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**Euroscepticism and EKRE: How Nativism Influences the Euroscepticism of Estonia's  
Largest Populist Radical Right Party**

MA Thesis

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE) has rapidly grown in popularity over the course of seven years. After officially forming in 2013, the party won 8% of the seats in the Estonian Parliament in the 2015 elections. Then, in 2019, the party more than doubled this number when it won 19% of the seats in the parliament. The party has accomplished this impressive feat while advocating for the Estonian government to place a greater emphasis on sovereignty and traditional values. In addition to this emphasis on nativism, the party also promotes Eurosceptic language in both its policy goals and rhetoric. This thesis sets out to prove that, in the case of EKRE, this concern over cultural issues is related to the Eurosceptic nature of the party. By conducting interviews with party leaders, three categories of codes were created. Those categories are, Euroscepticism, nativism, and populism. From these codes, this thesis comes to the conclusion that EKRE is a hard-Eurosceptic party and its hard-Eurosceptic beliefs are fueled by nativism.

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.

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## **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	1
Background Information.....	7
Literature Review.....	19
Methodology.....	42
Results.....	52
Analysis of Results.....	57
Conclusion.....	72
Works Cited.....	75
Appendix I.....	80
Appendix II.....	82

## Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to examine the Estonian political party known as EKRE (Conservative People's Party of Estonia). This party is one of the many populist radical right parties in both Europe and the Baltic Sea region that is represented in its respected parliament. Additionally, it is a party that utilizes many Eurosceptic phrases and terms in its rhetoric and policy proposals. From this information, two questions emerge: how intense is EKRE's Euroscepticism, and what fuels these Eurosceptic beliefs. The purpose of this thesis is to answer these two questions.

It is important to study Euroscepticism because it is a phenomenon that has seen a major increase in coverage over the past decade. The 2014 European Parliament elections were hailed by many media outlets as being a major victory for the various far right and Eurosceptic parties.<sup>1</sup> However, the question remains, Where does this Eurosceptic outlook originate from? This thesis attempts to answer this question in the context of the Republic of Estonia.

By using a single case study, this thesis will illustrate what motivates the Eurosceptic policies and rhetoric utilized by the largest populist radical right party in the country of Estonia. This is an important task because, as will be shown in the thesis, there is not a universal consensus as to how this party came to prominence. As will be shown, there are numerous authors who disagree with the central findings of the research project. Therefore, this paper will help contribute to the debate on how and why a Eurosceptic party has emerged in this country. Another reason that this project is important is that it will add to an existing political theory. The Sussex-school of party-based Euroscepticism originally only examined party-literature. By using interviews as the primary source of data, this paper will help add on to the Sussex-school and its data collection.

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<sup>1</sup> Cas Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy in Europe* (Routledge, New York, 2016) Location 886. NB! This book, along with "Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism vol.I," and "Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism vol.II" are electronic books. They do not have page numbers, but location numbers. Therefore, the location of the quotations used from these sources will be denoted with a "Location number" rather than a page number.

EKRE is a relatively new party in Estonia that was formed in 2013. By 2015 it had won around 8% of the seats in parliament and by 2019, it had gained around 19% of the seats in parliament.<sup>2</sup> EKRE is a party that advocates for policies that promote traditional and family values as well as policies that attempt to address what the party sees as a demographic crisis in the country.<sup>3</sup> It is evident that members of the party fear that the number of ethnic Estonians being born inside the country is too low and that immigrants from other countries are threatening the cultural identity of the state. This results in an anti-immigrant stance that targets the EU refugee policies. As previously stated, this thesis will attempt to illustrate that these nativist views are what propel EKRE to take on a hard-Eurosceptic party.

