

ESTONIAN RUSSOPHONE IDENTITY IN 2010¹

Aigerim Nurseitova (University of Tartu)

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Introduction

In 2010, the dominant identity discourse among Russophones in Estonia centered around constructing a distinct identity from their significant Others while consequently battling socio-economic inequality. Estonian Russophones did not perceive themselves as belonging anywhere. Instead, Estonian Russophone identity construction unfolded through cultural development that differentiated them from their significant Others. Aspirations for political representation and improvement of Russophones economic conditions remain salient, particularly due to financial crises of the time and perceived socio-economic exclusion. This report will begin with the description of the selected sources, continue into the detailed description of the identity categories retrieved during the data analysis, highlighting the dominant discourses presented in the selected texts.

1. Text selection and classification of sources

The dataset comprises speeches, newspapers, novels, movies, magazines, and letters to editor (see ‘Sources’ below for the full list). Notably, 2010 did not include any textbooks, as no Russian-language Estonian history textbooks had been published in Estonia since the early 2000s. The education system, therefore, relied on translations produced in the late 1990s and early 2000s, which had already been analyzed in the previous reports (Haridus- ja teadusminister, 2007).

Three speeches were selected for 2010. The first was delivered by Jana Toom, an Estonian Russophone politician, member of the Centre Party, and a member of the Estonian parliament. In the early 2010s, Toom opposed the transition of Russian-language school to Estonian-language instruction. Her speech was delivered at a protest meeting in Tallinn in 2012 – this being the earliest available speech, as she entered parliament only in 2011. The second speech was from Mihhail Stalnuhhin, another Estonian Russophone politician and member of the Estonian parliament from the Centre Party at the time. The third was a declaration by Dmitri Linter and Maksim Reva, representatives of the *Nochnoy Dozor* movement, opposing the relocation of the Soviet-era monuments in Estonia. This movement gained visibility in 2007 during the Bronze Night protests, which erupted in response to relocation of the Bronze Soldier in Tallinn.

For 2010, two newspapers, *Den za dnem* and *Postimees na russkom*, were chosen based on their readership numbers. *Molodezh Estonii* and *Estonia*, previously selected for coding in earlier reports, had stopped printing by 2010. *Postimees na russkom* was the most circulated Russian-language daily newspaper in 2010. According to the Estonian Newspaper Association, its average circulation was 11.3 thousand copies a month in 2010 (EALL, 2010). *Den za dnem* published once a week and had an average circulation of 12.9 thousand copies a month. For both newspapers, articles from the first available issue for each month of 2010 were sampled. Letters were taken from the same issues of these two newspapers.

¹ This national identity report was completed as part of the *Making Identity Count (MIC) Estonia* project (PRG1052 – *National Identity and Estonian-Russian Relations: A Longitudinal Study of Elite and Mass Discourses*). The sampled material was coded using the standard MIC procedure (Allan 2016). The full collection of MIC Estonia national identity reports is available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/10062/108183>.

Due to the limited potential audience, novels written by Estonian Russophone authors are not found on the bestseller lists in Estonia. As in previous reports, this report relies on the works of the prominent, award-winning Estonian Russophone writers (Repson, 2012): Jelena Skulskaja, P. I. Filimonov, Andrei Ivanov, Gohar Markosjan-Käsper, and Manja Nork. P. I. Filimonov and Manja Nork are pseudonyms of Roman Fokin and Tatiana Sigalova, respectively.

Another source was *Vyshgorod*, a literary magazine published in Tallinn six times per year since 1994. According to its editor, Ludmila Glushkovskaja (n.d.), *Vyshgorod* had a circulation was 500 copies and primarily featured literary works of Estonian Russophone authors. In 2009 they produced two quarterly issues. Both issues of this magazine were included in the coding. A second magazine, *Plug*, is relatively newer, having been published since 2009. Aimed at a younger audience, it addressed various aspects of Estonian Russophone youth culture and everyday life. Its editors, Dan and Olesja Rotar, did not disclose circulation figures, as the magazine was freely distributed in public spaces in Estonia. Given that it was published approximately every two months, all seven issues published in 2010 were included in the analysis.

Two films were selected for the 2010 report. The first, *Võõras omade seas* (A stranger among us), is a documentary that follows the journey of a Russophone rock band ‘AveNue’ as they seek belonging in Estonia. It was directed by Aleksandr Kheyfets and Karin Reinberg and aired on national television on 2 December 2009. The second film is a recorded theatrical performance titled *Russkie, oni takie...* (Russians, they are so...), directed by Yuliya Aug, produced by Natalja Matsenene, and written by Alexey Zenzinov, Marina Krapivina, and Jelena Skulskaja. Based on 200 interviews conducted for this screening, the play portrays the life and thoughts of local Russophones (Aug, 2023).

