Uudised webpage. (2016). *Kallastel peeti kala- ja sibulalaata*. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/kallastel-peeti-kala-ja-sibulalaata/>
31. Pärtel, T. (2016). *Kuidas tõelise äärmusluse risttule all ellu jääda?*. Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/taavi-partel-kuidas-toelise-aarmusluse-risttule-all-ellu-jaada/>
34. Uued Uudised webpage. (2016). *EL toetab suuremat sõjalist koostööd liikmesriikide vahel*. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/maailm/el-toetab-suuremat-sojalist-koostood-liikmesriikide-vahel/>

38. Uued Uudised webpage, (2017). Multikulti ajupesu Eesti koolides võtab tuure üles. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/juhtkiri/multikulti-ajupesu-estti-koolides-votab-tuure-ules/>
47. Uued Uudised webpage, (2017). Prantsuse euroföderalistid, liberaalid ja sotsid teevad kõik, et Le Pen hävitada. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/maailm/prantsuse-eurofederalistid-liberaalid-ja-sotsid-teevad-koik-et-le-pen-havitada/>
52. Helme, M. (2017). *Briti terrorilaine nõuab radikaalset poliitikamuutust*. Uued Uudised webpage, <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/maailm/mart-helme-briti-terrorilaine-nouab-radikaalset-poliitikamuutust/>
63. Helme, M. (2017). *KOV 2017: Martin Helme: teeme Tallinnast eestimeelse ja ausate juhtidega pealinna!*. Uued Uudised webpage, <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/estti/kov-2017-martin-helme-teeme-tallinnast-eestimeelse-ja-ausate-juhtidega-pealinna/>
70. Uued Uudised webpage, (2018). *'Räägime asjast': Eesti sissemakse euroliidu kassasse suureneb*. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/estti/raagime-asjast-estti-sissemakse-euroliidu-kassasse-suureneb/>
75. Uued Uudised webpage, (2018). *Võru endine linnapea liitus EKRE-ga*. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/estti/voru-endine-linnapea-liitus-ekre-ga/>
80. Uued Uudised webpage, (2018). *Uus libakonservatiivne erakond ei suudaks edukalt poliitikamaastikule välja ronida*. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/uus-libakonservatiivne-erakond-ei-suudaks-oma-mulkast-poliitikamaastikule-valja-ronida/>
82. Uued Uudised webpage, (2018). *Mõtisklus uuringutulemustest: miks on EKRE valija ikkagi suurehituste vastu skeptiline?*. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/motisklus-uuringutulemustest-miks-ekre-valija-ikkagi-suurehituste-vastu-skeptiline/>
92. Uued Uudised webpage, (2018). *Eesti tee kulgeb sirgeseljalise liitlase Poolaga ühes suunas, mitte tema vastu*. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/estti/estti-tee-kulgeb-sirgeseljalise-liitlase-poolaga-uhes-suunas-mitte-tema-vastu/>