In order to see if it is true that EKRE is a hard-Eurosceptic party, the term has to be conceptualized and clearly defined. Over time there have been four popular ways in which Euroscepticism is defined each with their own distinct categories of parties and methods of categorization. However, for this research project, the conceptualization of Euroscepticism provided by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak is the most appropriate. In their work, the two authors create two categories of Eurosceptic parties: hard and soft-Eurosceptic. The research conducted by this thesis indicates that EKRE should be considered a hard-Eurosceptic party. This indicates that the party contains,

“a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and...who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived.”<sup>4</sup>

This is in opposition to soft-Euroscepticism. For this term, the Sussex school states that, soft-Euroscepticism occurs when, “there is a not a principled objection to European

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Conservative People’s Party of Estonia Faction,’ Riigikogu, < <https://www.riigikogu.ee/en/parliament-of-estonia/factions/conservative-peoples-party-estonia-faction/>> [accessed May 16, 2019]

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism vol.I* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2008) Location 181.

integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU.”<sup>5</sup> The difference between the two terms is that hard-Eurosceptic parties are those that wish to exit from the EU or, they believe that the EU, as it is currently constructed, is detrimental to the various member states. On the other hand, soft Eurosceptic parties are ones that do not necessarily believe that their country must refuse European integration or cooperation. In fact, many believe that the EU is beneficial. However, these parties believe that the EU has become too politically integrated or should refrain from accepting anymore new members.

While EKRE does not advocate for exiting the European Union, it is a party that does oppose, “the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived.” This is in opposition to a soft-Euroscepticism. As will be later shown, the leaders of EKRE believe that the EU, as it is currently constructed, is fundamentally flawed. They believe that the EU is destroying the sovereignty of the nation state. They, and the party, see that the EU as attempting to usurp power from state capitals by imposing migration policies and “cultural marxism.”

Although Taggart and Szczerbiak’s conceptualization was deemed to be the best fit for this thesis, there were still other categorizations of the topic that deserved examination. This includes the work done by Kopecky and Mudde, who developed their categorization to improve upon Taggart and Szczerbiak’s; the conceptualization created by Sofia Vasilopoulou, who wanted to fix the issues brought about by the two previous theories; and finally Leonard Ray, who devised a party categorization system that was designed to be more quantitative and examine larger numbers of parties. While all of these theories provided excellent party categorizations, the Sussex school and its definition of hard and soft-Euroscepticism was more appropriate for this single case study.

In addition to describing and defining hard vs. soft-Euroscepticism, it is also vital to conceptualize and define populism; as this thesis claims that populist radical right parties are connected to the concept of Euroscepticism. Therefore, a definition of populism must

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid Location 192

be provided for this thesis. Benjamin Moffit's conceptualization of populism will be the same definition that this thesis utilizes. In his book, "The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation," Moffit states that, "populism is a political style that is used by a wide range of actors across the world today."<sup>6</sup> He goes on to write that the parties that utilize this performance will often incorporate three major themes: appeal to the people vs. the elite; bad manners; and the threat of a crisis or threat.<sup>7</sup> As will be shown in this thesis, these are all tactics that EKRE employs, illustrating their populist credentials.

When analyzing the populism of EKRE, the researcher did not solely utilize interviews. Because Moffit's conceptualization was used, it was not enough to solely examine the statements made by party members. In addition, the researcher examined public statements made by high ranking EKRE politicians. As Moffit states, populism is a political style. Therefore, their public statements must be analyzed in order to see how they perform in public, not just in one-on-one interviews.

The final concept that needs to be defined is the concept of nativism. Since this concept is one of the main ideas of the thesis, it is critical to define and conceptualize it in the context of this paper. For this thesis the definition of nativism will be provided by Hans Georg Betz. In his 2019 article, the author devises three ways to examine nativism: economic nativism, welfare chauvinism, and symbolic nativism.<sup>8</sup> For this project, the conceptualization of nativism will be centered around the definition of symbolic nativism. He states that, "Symbolic nativism is centred on the defence of the fundamental traditions, values and historically evolved institutional arrangements that define a particular community, its culture and identity."<sup>9</sup> This is the form of nativism that is most appropriate

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<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Moffit, *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2016) 28.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid 29

<sup>8</sup> Hans-Georg Betz, 'Facets of Nativism: A Heuristic Exploration,' *Patterns of Prejudice* 53 no.2, (2019) 111-135, (pg.111)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid (pg.123).



for EKRE's approach to the topic. Throughout the interviews, the politicians described the various cultural and identity issues that they perceived as threats to the country.