2. Raw identity categories

The project adopted a procedure for aggregating identity categories that differed from the standard Making Identity Count methodology, as the codes and their raw count varied significantly across genres. The percentages were calculated by normalizing raw counts within each to assess the relative prominence of each category. The categories average prominence of which was below 1% were eliminated, leaving 37 categories for further analysis. In the final calculation of valences prominence in these 37 categories, three of these categories lacked sufficient salience, leaving 34 categories used in the report. Table 1 and 2 summarize identity categories inductively derived from the sampled texts. This section provides a detailed explanation of their meanings.

Economic inequality

This section discusses the categories that best describe the discourses centered on inferiority that circulated regarding Estonian Russophone identity in the early 2010s. It includes the following categories: Class inequality, Economy, Estonia: small state/periphery, Estonia: West, Estonian politics/authorities, and Minority rights violations.

In earlier reports, Russophones shared their expectations regarding Estonian democratization and the elimination of ethnic discrimination as part of the process of joining the European Union. While Estonia joined the European Union in 2004 and was preparing to join the Eurozone in 2011, Russophones still had mixed feelings about Estonia’s identity as a constituent part of the West (see category **Estonia: West**). While the minority rights violations were still part of the grievances that emerged in Estonian Russophone discourses, another factor that contributed to negative valence in newspapers and novels was the deteriorating state of the **economy** at the time due to the changes and challenges that came with joining the Eurozone. This accession ran parallel with numerous

international and regional crises, such as the 2008 global financial crisis, the Greek government debt crisis in 2009, and expected crisis in Ireland.

Except that Estonia, in his opinion, will suffer from Euro-harassment. ("Guenon's Euro," 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_00470})

The G8 and the European Union will not help us rid ourselves of our farm mentality. (Ivanov, 2014; {2010_N_GORS_00670})

Anton did not say that since many people were made redundant because of the crisis, the work that used to be done by three people is now often done by one person. And the work is physically demanding. (Garanža, 2010b; {2010_P_DENZ_00990})

Estonia's small size and peripheral position (see **Estonia: small state/periphery**) in the EU contributed to the sense of inferiority:

...that is the uniform, and everyone is supposed to wear it, at least in Estonia, where a trip through the ladies' department stores gives an impression that a half million local women are clothed and clothed by a single factory, stamping its wonderful products in a run-down Chinese village with not even a hundred thousand inhabitants... (Markosjan-Käsper, 2013; {2010_N_MARK_00310})

The management considers the Baltic States too small, and customers in Estonia and Lithuania too price-sensitive, and therefore bets on developing the market of charter transportation of larger European countries. (Kolosok, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_02241})

As much as these financial crises affected many people around Europe and the rest of the world, Russophones perceived the presence of additional stressors due to **class inequality** in Estonia.

Estonia is afflicted with a dangerous disease, the name of which is inequality. This disease is all the more dangerous than it seems to many of us. "Some animals are more equal than others" is no longer a perversion, but a norm and truth of life. (Karajev, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_01130})

...at outrageous prices in airports, where they had to hide in some corner, so as not to show the surrounding Euro-tourists how alien they are at their holiday of life, embarrassingly chew sandwiches brought with them, drinking unthinkably expensive water (Markosjan-Käsper, 2013; {2010_N_MARK_00620})

Like before, class inequality was associated with **minority rights violations**, which, in turn, were blamed on the trajectory of **Estonian politics and authorities**. Due to limitations in place due to the earlier citizenship and language laws, Russophones expressed their feelings of inferiority in the socio-economic hierarchy in Estonia.

I am talking about the rich (i.e., the well-off, the "middle class") and the poor. Another thing is that there are more Russians among the poor in Estonia and more Estonians among the rich. (Karajev, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_01160})

...according to all sociological studies, the current situation of "persons of Slavic origin" is worse than that of Estonians. (Lagašina, 2010a; {2010_P_DENZ_06880})

The first time my son had such an unpleasant experience was two or three years ago, when some free children's event was held in Kadriorg in the summer. Children were

having fun playing, the animation team was conducting contests and quizzes, there was an opportunity to enjoy free karaoke, cheerful songs were being sung from the stage – everything was just great, except for one thing – this was only in Estonian. For children who do not understand Estonian, there was only one possibility: to jump on trampolines, where, by the way, the staff could not put together two words in Russian to explain the safety rules to children... To some people, this problem may seem far-fetched, but to me it does not. Why does my 6-year-old son have no right to participate on an equal footing in the events organized with taxpayers' money, i.e., with my money too?... An Estonian child will be given a tour, will be offered to participate in a contest and sing something, but what about the others? After all, almost half of the inhabitants of Tallinn are Russian-speaking, and they are also invited to these festivals! (Mihail, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_02220})