93. Uued Uudised webpage, (2018). *Asjadest õigete nimedega: Tarmo Soomere utopistlik humanism on oma riigi ja rahva reetmine.* <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/asjadest-oigete-nimedega-tarmo-soomere-utopistlik-humanism-on-oma-riigi-ja-rahva-reetmine/>
94. Uued Uudised webpage, (2018). *Viktor Orbán ähvardas vetostada immigrantidest keelduvaid riike karistava EL-i eelarvekava.* <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/maailm/viktor-orban-ahvardas-vetostada-immigrantidest-keelduvaid-riike-karistava-el-i-eelarvekava/>
95. Helme, M. (2018). *Peatame rahva väljavahetamise!*. Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/mart-helme-peatame-rahva-valjavahetamise/>
96. Uued Uudised webpage. (2018). *'Räägime asjast': siseminister illegaale ei näe, demograafilist kriisi ei tunnista ja piirikontrolli ei luba.* <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/raagime-asjast-siseminister-illegaale-ei-nae-demograafilist-kriisi-ei-tunnista-ja-piirikontrolli-ei-luba/>
98. Uued Uudised webpage, (2018). *Eesti riik annab rohelise tule Molenbeekidele ja no-go-tsoonidele Maarjamaal.* <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/eesti-riik-annab-rohelise-tule-molenbeekidele-ja-no-go-tsoonidele-maarjamaal/>
110. Uued Uudised webpage. (2018). *Filosoof Roger Scruton hoiatab: häid asju on kerge hävitada, aga väga keeruline uuesti luua.* <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/filosoof-roger-scruton-hoiatab-haid-asju-on-kerge-havitada-aga-vaga-keeruline-uuesti-luua/>
113. Helme, M. (2018). *Varga kinnivõtmist nõuavad kõige valjemini ikka vargad ise.* Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/mart-helme-varga-kinnivotmist-nouavad-koige-valjemini-ikka-vargad-ise/>
119. Kaalep, R. (2018). *Ärkamisaeg ei tule tagasi, vaid ärkamisaeg läheb edasi.* Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/ruuben-kaalep-arkamisaeg-ei-tule-tagasi-vaid-arkamisaeg-laheb-edasi/>
122. Madison, J. (2018). *Ungari vastu hääletanud eurosaadikud Paet, Toom, Kelam, Padar ja Tarand on lakeid!*. Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/maailm/jaak-madison-ungari-vastu-haaletanud-eurosaadikud-paet-toom-kelam-padar-ja-tarand-on-lakeid/>

123. Uued Uudised webpage. (2018). *'Räägime asjast': Ungari-hääletus europarlamentis oli räägem kui mistahes NLiidu Ülemnõukogu istung.* <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/raagime-asjast-ungari-haaletus-europarlamentis-oli-raigem-kui-mistahes-nliidu-ulemnoukogu-istung/>
124. Uued Uudised webpage. (2018). *Mõtisklus: 'ajaga kaasas käimine' kui uusrevolutsiooni loosung.* <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/motisklus-ajaga-kaasas-kaimine-kui-uusrevolutsiooni-loosung/>
125. Uued Uudised webpage. (2018). *Käimasolev venestamine Eestis on osake suuremast globalistlikust rahvusriikide hävitamise plaanist.* <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/juhtkiri/kaimasolev-venestamine-eestis-on-osake-suuremast-globalistlikust-rahvusriikide-havitamise-plaanist/>
134. Uued Uudised webpage. (2018). *Täna on taassünnipäev – kuid suveräänsusnõue vajab jälle ülekordamist!* <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/tana-on-taassunnipaev-kuid-suveraansusnoue-vajab-jalle-ulekordamist/>
138. Pärn, M. (2018). *Kas Saulus tahab saada Pauluseks? Vastus Ossinovskile.* Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/malle-pan-kas-saulus-tahab-saada-pauluseks-vastus-ossinovskile/>
139. Uued Uudised webpage. (2018). *Priit Pulleritsust, lastetute võimust ja poliitikute hoolimatusest järeltulijate tuleviku suhtes.* Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/priit-pulleritsust-lastetute-voimust-ja-poliitikute-hoolimatusest-jareltulijate-tuleviku-suhtes/>
141. Helme, M. (2018). *Gruz 200 – vabandust, Eesti 200 – millal jõuate laibaveoni?.* Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/mart-helme-gruz-200-vabandust-eesti-200-millal-jouate-laibaveoni/>
144. Arro, K. (2018). *Rändepakt, heaoluühiskond ja lihtsa palgatöötaja valikud.* Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/kaspar-arro-randepakt-heaoluuhiskond-ja-lihtsa-palgatootaja-valikud/>