In order to accomplish the task in answering the two research questions, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were utilized. These were conducted with two high-level EKRE MPs, Martin Helme and Jaak Madison. These interviews were generally broken into four sections: background questions; questions regarding the Eurosceptic nature of the party; questions on society as a whole; and questions that concerned the policies of the party. Once these interviews were gathered, they were examined for specific phrases and statements and were then coded. There were three categories of codes used: Eurosceptic codes; nativist codes; and populist codes. In addition to these three categories, there were also statements made that were noteworthy, however they could not fit into one of the aforementioned categories. Therefore, they were coded as miscellaneous.

Within these three categories the codes used are as follows. For the Eurosceptic category, the codes are hard-Euroscepticism and soft-Euroscepticism. These two codes are based on the conceptualizations devised by Taggart and Szczerbiak. For the nativist category, the codes are tradition, demographics, and sovereignty. These codes are associated with Betz's idea of symbolic nativism. Finally, the populist category has the single code of populism. These codes were also accompanied by various sub-codes that were also identified in the interviews. Unlike the codes, there were no specific sub-codes that emerged. Rather, these sub-codes were small phrases or terms that directly emerged from certain quotations or were terms that summarized the sentiment of the phrase.

This project will also attempt to address the various potential criticisms that can be placed on these interviews. The first major criticism is that only two interviews were conducted. Under many circumstances, this would be considered too small of a sample to draw valid conclusions. However, for this case specifically, this number of interviews is appropriate. Because EKRE is a far-right and populist party, it follows that it would have a very strict and hierarchical party structure. Therefore, it would only be beneficial to interview the top echelon of the party, rather than lower ranking or ordinary members.

Other criticisms that this technique can face is that the participants are being interviewed in their second language. However, both of the subjects interviewed speak excellent English and the use of a translator would have potentially inhibited proper analysis of the language used by the subjects.

The thesis will be organized in the following manner. The first chapter will provide background information to the reader. The current political parties of Estonia will be discussed as will Estonian views on the European Union. More importantly, the reader will be provided with a brief history of EKRE and the major positions that it takes as a party. The background information is the first chapter because the reader needs to have this basic information before being exposed to the more theoretical aspects of this paper. The next chapter will be the literature review. This section will serve two purposes. The first is to present the existing literature on the topic. This will serve to show where the gaps in the literature exist and how this thesis plans to fill them in. The second role of this chapter is to conceptualize the various terms that are key to this project.

Once the literature has been presented, the methodology chapter will follow. The section devoted to methodology will explain how coding was used to gather information from the interviews that were conducted. The definitions and explanations of the codes will be discussed in this chapter as well. It will also justify the techniques used in this thesis. The fourth chapter will briefly showcase the results of the coding. This will lay out how many times in each interview the interviewees mentioned one of the codes that had been defined in the methodology chapter. The fifth chapter will be used to analyze the results of the interviews. This will utilize texts from the literature review and texts outside of the literature review. The thesis will then conclude with a brief concluding section that will summarize the findings of the thesis and will present areas that can be expanded for further research.

## **CHAPTER 1: Background Information**

### **Introduction**

Before discussing the research design, literature review, and the results of this paper, it is necessary to provide the reader with some background regarding both the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE) and on Estonian politics in general. While there has been an increase in the number of English texts that examine EKRE, there are still some gaps in the literature that this thesis will fill. This chapter will briefly explain the history and current makeup of Estonian politics, and, more importantly, how EKRE came to power and its performance in the previous elections. As this section of the thesis will illustrate, the creation and popularity of this party was never a forgone conclusion. In fact, before the rise of EKRE, there had not been a major Eurosceptic party in the country since its accession to the EU. Before EKRE's meteoric rise, Estonian politics was dominated by the center-right, center-left, and the center parties. All of these political bodies were pro-European Union and Estonia, along with Poland, was seen as consistently in favor of European policies. As previously stated in the introductory chapter, that is why it is so vital to examine a single country as a case study and to specifically examine EKRE in order to see what specific context allowed for its rise in prominence. That is why it is important to give the reader necessary background information regarding the country and the party itself.

This chapter will be divided into six main subsections: The current parties in the parliament; a history of the EKRE party; the structure of the party; a comparison with similar parties in the region; problems facing Estonian society; and Estonian views of the EU.

### **The Major Parties in Estonia**

The Republic of Estonia is currently home to five political parties that are represented in the parliament. Before dissecting and further analyzing the Conservative People's Party of Estonia, the other prominent parties of Estonia will be briefly discussed.