Those who do not know Estonian or do not know much at all. They do not feel like a piece in this puzzle at all; they are some crumbs in between. (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_01340})

You should hide your gray passport under your armpit and get out of here. (Kheyfets & Reinberg, 2009; {2010_M_VOOR_00480})

We will never join the elite! We will not fit into their circle, no matter how well we speak their language! We will always be second-class only, based on nationality. No discrimination. Just ignorance. (Ivanov, 2014; {2010_N_GORS_00090})

Both ‘minority rights violations’ and ‘Estonian politics/authorities’ categories received an increasing number of negative valences in their codes. In 2010, a large share of criticism fell on the government, as it was not able to prevent a surge in unemployment.

The fact that the information about the scale of unemployment does not sound too convincing from the mouth of the authorities, as always in such cases, makes one suspect something wrong. (Lagašina, 2010c; {2010_P_DENZ_00670})

Trust in government structures had already decreased during the events of the Bronze Night, when Russophones clashed with police while protesting the relocation of a Soviet monument, the Bronze Soldier, in Tallinn.

Tarand decided to find out why Russians were so aggressive in April 2007. And he did: "The source of social anxiety of young non-Estonian men may be the lack of suitable sexual partners". Translating from quasi-scientific to normal: it is difficult for a Russian guy to find a girlfriend. (Karajev, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_01190})

A distinction also arose between lower class Russophones and those among the rich or elites, which were othered as well.

Advanced in every way. The fancy ones. Children of professors and actors. Graduates of special schools. With fancy diplomas. With [language exam] categories and citizenship. (Ivanov, 2011; {2010_N_ZOLA_00440})

A stranger at the bottom among strangers (Kheyfets & Reinberg, 2009; {2010_M_VOOR_00470})

At the same time, discourses in newspapers reflected a desire that being part of the Western community would eventually result in equal and democratic Estonian society:

In this case, I am surprised by something else: the author states that Estonians have a higher social status than Russians but does not rush to say: we are a European country, open your eyes, there is nothing normal here! (Karajev, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_01211})

If Estonia really wants to be part of Western Europe or Scandinavia, it should build a more social community. (Niitra, 2010; {2010_P_POST_01580})

Integration

One of the major topics in contemporary Russophone discourses was their integration into Estonian society. These discourses centered on social topics rather than economic ones, such as the aforementioned ones on living conditions and employment. This section includes the following categories: Assimilation/Integration, Citizenship: Estonian, Education: Russian schools, Emigration, Estonia: homeland, Estonian language, Ethnic division, Russian language, Unity.

Even though it had been 20 years since the topic of integration had first emerged in Estonian national discourse, 2010 was still a year of reflection and discussion for many Russophones. This category examines both **assimilation and integration**, as this process had different connotations for Russophones.

Should a true Estonian citizen, an Estonian in the political sense, necessarily assimilate into the milieu of ethnic Estonians? (Teder, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_02100})

Ambiguity is reflected in the topographical table as the most prominent valence in this group (e.g., 'There are so many people who change their last name just to get a job' (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_02580})). Newspapers underlined the dominance of ambiguous and positive valences ('If we are to live on Estonian land, expecting it to be a home for our children and grandchildren, we cannot ignore the spiritual values of the Estonian people' (Tokareva, 2010; {2010_P_POST_00640})). Movies reflected primarily ambiguous discourses with some negative connotation assigned ('- We hear a lot about integration projects, do you think they work or not? - Of course they do not work!' (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_01170})).

Transition from Russian-language education to Estonian-language education was discussed in categories such as **Education: Russian schools, Estonian language**, and **Russian language**. Russian schools were positively regarded in the Russophone minority, so the necessity of further integration through changing the language of instruction was challenged by many in newspapers and movies.