145. Uued Uudised webpage. (2019). *Raul Rebane otsib ja leiab valimiste peakiisimuse EKRE mustamises.* <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/raul-rebane-otsib-ja-leiab-valimiste-peakusimuse-ekre-mustamises/>
148. Põlluaas, H. (2019). *Kui föderaliseeruv EL muudab Eesti europrovintiks, tuleb selles osalemine rahva otsustada anda.* Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/henn-polluaas-kui-foderaliseeruv-el-muudab-eesti-europrovintiks-tuleb-selles-osalemine-rahva-otsustada-anda/>
149. Madison, J. (2019). *Britid astusid sammu lähemale iseseisvusele!*. Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/jaak-madison-britid-astusid-sammu-lahemale-iseseisvusele/>
150. Uued Uudised webpage. (2019). *Rootsi eliit valis kalifaadi, sotsist lödipüks Löfveni vähemusvalitsus tüürib rahvusriigi hukatusse.* <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/repliik/rootsi-eliit-valis-kalifaadi-sotsist-lodipuks-lofveni-vahemusvalitsus-tuurib-rahvusriigi-hukatusse/>
153. Uued Uudised webpage. (2019). *Miks osa eestlastest oma rahvast nii väga vihkab ja paduvõõraid lausa armastab?* <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/repliik/miks-osa-eestlastest-oma-rahvast-nii-vaga-vihkab-ja-paduvooraid-lausa-armastab/>
159. Uued Uudised webpage. (2019). *Eestlased ei julge enam naeratada ega komplimente teha – ‘mida sa, pervar, jõllitad?’.* <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/eestlased-ei-julge-enam-naeratada-ega-komplimente-teha-mida-sa-pervar-jollitad/>
165. Vihuri, V. (2019). *Kuidas Tim Sebastian ja Postimees üritasid manipulatiivselt Martin Helmest valetajat teha.* Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/uudis/eesti/veiko-vihuri-kuidas-tim-sebastian-ja-postimees-uritasid-manipulatiivselt-martin-helmest-valetajat-teha/>
206. Ummelas, M. (2019). *Vahemere Pandora laegas on avatud.* Uued Uudised webpage. <https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/mart-ummelas-vahemere-pandora-laegas-on-avatud/>

Bibliography

Afanasjev, V., Salumaa, P. (2019). Vahur Afanasjev ja Priit Salumaa: millise kisa valid sina?. *ERR*, 14. October. Visited 14.10.2019, <https://www.err.ee/991768/vahur-afanasjev-ja-priit-salumaa-millise-kisa-valid-sina>

Atton, C. (2006). *Far-right media on the internet: culture, discourse and power*. SAGE Publications London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi Vol8(4):573–587 [DOI: 10.1177/1461444806065653].

Betz, H-G. (2018). *The radical right and populism*, *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Edited by Jens Rydgren. Oxford Press.

Betz, H-G., Johnson, C. (2004). *Against the current – stemming the tide: the nostalgic ideology of the contemporary radical populist right*. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 2004; 9(3):311-327.

Billig, M., Condor, S., Tieleaga, C. (2013). *Political Rhetoric*. *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Publisher: Oxford University Press.

Bornschiefer, S. (2018). Globalization, Cleavages, and The Radical Right. Chapter in Rydgren, J. (ed) 2018 *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Braghiroli, S., Petsinis, V. (2019). *Between party-systems and identity-politics: the populist and radical right in Estonia and Latvia*, *European Politics and Society*, DOI: 10.1080/23745118.2019.1569340.

Castells, M. (2009). *Communication Power*. Oxford University Press. Visited 8.05. 2020, <https://maestriacomunicacionibero.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/castells-power-in-the-network-society.pdf>

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. SAGE Publications: London.

Erakondade Reitingud webpage. (2020). *EKRE toetus tõusis käesoleva aasta kõrgeimale tasemele*. Visited 15.05.2020, <https://reitingud.ee/uudised/ekre-toetus-tousis-kaesoleva-aasta-korgeimale-tasemele/>