This will help the reader contextualize the rise of EKRE within the country of Estonia. The two largest parties in the country are the Reform Party and the Center Party. The Reform Party is currently the largest party in the Estonian parliament and is best characterized as a classically liberal party. The party believe in lower income taxes and that the free market is the best key for Estonia to see success on the global stage.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the Center Party does advocate for more state intervention in the economy.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, this party, as part of its message, tries to appeal to the “interests of the less well-off population and the national minorities.”<sup>12</sup> This has meant that the Center Party was typically classified as the party for the Russian-speaking population.<sup>13</sup>

A key piece of information to note is that the Center Party was the only party in Estonia to not fully endorse accession to the EU. As Evald Mikkel and Geoffrey Pridham write, in Estonia and Latvia, almost every party wished to join the EU.<sup>14</sup> The only exception was the Center Party in Estonia. They write, “both countries evidenced strong cross-party and elite support for EU accession, the main exception being the Centre Party in Estonia, which was deeply divided and ambivalent on the EU issue.”<sup>15</sup> This illustrates that Estonia has had a party that was hesitant about its membership in the EU before EKRE.

The other two parties in the Estonian Parliament are Isamaa and the Social Democratic Party. These two parties are the fourth and fifth largest parties, respectively. Isamaa is a conservative party (though not as far to the right as EKRE). This is reflected in their desire to establish a voting system in the country whereby families with children will

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Estonian Reform Party Faction,’ *Riigikogu*, < <https://www.riigikogu.ee/en/parliament-of-estonia/factions/estonian-reform-party-faction/>> [Accessed March 27, 2019]

<sup>11</sup> Estonian Centre Party Faction, *Riigikogu*, < <https://www.riigikogu.ee/en/parliament-of-estonia/factions/estonian-centre-party-faction/>> [Accessed March 27, 2019]

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

<sup>13</sup> Tonis Saarts, ‘Persistence and Decline of Political Parties: the Case of Estonia,’ *East European Politics*, 31 no.2 (2015) 208-228, (pg.216)

<sup>14</sup> Evald Mikkel and Geoffrey Pridham, ‘Clinching the ‘Return to Europe’: The Refereundums on EU Accession in Estonia and Latvia,’ *West European Politics*, 27 no.4 (2004) 716-748, (pg. 717).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid* 717

receive a more heavily weighted vote in elections.<sup>16</sup> This would be designed to promote families and maintain a high proportion of Estonians in the country. The final party, the Social Democrats, are a left-of-center party. They want to “improv[e] the situation of children and families with children, eliminat[e] salaried poverty, and improv[e] social coherence.”<sup>17</sup> This would imply that the party wants to establish a strong social security net for the Estonian population. All of the parties mentioned are pro-EU.

### **The History of EKRE**

The Conservative People’s Party of Estonia was established relatively recently. Yet despite this, the party has quickly gained popularity within the country of Estonia. The origins of the party can be traced to the mid-2000s. One of the creators of the party, Martin Helme, stated that, “in 2006 we joined with like-minded people and formed a pressure group, an activist group that centered around the debate on what to do with soviet monuments.”<sup>18</sup> As stated by Martin Helme, this movement was created largely from the crisis surrounding the Bronze Soldier controversy in 2007.<sup>19</sup> This organization existed as a pressure group until the early 2010s. At this time, the movement joined forces with the old People’s Union Party to officially create what is now known as the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia in 2012.<sup>20</sup> Once one of the largest and most popular parties in Estonia, the People’s Union was rocked by a series of scandals in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that saw its popularity drastically decrease. The party soon, “saw its ranks fall to fourth in 2011 [and it] failed to make the 5 percent threshold. Percentages in popularity polls [had] been in the low single-digit figures.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Isamaa Faction’, *Riigikogu*, <<https://www.riigikogu.ee/en/parliament-of-estonia/factions/isamaa-faction/>> [Accessed March 27, 2019]

<sup>17</sup> ‘Social Democratic Party Faction,’ *Riigikogu*, < <https://www.riigikogu.ee/en/parliament-of-estonia/factions/social-democratic-party-faction/>> [Accessed May 7, 2019]

<sup>18</sup> Martin Helme, Interview with Daniel Jarosak (*Riigikogu*, Interviewed on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019).