One of the indicators of the segregationist model of education is a lack of equal treatment of schools and teachers: disrespect for the personality of Russian-speaking teachers, their language of communication, and Russian education. However, Russian as the language of communication is a historically developing given, in which the spirituality of the people is reflected. The richness of the language, accumulated over centuries, should be passed on to the next generations through the culture of Russian education. (Kloren, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_07043})

I want Russian schools to stay open. (Teras, 2010; {2010_P_POST_00510})

Sometimes it seems that if the "Russian problem" is removed, the value of the Estonian language will immediately diminish in the eyes of many Estonians. (Lagašina, 2010d; {2010_P_DENZ_02080})

Russophones recognized the necessity of learning Estonian language in schools: ‘In Estonia, knowledge of the Estonian language becomes a springboard for students to become more successful in studies and work, in social life and in starting a family’ (Feldschmidt, 2010; {2010_P_POST_00470}). At the same time, there was still a strong desire to maintain the existing Russian schools: ‘I do not understand the position of the state towards our teachers – why should a math or physics teacher learn Estonian if these subjects are taught in Russian in Russian schools.’ (Garanža, 2010a; {2010_L_DENZ_01570}; ‘... we try to explain to our colleagues, and even the best of them, how important it is for us to keep a common language with our own children, because language is not a linguistic concept, a common language, but a cultural concept’ (Toom, 2012; {2010_S_STAL_00240})).

Integration and educational reform contributed to many discussions on the topic of **ethnic division** in Estonia. As mentioned in previous reports, Russophones sought and idealized **unity** as a shared goal: unity among themselves as a group and unity within wider Estonian society. While ethnic division was expressed in neutral and negative sentiment in speeches, newspapers, and movies, unity was positively highlighted in newspapers and movies and ambiguously discussed in letters.

Because when they say that we live in different information fields and so on, in a sense it is true. We discuss problems with each other, but in order to go to a neighbor to talk, yes, we may lack, well, we lack a lot of things. We are afraid of being punched in the eye. Let us somehow overcome this fear, let us talk. Because we will be understood, but we only need to explain a lot and for a long time, unfortunately. (Toom, 2012; {2010_S_STAL_00320})

And when Russian romances are sung in young voices by beautiful and young boys and girls, one forgets about interethnic problems, does not think about tomorrow, and only listens, listens and marvels: with what care Estonian gymnasium students try to penetrate the essence of Russian romance. (Kopti, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_01690})

By 2010, an increasing number of Russophones had applied for **Estonian citizenship**. The analysis did not reveal much prominence for the topic of citizenship, other than neutral valences in movies, which shared statistics on the number of Russophones acquiring the Estonian citizenship. Non-citizenship issues, however, were included in the minority rights violations category. Russian citizenship discourses did not receive enough prominence at the stage of data analysis.

Through movies, Russophones once again expressed **Estonia** being their **homeland**: ‘Where am I supposed to go? I was born here. This is my homeland’ (Kheyfets & Reinberg, 2009; {2010_M_VOOR_00190}); ‘Estonia is my homeland. I was born here, grew up here. I spent my entire childhood here. My relatives and friends are here.’ (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_02790})). At the same time, the topic of **emigration** from Estonia related positive sentiments in the same genre, but this emigration was not necessarily to Russia, but further to the West: ‘We can leave. But I do not want to go to Russia either. I do not want to stay here either’ (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_02660}); ‘I would like to move to England, actually’ (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_01740}).

Estonian Russophone identity

In the 2000 report, there was a genesis of Estonian Russophone identity construction. In 2010, Russophones continued to define themselves. This section includes the following categories: Estonian culture, the Estonian Russophone community, Estonian Russophone culture, Estonian Russophone: in-between, Russian culture, Russian elite, and Traditional family/gender roles.

Estonian Russophones present themselves as a combination of Estonian and Russian culture. In this context, Russian culture has an earlier origin than modern Russia does (see SO: Russia: pop culture category on this subject). Notably, within the exchanged discourses, Estonian culture is held in higher regard than Russian culture. In newspapers, movies, and magazines the category of **Estonian culture** consistently received positive valence ('I like the way Estonian electronic bands play. They surprise me with their unconventionality and presentation of material' (Rotar, 2010a; {2010_MG_PLUG_00120})). Only in films did Estonian culture attract negative sentiment as well ('I keep thinking that Estonian literature... it is too narrow' (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_01620})). **Russian culture**, by contrast, attracted negative valence in novels ('For some reason I began to like Dostoevsky at nineteen, but as soon as I learned that he lived for a while in Revel [old name for Tallinn], I immediately lost interest in him' (Ivanov, 2014; {2010_N_GORS_00310})), while films and magazines reflected neutral valences, including some additional positive valence in films ('- Do you feel connected to Russian culture? - Of course!' (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_01560})). Neutral valences were given to references from classical Russian literature figures, folk tales, and music.