- European Union Website. (2019). *Estonia*. Visited 15.10.2019, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries/member-countries/estonia_et
- Gershkovich, E. (2019). Estonia Joins the Far-right Club. *Politico*, 30. April. Visited, 10.10.2019, <https://www.politico.eu/article/estonia-tallinn-joins-the-far-right-club-martin-helme-mart-helme-kersti-kaljulaid-populism/>
- Greven, T. (2016). *The Rise of Right-wing Populism in Europe and the United States. A Comparative Perspective*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung: Germany.
- Grömping, M. (2014). 'Echo Chambers' Partisan Facebook Groups during the 2014 Thai Election. *Asia Pacific Media Educator* 24(1) 39–59. 2014 University of Wollongong, Australia SAGE Publications Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC DOI: 10.1177/1326365X14539185
- Guiso, L., Herrera, H., Morelli, M., Sonno, T. (2018). *Populism: Demand and Supply*. Visited 10.04.2020, <https://www.heliosherrera.com/populism.pdf>
- Heelas, P. (2013). *Eesti kui katselabor – ideaalne näide vaimsuse ja religiooni suundumuste uurimiseks. Valik usundiloolisi uurimusi: uue vaimsuse eri*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.
- Hennoste, T. (2008). *Uudise käsiraamat: kuidas otsida, kirjutada, toimetada ja serveerida ajaleheuudist*. Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus.
- Himma, M. (2019). Meediakommentaari: milleks meile ajakirjandus?. *ERR*, 15. April. Visited 13.05.2020, <https://www.err.ee/930326/meediakommentaari-milleks-meile-ajakirjandus>
- Kalmus, V., Masso, A. Linno, M. (2015). *Kvalitatiivne sisuanalüüs. Sotsiaalse analüüsi meetodite ja metodoloogia õpibaas*. Tartu Ülikool. Visited 5.03.2020, <http://samm.ut.ee/kvalitatiivne-sisuanalyys>
- Kasekamp, A., Madisson, M-L., Wierenga, L. (2018). *Discursive Opportunities for the Estonian Populist Radical Right in a Digital Society, Problems of Post Communism*. 66:1, 47-58, DOI: 10.1080/10758216.2018.1445973

Kondor, K. (2018). Jobbik: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?. *Fair Observer*, 3. April. Visited 13.04.2020, <https://www.fairobserver.com/region/europe/jobbik-fidesz-viktor-orban-hungary-far-right-news-europe-51482/>

Koopmans, R., Muis, J. (2009). *The rise of right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands: A discursive opportunity approach*. *European Journal of Political Research* 48: 642–664, 2009 doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6765.2009.00846.x

Koopmans, R., Olzak, S. (2004). *Discursive Opportunities and the Evolution of Right-Wing Violence in Germany*, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 110, No. 1 (July 2004), pp. 198-230. The University of Chicago. Visited 9.05.2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/386271>

Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschie, S., Frey, T. (2006). *European Journal of Political Research* 45: 921–956, 2006 921 doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00644.x

Leas, R. (2019). Eesti sai mullu Euroopast raha poole miljardi võrra enam, kui ise maksis. *ERR*, 25. October. Visited 25.10.2019, <https://www.err.ee/995875/eesti-sai-mullu-euroopast-raha-poole-miljardi-vorra-enam-kui-ise-maksis>

Lepik, K., Strömpl, J. (2014). *Põhistatud teooria*. Sotsiaalse analüüsi meetodite ja metodoloogia õpibaas. Tartu Ülikool. Visited, 31.10.2019, <http://samm.ut.ee/pohistatud-teooria>

Madisson, M-L. (2016). *NOW Conspiracy Theory: A Key Frame in Online Communication of the Estonian Extreme Right*. *Lexia. Rivista di semiotica*, 23–24, Complotto, pag. 189–208.

Madisson, M-L., Ventsel, A. (2017). Tõejärgse retoorika tõetingimused. *Sirp*, 27. January. Visited 20.09.2019, <https://www.sirp.ee/s1-artiklid/c9-sotsiaalia/toejargse-retoorika-toetingimused/>

Makarychev, A., Sazonov, V. (2019). *Populisms, popular geopolitics and the politics of belonging in Estonia*, *European Politics and Society*, 20:4, 450-469, DOI: 10.1080/23745118.2019.1569341.