<sup>19</sup> Helme, Interview

<sup>20</sup> Ott Tammik, ‘People’s Union Becomes ‘Conservative People’s Party.’ *ERR*, (March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012)

<<https://news.err.ee/103747/people-s-union-becomes-conservative-people-s-party>> [Accessed May 6, 2019]

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

After the party formed, it ran in all of the major elections in the country between 2013-2019. Martin Helme, in his interview, described what each election results meant for the party:

Our...first elections, when we ran in local elections in 2013, it wasn't particularly successful. It was an opportunity... to try out what worked and what didn't work and try to mobilize our forces. So then came the 2014 EP elections which went better, but because the threshold is so high, we didn't get a mandate. And then the 2017 local elections came and went about how we expected. It wasn't a screaming success, but we were quite happy with the results. And I forgot about the 2015 parliamentary elections, which no one thought that we would succeed but we surprised them.<sup>22</sup>

The timeline that is described by Martin Helme is backed up by the results of each elections. The rise in popularity of EKRE has been noteworthy. This is especially evident in the 2015 parliamentary elections in which the party gained 8.1% of the seats in the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament).<sup>23</sup> For a two-year-old party competing in its first elections, this is a very successful outcome. This result was improved upon in 2019 when the party won 19% of the seats in parliament.<sup>24</sup>

As stated in the introductory chapter, EKRE is a populist radical right party, and therefore holds many views and supports various policies that are popular with parties that are on the political right. Specifically, it promotes policies in relation to Europe that are very common amongst other far-right parties. One of the most prominent policies is the idea of retaking control of Estonia's borders. As parliament member Jaak Madisson states, "if we want to restore the border controls, we must get permission from the European Commission and if we don't get it, we can't get it. And for most member states, it is problematic that you have to ask the EC to restore your border control."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Helme, Interview.

<sup>23</sup> 'Conservative People's Party of Estonia Faction.'

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Jaak Madison, Interview with Daniel Jarosak (Riigikogu. Interviewed on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019).

Another aspect of this party is the emphasis on family and conservative values. The party's official web page on the Parliamentary website highlights this belief in two ways. The first is that, "The Party also wants to introduce a group of measures that would increase the birth rate of Estonians."<sup>26</sup> The second is that, "The Conservative People's Party wants to repeal the Cohabitation Act."<sup>27</sup> The Cohabitation Act allows same-sex couples to officially register with the Estonian government.<sup>28</sup> As will be discussed later in the thesis, these beliefs and policies illustrate a party that is greatly concerned with demographics. This also illustrates, along with their MP's rhetoric, that this is a party that is not supportive of diversity or multiculturalism.

The third major talking point for EKRE is the issue of language. This is related to the previous points and is rooted in the desire to preserve the Estonian nation. The party explicitly states on its parliamentary page that its desire is to preserve, "the vitality of the Estonian values...language, culture...traditions."<sup>29</sup> This point is then further expounded upon by Jaak Madison who stated, when asked about the issue of language that,

"we have to start from Kindergarten. There has to be the same school program. It cannot be like the US where the Mexicans are only speaking Spanish and don't learn English. Or like in Germany where you have different school systems that you can learn only in Turkish and not German. But this is the problem that we have in Estonia."<sup>30</sup>

This illustrates the fear that the Estonian people and their language and culture can become endangered if minorities are not assimilated or are not restricted from entering the country. However, this is not to say that EKRE opposes ethnic Russians and Russian speaking individuals from joining its ranks. However, is more transactional in its motivation. Louis Wierenga cites Ruuben Kaalep who stated that, "whenever two white nations together face

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<sup>26</sup> 'Conservative People's Party of Estonia Faction.'

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> 'Riigikogu approved Cohabitation Act,' *Riigikogu* (October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014), <<https://www.riigikogu.ee/en/sitting-reviews/riigikogu-approved-cohabitation-act/>> [accessed May 18, 2019]

<sup>29</sup> 'Conservative People's Party of Estonia Faction.'

<sup>30</sup> Jaak Madison, Interview.

something that is not white, they will see that eventually it is better to work together.”<sup>31</sup> This refers to the Muslim minority in Estonia. So, while language is a major issue for EKRE, this does not mean that the party will exclude Russians from its ranks when confronted with an ‘alien’ entity.