By 2010, local Russophones had succeeded in developing their popular culture, distinct from Estonian and Russian mainstreams. The category of **Estonian Russophone culture** was associated with strong positive, neutral, and ambiguous valences across newspapers and magazines:

Andrei Ivanov has a wonderful style, he uses the Russian language very skillfully, and he knows about the life of illegal refugees. (Semenov, 2010; {2010_MG_PLUG_00380})

But Russian-speaking poets and beatmakers do not intend to lag behind, going their own way. A way different from both Estonian rappers and rappers from Russia. (Rachinski, 2010; {2010_MG_PLUG_00490})

Despite references to the **Russophone community** and its **elite** arising in 2010 as they had in 2000, these individuals failed to consolidate a political community. Criticism of the elites centered on their inability to unite Russophones effectively. In novels, however, the prominence of negative valence arises due to criticism of the Soviet-era Estonian Russophones (more on criticism of the Soviet past can be found in the section on Historical Others). In newspapers, where neutral valence was prominent for the Estonian Russophone community category, the term 'community' has appeared in the context of how Estonians perceived Russophones or as a distinguishing factor for statistical or reporting classifications.

One category that gained prominence in 2010 is **Estonian Russophone: in-between**. It appears in novels and films with negative, neutral, and ambiguous valences. In these discourses, Russophones question their belonging while being marginalized by both Estonians and Russians from Russia.

My mother would have gone mad if I had taken Russian [passport]. But I poetized my deed to the utmost: "a man in between", "without a motherland and without a flag".... (Ivanov, 2011, p. 316; {2010_N_ZOLA_00350})

Born in one country, living in another. No homeland. I did not define who I think I am. (Kheyfets & Reinberg, 2009; {2010_M_VOOR_00510})

When I was in college. In Russia. They called us fascists there. ... And when you come back here, we are invaders. (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_02650})

Another category marked by a diversity of discourses due to an undefined self is Traditional family/gender roles. On the one hand, positive identification with the 'traditional' way of life remains dominant in newspapers and novels:

When boys and girls are judged by the same laws, boys turn into girls. That is the terrible thing - unisex, mixed type. The more highly evolved a species is, the more sexual differentiation it has. Humans are not Chlamydomonas. Male human beings are supposed to be as unlike female human beings as much as possible. Women are supposed to have thinness and elegance of form, beautiful long hair, men - strength of musculature, shaved head or short haircut, some facial hair. (Kolosok, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_00160})

However, the same types of sources also express neutral, ambiguous, and even negative views of traditionalist values, particularly in relation to the normalization of gender-based violence:

According to statistics, domestic violence affects one in five women in Estonia. (Karabut, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_08580})

"She never held on to men, unlike her friends who put up with the fact that husbands drink, rage, and even beat them... It is not good when your husband beats you without any reason, just because he is drunk or in a bad mood". So, if he is sober and the wife gave a reason (say, a little flirtation with other men), then it is still possible to discipline [beat] the wife? (Tuhh, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_08870})

Historical Others

This section addresses Russophones' interpretations of the past and includes the following categories: HO: Old Russian, HO: Re-Independence of Estonia, HO: Soviet Estonia, HO: Soviet people and culture, HO: USSR, HO: WWII commemoration/Bronze soldier.

Some Russophones emphasized ancestral ties to Estonia predating the Soviet occupation. References to **Old Russians** gained prominence, carrying ambiguous and positive valence particularly in magazines:

While in the 1910s, Igor Sevryanin imagined Estonia as a fairy-tale Balto-Scandia, since the mid-1920s we find real landscapes in his poems; they bring the poet calmness and tranquility. (Issakov, 2010; {2010_MG_VYSH_00070})

One can assume that Elizabeth Alfredovna is equally alien to both warring parties - Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union (Issakov, 2010; {2010_MG_VYSH_00090})

The report distinguishes between **Soviet Estonia** and the **USSR**: the former refers to Russophones' way of life during the Soviet period, while the latter denotes the Communist Party in Moscow, the KGB, and the NKVD. Despite this conceptual bifurcation, the valence distribution between the two remains broadly similar. In the 2000 report, Russophone discourse had already begun reassessing the Soviet past as something far grimmer than previously taught. In novels, Soviet Estonia is still depicted ambiguously; the USSR is framed predominantly negatively.

Even the Soviet government with its assiduous limitation of hand luggage did not infringe on ladies' handbags... (Markosjan-Käsper, 2013, p. 124; {2010_N_MARK_00480})

On the street, they could drive up and shove them into a car, no one would say a word: Beria and Stalin worked on the gene pool, turned people into cattle, obedient and cowardly. (Ivanov, 2014, p. 18; {2010_N_KOPE_00020})

In film, both Soviet Estonia and the USSR are portrayed more positively, while newspapers tend toward neutral and negative portrayals of the USSR.