- McDonnell, D. (2015). *Populist Leaders and Coterie Charisma. Political Studies* 2016. Vol 64(3) 719-733. Sage Public.
- Minkenberg, M. (2017). *The Radical Right in Eastern Europe: Democracy Under Siege?*. New York: Palgrave.
- Mudde, C. (2004). *The Populist Zeitgeist: Government and Opposition. The Impact of Populism on Parties, Media and the Public in Western Europe*. Visited 11.04.2020, https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/1808798/119430_thesis.pdf
- Mudde, C. (2007). *Populist radical right parties in Europe*. Cambridge University Press: New York. Visited 27.10.2019, <http://www.pacedifesa.org/public/documents/Cas%20Mudde%20Populist%20Radical%20Right%20Parties%20in%20Europe%20%202007.pdf>
- Mudde, C. (2016a). *The Study of Populist Radical Right Parties: Towards a Fourth Wave*. C-rex working paper series. No. 1 / 2016. University of Oslo and University of Georgia. Visited, 30.10.2019, <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/publications/c-rex-working-paper-series/Cas%20Mudde:%20The%20Study%20of%20Populist%20Radical%20Right%20Parties.pdf>
- Mudde, C. (2016b). *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe*. Routledge Studies in Extremism and Democracy.
- Mudde, C. (2018). *The ideology of the extreme right: The extreme right party family*. Visited 12.02.2020, <https://www.manchesteropenhive.com/downloadpdf/9781526137753/9781526137753.0005.pdf>
- Müller, J.-W. (2018). *Mis on populism?*. TLÜ Kirjastus: Tallinn 2018.
- Norocel, C. Szabo, G., Bene, M. (2017) *Integration or Isolation? Mapping Out the Position of Radical Right Media in the Public Sphere*. *International Journal of Communication*.

Norocel, O. C., Szabo, G. (2019). Special Issue: Mapping the Discursive Opportunities for Radical-Right Populist Politics across Eastern Europe, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 66:1, 1-7, DOI: 10.1080/10758216.2019.1537040

Pärgma, R. (2016). President 2016: populaarseim presidendikandidaat on Mart Helme. *Postimees*, 19. August. Visited 10.04.2020, <https://www.delfi.ee/news/paevauudised/eesti/president-2016-populaarseim-presidendikandidaat-on-mart-helme?id=75390367>

Parliament Elections Webpage. (2019). *Voting and Election Result, Republic of Estonia*. Visited 12.04.2020, <https://rk2019.valimised.ee/en/election-result/election-result.html>

Patterson, M., Monroe, K. R. (1998). Narrative in Political Science. *Annual Review of Political Science*. Department of Politics and Society, University of California, Irvine. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.polisci.1.1.315>

Petsinis, V. (2019) Identity Politics and Right-Wing Populism in Estonia: The Case of EKRE, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 25:2, 211-230, DOI: 10.1080/13537113.2019.1602374

Prins, B., Saharso, S. (2010). 'From Toleration to Repression: The Dutch Backlash Against Multiculturalism.' In *Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices*. London: Routledge

Propastop webpage. (2019). *Eesti minister teeb koostööd Putini propagandamasinaga*. 29. July, https://www.propastop.org/2019/07/29/5192/?fbclid=IwAR1hGPtdPk_u79GUhFME7y0b4qG4ygXNsfxwqCURXBNMG0xwEsutKJOQ3fg (9.03.2020)

Pytlas, B. Kossack, O. (2015). *Lighting the fuse The impact of radical right parties on party competition in Central and Eastern Europe*.

Rydgren, J. (2017). *Radical right-wing parties in Europe What's populism got to do with it?*. Stockholm University.

Sildam, T. (2020). Minister Aller saadaks sügisel võõrtööliste asemel põldudele Eesti õpilased, *Estonian National Broadcast*, 28. April, <https://www.err.ee/1082895/minister-aller-saadaks-sugisel-voortooliste-asetel-poldudele-est-i-opilased>

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012). Visited 8.10.2019, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ET/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12016M002>

Törnberg, P. (2018). Echo chambers and viral misinformation: Modeling fake news as complex contagion. *PLoS ONE* 13(9): e0203958. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0203958>

Trumm, S. (2018). The ‘new’ wave of populist right-wing parties in Central and Eastern Europe: Explaining electoral support for the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia. *Representation Journal of Representative Democracy* ISSN: 0034-4893.