### **The Rise of EKRE in the Context the Baltic Sea Region**

The rise of EKRE is part of a Eurosceptic revival that is prominent throughout Europe. The Baltic Sea region is no exception to this. It would be beneficial to examine other far-right parties in the Baltic Sea region and see how EKRE compares to them in both style and policy. The first major right-wing party that has become prominent in the Baltic region is the True Finns party, of Finland. The elections of 2011 proved to be a massive year for the party. As Mark Niemi writes, “The parliamentary group... now suddenly grew to 39 members. At the same time the party fractured the traditional configuration of three main parties and became the third-largest party in the Parliament.”<sup>32</sup> Today, the party currently holds 38 seats in the parliament (around 17%).<sup>33</sup> The party’s website states that, “The Finns Party platform and policy is built on the work ethic, entrepreneurship, and a balanced social welfare system linked to Christian values. The Party has support from all sectors of the political spectrum.”<sup>34</sup> The party is also hesitant when it comes to immigration. Their pamphlet on their immigration party writes that, “Actual outcomes of these [immigration] factors can be seen in the many riots, brutal events, and the formation of violent gangs in a number of large European cities.”<sup>35</sup>

Another party that should be examined is the National Alliance in Latvia. This party is slightly older than EKRE, having found electoral success in 2011 rather than

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<sup>31</sup> Louis Wierenga, ‘Russians, Refugees, and Europeans: What Shapes the Discourse of the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia?’, *Uptake working paper*, no.6 (2017) 1-20, (pg.15).

<sup>32</sup> Mari K. Niemi, ‘The True Finns Identity Politics and Populist Leadership on the Threshold of the Party’s Electoral Triumph,’ *Javnost-The Republic*, 20 no.3 (2013) 77-91, (pg.78).

<sup>33</sup>Parliamentary Elections 2019,’ *Finns Party in English*, <<https://www.perussuomalaiset.fi/kielisivu/in-english/>> [Accessed. May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019]

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Finns Party, The Finns Party’s Immigration Policy, <[https://www.perussuomalaiset.fi/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ps\\_immigration\\_final.pdf](https://www.perussuomalaiset.fi/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ps_immigration_final.pdf)> [Accessed April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019] (pg.1)



2015.<sup>36</sup> Despite this difference in age, both parties have rather similar stances. For instance, the NA advocates for, “traditional marriage and advocating liberal spending on benefits for families with children (the “demography” issue – low ethnic Latvian birth rates – has been a major issue for the party).”<sup>37</sup> Additionally, it has declared that, “it will never support or join a government that involves *Harmony*” (the Harmony party is a prominent political party in Latvia that is popular amongst its Russian minority).<sup>38</sup> This all is similar to EKRE who’s policies are also focused on the demographics of their home country and view Russia with intense suspicion.

What these parties all showcase is that the region is experiencing the same issues that plague the other states of the EU. What’s more, the region itself is highly heterogeneous, with old EU member states, new EU member states, and countries of varying sizes. Yet, despite these numerous differences, almost every country in the region has at least one notable and influential right-wing party. However, what is interesting to note is that both Estonia and Latvia saw their main Eurosceptic parties emerge later than their sister parties both in the region and in the continent as a whole.

### **Perceived Problems Currently Facing Estonian Society:**

This subchapter will mainly focus on the issues that EKRE and its supporters view as being potentially harmful to the country of Estonia. One theme that emerges from this is the issue of language. Throughout the interviews with the MPs, the issue of language was brought up a number of times. For instance, in his interview, Jaak Madison told how Russian-speaking individuals needed to be more integrated into the population.<sup>39</sup> This fear over language gives EKRE ammunition to target members of the Russian-speaking population. The party is able to frame the population as being one composed of patriots,

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<sup>36</sup> Juris Kaza, ‘Who is Who in Upcoming Latvian Parliamentary Elections,’ *Re:Baltica*, (Re:Baltica August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018) <https://en.rebaltica.lv/2018/08/who-is-who-in-upcoming-latvian-parliamentary-elections/> [Accessed April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019]

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Helme, Interview

disinterested individuals, and pro-Kremlin supporters.<sup>40</sup> This, of course, gives the impression that the Russian-speaking population presents a challenge to society.