I was born here, in Tallinn. I remember the courtyard and two wooden barrack-type houses. I... I was about seven years old... came out on the porch wearing my mother's medals on my chest for the capture of Budapest, for Berlin. My mom was a radio operator on Konev's staff. And in my hand, I have a huge sandwich called Happy Childhood. A big slice of black bread and a thick, thick layer of jam. And there is a crowd: "Let me have a bite!" Estonians, Russians, Jews, Armenians lived cheerfully, friendly, helping old people to collect firewood, briquettes, and clean. I learned Estonian here, in the yard, in Kalamäe. And now I live in Narva. (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_00320})

I was at the club that night. You see, we were all on the KGB's radar at the time, and Bella Akhmadulina spoke so inspirationally and openly that we thought that the organs had prepared another provocation.... (Skulskaja, 2010; {2010_P_POST_01650})

Discourses on **Soviet people and culture**, on the other hand, are more ambiguous in newspapers and novels ('The deeper into the past the poet went, the less of a threat he posed to the Soviet authorities' (Skulskaja, 2008, p. 274; {2010_N_SKUL_00610})).

WWII commemoration and the Bronze Soldier emerge as especially charged topics across genres. The valence prominence occurs in almost all genres. In speeches, the category has an ambiguous valence prominence, as WWII commemoration was contested regarding Estonian freedom fighters but glorified for the Soviet Army. In newspapers, novels, films, and magazines, this category largely displays neutral valence, as texts recall historical facts. Positive association arise in newspapers and movies. WWII commemoration also refers to living veterans and the socio-economic marginalization of the elderly that did not receive pensions from the Estonian state, which translated into calls for commemorating their deeds.

For me, it is a holiday of peace [May 9], not war. (Kheyfets & Reinberg, 2009; {2010_M_VOOR_00390})

We are standing on the eve of the 65th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet army, the anti-Hitler coalition, and all progressive humanity over Nazi Germany in the Second World War. And the most humane and politically justified step on the part of the Estonian government would be to give pensioners the opportunity to receive an honestly earned old-age pension right now. (Znojjev, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_01350})

The **Re-independence of Estonia** at the same time gained neutral valence prominence in newspapers and novels ('The idea to start a farm came to Poom after Estonia regained its independence, when, in the process of property reform, the land that had once belonged to his grandfather was returned to him' (Rozdestvenski, 2010; {2010_P_POST_00970})) and positive valence in films ('And so, at different stages of formation for our young Estonian Republic, I felt myself different here. I remember the period of glasnost, the creation of the People's Front, Edgar Savisaar. I remember it all joyfully, a time of hope and euphoria' (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_00350})).

Significant Others

This section includes the following categories: SO: Estonians, SO: EU/Europe, SO: Russia, SO: Russia: popular culture, SO: Russians from Russia, and SO: USA. Europe and the United States have been separated from the former category ‘the West’, as references to ‘the West’ were significantly fewer as opposed to the United States and Europe. They also varied in terms of valence prominence in genres.

Estonians, as internal Others, demonstrate neutral, ambiguous, and negative valences in newspapers, novels, and films. Ambiguous valence arises from the belief that ordinary Estonians differ from politicians, though the perceived gap has narrowed compared to the 1990s and 2000.

Maybe they wanted to, but did not dare? Maybe the Estonian stoicism, incomprehensible to a southern man, encouraged them to put up with circumstances not suggested by them, but perceived as an inevitable evil? Or was it the habit of obeying their superiors if they so decided? A peculiar understanding of democracy: we chose this boss, we should obey him? (Markosjan-Käsper, 2013; {2010_N_MARK_00340})

Negative valence appears in accounts of negative interactions with ordinary Estonians, particularly involving hate and discrimination (‘Estonian women started calling me all the time and saying, "Leave him, go to your Russia!" It was just a shock to me’ (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_02230})).

Discourses on **Russia** are again diverse, with neutral, ambiguous, and negative valences in newspapers, neutral, and negative valences in novels, and positive, negative, and neutral valences in films. Most Russophones perceive Russia as an external Other whose politics are remote from their lives, merely reporting on recent events in the neighboring country.

For Russia, what is happening on the [Korean] peninsula is not particularly dangerous, but it is not particularly useful either. Participation in the six-party talks, of course, makes Russia's voice somewhat more audible in the region, but not significantly. However, a successful resolution of the problem would increase Moscow's authority. (Kivi, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_09800})

Negative and positive valences emerge through comparisons of life in Russia and life in Estonia.

The obsession with Russia – especially St. Petersburg – I have never understood.... (Ivanov, 2011, p. 348; {2010_N_ZOLA_00530})

I like Russia better. Yes, I like Russia better. There is something else. Something else. (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_02620})

A clear understanding also emerges that Russophones do not belong in Russia.