Tulevane minister kustutas ‘piiripealse postituse’. (2019). *ERR*, 11. April. Visited 15.10.2019, <https://www.err.ee/929425/tulevane-minister-kustutas-piiripealse-postituse>

van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *What is Political Discourse Analysis?*. Universiteit van Amsterdam.

Vasilopoulou, S. (2011). *European Integration and the Radical Right: Three Patterns of Opposition*. *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 46, No. 2. Cambridge University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2010.01337.x>

Vasilopoulou, S. (2018). The radical right and Euroskepticism. University of York. Chapter in Rydgren, J. (ed) 2018 *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wierenga, L. (2017). *Russians, Refugees and Europeans: What shapes the discourse of the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia?*. UPTAKE Working Paper, No. 6. University of Tartu Press.

Wierenga, L. (2019). *Bauska’s Chairmen: Party Leadership and Twitter Engagement in Estonian and Latvian Populist Far-Right Parties*. *Polish Political Science Review*. *Polski Przegląd Politologiczny* 7 (1)/2019. University of Tartu. DOI: 10.2478/ppsr-2019-0009

Wodak, R. (2015). *The Politics of Fear: What Right-wing Populist Discourses Mean*. Sage. DOI: 10.4135/9781446270073

Narrative tree

THE ROOT NARRATIVES: I-V

THE BRANCH NARRATIVES (numbers), LEAF NARRATIVES (bullet points)

ROOT I

Being against EU and EU-minded will save EU and nation states (133)

1. EU-minded will not be able to destroy conservatives, although they try to (42)

- EU and EU-minded people suppress conservative minded citizens', like their freedom of speech, judge them and lie about them because Conservatives are real democrats (32)

2. Only conservatives can help save EU and/ or Estonia (37)

- Only conservatives know and can give people what they really want because are real democrats (12)
- Conservatives have the solution for stopping terrorism caused by immigration in EU (8)
- Everybody else but the ones that support conservatives is in subordination of Brussels (4)
- New conservatism is truth, left liberalism is false (4)

3. Leaving EU or/ and not following its orders is good (30)

- Estonia should stand with and look up to its Allied nation states (Hungary and Poland, US) rather than EU (16)
- Leaving leads to freedom of the nation state (10)
- Leaving will do good for economy (8)

- People should stand up against immigration policy (4)

4. Conservative minded have good and EU-minded bad qualities (29)

- EU-minded prefer immigrants to nationals (7)
- EU-minded people are brainwashed, cannot think on their own (5)
- EU-minded are traitors of the republic (4)
- Are afraid to be as a nation state alone without EU and other organizations (3)

5. Being pro EU means being pro Russia, the oppressor (26)

- left-wing people are Kremlin minded and therefor traitors (16)
- Estonian left-minded government and political elite is Kremlin-minded (8)
- West minded people accuse conservatives of being Kremlin agents, but are actually that themselves (7)

6. EKRE does not want to leave EU, but reduce its power over nation states (25)

- Member states should have more sovereign power in decision making (10)
- Immigration policy decisions should be made sovereignly (7)
- EU should not be federalization but union of nation states (4)

7. If do not support conservatives, bad things will happen (20)

- If do not support conservatives, immigration from the South will turn Estonia into euro province which is followed by Russian aggression (15)
- Estonians will go extinct (7)

8. EU punishes the ones that do not follow EU's orders (16)

- EU uses not following the rule of law as an excuse to invade home affairs (6)

- Does not sign the Brexit deal as punishment to GB for leaving (3)

9. The real and right EU people are white with conservative values (15)

- Do not want immigrants (7)
- With Christian values (6)
- Indigenous people, not by passport or citizenship but by ethnicity and roots (3)
- European and white (3)

ROOT II

EU wants to have (ultimate) power over its member (nation) states (129)

10. EU wants to make one big EU nation (The United Nations of Europe) and demolish sovereign nation states (61)

- Immigration policy is used to take away states' sovereignty and demolish nation states (24)
- EU wants to kill traditional values, like family, culture, Christian values (23)
- EU is a federation or wants to become a federation (18)
- EU-minded prefer immigrants to nationals (8)
- EU uses its 'values' like tolerance, solidarity and fake humanism to demolish nation states (7)

11. EU-minded people and establishments care for money and power, not people (55)

- EU legislation, values and money are instruments of political subordination and power (16)
- EU-minded governments and establishments are corrupt, deep states (12)
- EU establishments do not understand or care what people want (8)

- EU establishments power states (France, Germany, Belgium aka Macron, Merkel, Juncker) make smaller states go along with immigration plan (4)
- EU buys loyalty (4)

12. EU has propagandistic nature (34)

- Anything that is mainstream, like media, is under the control of Brussels and is used to destroy conservatives (22)
- EU is the same as or worse than Soviet Union (15)
- Minority groups, like young people, gays, are used as ‘whistleblowers’ for spreading propaganda (4)

13. EU wants to repress not EU-minded because is afraid of losing its supremacy (32)

- EU and EU-minded people want to prohibit conservatives, freedom of speech, judge them and lie about them, because EU-minded are not real democrats (32)

14. EU wants to Islamize nation states/ EU will Islamize (16)

- Gays, women, and children are sacrificed for Islamizing Europe (10)
- Immigration policy is for distributing Islam ideology and Islamizing EU (4)

ROOT III

Being and supporting EU-minded is dangerous (103)

15. EU member states’ people are in physical danger due to EU-minded establishments decision-making (43)

- Immigration policy brings violence and terrorism (36)
- Sexual violence towards women will spread due to immigration (12)
- Gays, women, and children are sacrificed for Islamizing Europe (8)

- immigration policy will not be able to stop terrorism spreading in EU (5)
- EU may try to achieve control with aggression and violence (4)

16. EU-mindedness is blind religion, ideology (Religion of Europe) (39)

- Estonian Government worships and obeys Brussels due to which makes bad decisions (20)
- EU-minded people are brainwashed, cannot think on their own and are afraid and have bad qualities (15)
- EU-mindedness is forced onto young people and they are victims of it (4)

17. If don't support conservatists, Estonia's sovereignty and its people's freedom is at cost (26)

- If do not support conservatists, immigration from the South will turn Estonia into euro province which is then conquered by Russians (15)
- Eu-minded people prefer immigrants to nationals (7)
- Estonians will go extinct (7)

18. Due to following EU, Estonia can't be friend with its important Visegrad countries Allies or US, who would help Estonia when its independency is at stake (19)

- Estonia should stand with and look up to its real Allies – Hungary, Poland, and US – rather than EU (16)

ROOT IV

EU as an organization does not work (71)

19. EU is no longer democratic (33)

- Immigration and integration policy are forced and undemocratic (17)
- Freedom of speech is now racism, naked women in art is now sexism etc. (8)

20. EU is not an honourable or honest organization (28)

- EU has bad qualities – lies, is weak, has low moral etc (12)
- Is bureaucratic (8)
- EU or its MS break its own laws (3)
- EU lets immigrants take over because is afraid of violence, is a coward (3)
- EU immigration policy can be compared to human trafficking (3)

21. EU's politics are bad for member states or member states' economy (24)

- Economic politics are bad (8)
- EU and member states should not deal with immigration at all (5)
- EU asks too much from Estonia (4)
- Agriculture policy is bad and unfair (3)

ROOT V

Immigration policy consequences break up EU (70)

22. EU does not realize the bad that comes with immigration and helping developing countries (49)

- Immigration policy brings violence and terrorism (31)
- EU is not able to control immigration flow and terrorism flow into EU (8)
- EU funds terrorism without knowing it (4)

23. EU does not see that immigrants have their own agendas (27)

- Immigrants do not want to/ will not integrate, but to take over EU (11)

- Immigrants are not really refugees, but come here for good economy (9)
- Immigrants think badly of EU's culture and values (6)

24. Immigrants will not integrate, so EU's plan to make a big EU nation will not work (14)

- Immigrants do not want to/ will not integrate, but to take over EU (11)
- Because negros and Muslims will get out of hand (3)