We are not needed in Russia. (Aug, 2012; {2010_M_RUSS_02610})

I do not believe in pensions, and I do not want to go to Russia either. We are the least needed there. Russia has already abandoned us, like a cuckoo's eggs in someone else's nest. Flounder as best you can. (Ivanov, 2014, p. 368; {2010_N_GORS_00130})

Popular culture originating from Russia since the 1990s has also been isolated as a significant Other, existing parallel to the Russian-language field in Estonia. The **Russia: pop culture** category is assigned neutral valence in films and neutral and positive valences in magazines (e.g., ‘At once, you pay attention to the general "Moscowness" of the single's sound, excellent work of musicians, and seriousness of approach in production’ (Rotar, 2010b; {2010_MG_PLUG_00300}))

The **Russians from Russia** category shows negative valence in novels and positive valence in films. In all cases, however, Russophones differentiate themselves from Russians from Russia.

... I suddenly realized once and for all, I understood everything about both Petersburgers and Muscovites: Muscovites are puffed-up lionesses who always consider themselves more important than others, know everything about everything, experts in life, in a common bar; and Petersburgers are poisonous snakes. (Ivanov, 2011, p. 234; {2010_N_ZOLA_00160})

Narva Days in St. Petersburg. We are performing there [together with band from Russia]. (Kheyfets & Reinberg, 2009; {2010_M_VOOR_00260})

EU and Europe codes combine both negative and positive valences in newspapers and novels, while showing only positive valence in films and magazines. Negative valence results from dissatisfaction with economic conditions after joining the EU, tying back to the earlier Estonia: West category.

Then, when it became known that Estonia's participation in the aid package would amount to 0.18% of the whole package, the population rushed to count the money in their wallets, and Minister Jürgen Ligi, as E24 wrote, tried in vain to convince the people that it was not a direct payment, but a guarantee. But his confidence that Ireland will be able to pay its debts on its own seems to be shared by few people. (Lagašina, 2010b; {2010_P_DENZ_10080})

No, the idea of European unity captivated her even now, but the implementation... Take at least the Brussels slackers... they can be nothing else but workers who, in order to justify the exorbitantly high wages, incessantly turn their heads in search of something else to adjust and finally turn their fiery gaze on the shape of cucumbers. Down with crooked cucumbers from the European table! (Markosjan-Käsper, 2013; {2010_N_MARK_00580})

European values of democracy remain attractive to Russophones, however.

Establishment of direct democracy, starting with the legal status of the popular vote at the local level. In the long term, Estonia should move towards a similar system as in Switzerland (Ideon, 2010; {2010_P_POST_01070})

The **USA**, on the other hand, appears less frequently in Russophone discourses than Europe does. Newspapers indicate predominantly negative and neutral valences, while magazines show positive and ambiguous markers.

Oniomania, or shopping addiction, sale syndrome – these concepts are not very familiar to Estonians, but in the West, and especially in America, these mental disorders have long been a national problem. (Puhhova, 2010; {2010_P_DENZ_00271})

It is not hard to fall in love with New York. It is like a child: it takes everyone as its own and shows off its best toys in return for your affection. (Bökova, 2010; {2010_MG_PLUG_00010})

3. The predominant discourse and its challengers

The dominant identity discourse in 2010 is **Rising through Exclusion**. Two decades after the reestablishment of independence, Russophones in Estonia saw their identity as stuck in a liminal

space. They did not see themselves belonging to either Estonia or Russia. Instead, Estonian Russophone identity construction occurs through cultural development distinct from their significant Others. Aspirations for political representation and improved socioeconomic conditions for Estonian Russophones persist. Amid the fears of the eradication of the Russophone cultural space created over the years, there is an acknowledgement that integration through learning Estonian will improve the living conditions of future generations. Nevertheless, there is a parallel aspiration to preserve Russian schools in Estonia as an important marker of Russophone identity, where cultural and linguistic affiliation with the rest of the minority are built. Previous aspirations for unity among divided the Russophones, as well as Russophones and Estonians, persisted in 2010. The vision of unity is one of friendly coexistence and respect for individual cultures and histories, instead of total assimilation.

While accession to the European Union initially offered hope of economic advancement, a year before joining the Eurozone, doubts emerged among Russophones as to whether the poverty gap would further widen due to the financial crises affecting Estonian economy. Russophones saw themselves as the group most negatively affected by the economic downturn. According to the discourses emerging from the data analysis, the earlier negative focus on discrimination through language and citizenship laws translated into a belief of socioeconomic inequality afflicting Estonian Russophones. Amid these challenges, Russophone sought to construct a separate identity distinguishing themselves not only from Estonians, but even more markedly from Russians from Russia.

Conclusion

Analysis of dominant discourses across 34 categories and six types of sources identified for 2010 leads to the following conclusions. In 2010, Russophones in Estonia perceived their identity as liminal. The dominant identity discourse in 2010 was *Rising through Exclusion*, wherein Russophones sought to construct a distinct identity amid the socioeconomic challenges of the past two decades. The identity distanced itself from not only from Estonian as an identity, but even more clearly from Russians from Russia as an identity. Previous aspirations for unity among divided Russophones, as well as Russophones and Estonians, persisted in 2010. This vision of unity was grounded in friendly coexistence and respect for individual cultures and histories, instead of total assimilation.

Table 1. Raw counts

Category	Total codes	Speeches	Newspapers	Novels	Movies	Magazines	Letters
Estonian politics / authorities	79	7	55	5	9		3
Minority rights violations	74		24	14	34	1	1
SO: EU / Europe	62	2	15	27	10	7	1
SO: Russia	60	1	29	7	18	4	1
SO: Estonians	58	1	10	27	15	3	2
Traditional family / gender roles	57	1	30	20		5	1
HO: USSR	45		11	23	10	1	
Economy	42	3	29		9		1
Estonian language	42		19	1	21	1	
HO: Soviet people and culture	37		3	34			
Class inequality	36		19	15	2		
Estonian Russophone culture	36		11	2	3	20	
Russian language	35	1	11	6	14	3	
HO: Soviet Estonia	31		3	21	7		
Assimilation / Integration	30		9	1	18	1	1
HO: WWII commemoration / Bronze soldier	30	2	7	16	5		
Ethnic division	28	5	6	5	9	2	1
SO: USA	27	1	9	4	3	10	
Estonian culture	25		6	2	11	6	
Russian culture	25	1	3	8	9	4	
Estonia: West	24		13	9		1	1
Unity	22	2	11	2	4	1	2
Estonian Russophone: in-between	21			4	17		
Estonia: small state / periphery	20		7	9	2	2	
SO: Russians from Russia	20		2	12	3	3	
Education: Russian schools	18	2	14	1			1
Russian party / elite	15		2	12			1
SO: Russia: pop culture	15		1	4	4	6	
HO: Re-Independence of Estonia	14		3	5	5		1
Estonia: homeland	13	1	2		10		
Citizenship: Estonian	11		1	1	4		5
Emigration	11			2	7	1	1
Estonian Russophone community	9	2	5	2			
HO: Old Russian	9			2		7	
Totals	1081	32	370	303	263	89	24

Table 2. Topography of Estonian Russophone identity

	<i>Speeches</i>	<i>Newspapers</i>	<i>Novels</i>	<i>Movies</i>	<i>Magazines</i>	<i>Letters</i>
<i>Economic inequality</i>						
Class inequality		--~	--			
Economy		--+~				
Estonia: small state / periphery		//	-		/	
Estonia: West		+~/	~-			
Estonian politics / authorities	~	----//+	/	-		
Minority rights violations		--//~	~-	--~/		
<i>Integration</i>						
Assimilation / Integration		~+		~~~-		
Citizenship: Estonian				/		
Education: Russian schools		++/				
Emigration				+		
Estonia: homeland				+/		
Estonian language		//~+-		//+-		
Ethnic division	/	/		/-		
Russian language		+/	/	//+	/	
Unity		++		+		~
<i>Estonian Russophone identity</i>						
Estonian culture		+		+ -	+	
Estonian Russophone community		/				
Estonian Russophone culture		++/			+++~	
Estonian Russophone: in-between			~	//-		
Russian culture			-	/+	/	
Russian elite			-			
Traditional family / gender roles		++//~-	++-			
<i>Historical Others</i>						
HO: Old Russian					~+	
HO: Re-Independence of Estonia		/	/	+		
HO: Soviet Estonia			~-/	+		
HO: Soviet people and culture		~	~~~~+~			
HO: USSR		/-	--/~	+/		
HO: WWII commemoration / Bronze soldier	~	/+	/	//+	/	
<i>Significant Others</i>						
SO: Estonians		~/	//~-	//-		
SO: EU / Europe		-+	--+	+/	+	
SO: Russia		//~~-	/-	+~/		
SO: Russia: pop culture				/	+/	
SO: Russians from Russia			-	+		

SO: USA

-/

+~

Saliency of categories is measured on the following scale: 1.0–2.5 (1); 2.5–5.0 (2); 5.0–7.5 (3); 7.5–10.0 (4); above 10.0 (5).

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