The second problem is rooted in demographics. With around 1.3 million citizens, Estonia's entire total population is around half of the population of Warsaw. As an ethnicity, Estonians constitute over 900,000 citizens in Estonia that makes up around 75% of the state. What is interesting, however, is that it is one of the few former communist countries in the area that is not experiencing a decline in population. Unlike Poland, Russia, and the other two Baltic states, Estonia has seen a modest increase in its population.<sup>41</sup> However, while the overall population has increased, the actual number of ethnic Estonians is decreasing. According to Estonian Statistics, in 2013 the number of ethnic Estonians in the country was 912,188 however in 2017, that number had fallen to 904,639 (the population was falling yearly in between these two measures).<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, net migration to Estonia has been increasing, meaning that non-ethnic Estonians are becoming a more noticeable fraction of the population.<sup>43</sup>

Of course, an increasing population that is either foreign-born or not part of the ethnic majority is not necessarily a negative event. In fact, most economists would laud this trend as it can provide more working age citizens. However, for certain segments of the population, this can be perceived as a threat. This sentiment is captured by Martin Helme when he states,

“demographic sense to make sure that the that both the number and the proportion of Estonians in EE is increased that we will grow as a nation and we will be in an increasing majority and when we are talking about the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>41</sup> Statistics Estonia, 'More Births and Smaller Emigration Increased the Population Figure,' Statistics Estonia. (9 May 2019). < <https://www.stat.ee/news-release-2019-053>> [Accessed May 17, 2019]

<sup>42</sup> Statistics Estonia, 'Population by Ethnic Nationality, 1 January, years,' *Statistics Estonia*. (9 June 2017), <<https://www.stat.ee/34278?highlight=russian%2Cspeaking>> [Accessed May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019]

<sup>43</sup> Statistics Estonia, 'The Population of Estonia Increased Last Year,' *Statistics Estonia*, (16 January 2019). <<https://www.stat.ee/news-release-2019-007>> [Accessed May 7, 2019]

Russians in EE or the Ukrainians in EE...it would be nice if we had a negative but at least as small immigration as possible.”<sup>44</sup>

This demography controversy is thus an issue for EKRE and the various Estonian citizens who support the party. This is not unique to EKRE as various other far-right parties throughout Europe and the Baltic Sea region focus heavily on ensuring that an ethnic majority is maintained. For instance, in Poland, the ruling PiS party both implements policies that are designed to promote traditional families and child rearing and espouses rhetoric as well. Their “Family 500+” policy is designed to promote women to have more children, in return for cash incentives.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, former Prime Minister Beata Szydło has publicly stated that Family, development and security are the three pillars of our governance.”<sup>46</sup> As will be discussed later in this paper, EKRE’s Euroscepticism is, in-part, based on this fear of demographic shifts.

### **Estonian Views of the EU**

Of course, it is important to examine how Estonians view the European Union in the present day. While the country has elected a string of pro-EU governments into power, it would be misguided to assume that all Estonians are completely enthusiastic about Brussels and the direction the EU is taking. Firstly, when examining how Estonians view the European Union as a whole, according to the 2018 Eurobarometer survey, 53% of Estonians trust the EU; a number that is 11% higher than the EU average.<sup>47</sup> This coincides with the idea that Estonians have a highly favorable view towards the European Union and trust the decision making process that occurs in Brussels. This is supported further by the

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<sup>44</sup> Helme, Interview.

<sup>45</sup> Agnieszka Sowa, Family 500+: A New Family Income-Supporting Benefit in Poland, (European Commission, 2016) < file:///C:/Users/Daniel/Downloads/ESPN%20-%20Flash%20Report%202016-45%20-%20PL%20-%20June%202016.pdf > [Accessed May 17, 2019]

<sup>46</sup> Premier.gov.pl, “Prime Minister Beata Szydło: family, development and security are the three pillars of our governance,” *Premier.gov.pl* < <https://www.premier.gov.pl/en/news/news/prime-minister-beata-szydlo-family-development-and-security-are-the-three-pillars-of-our.html> > [Accessed May 7, 2019]

<sup>47</sup> European Commission, 2018. *Standard Eurobarometer 89 Spring 2018 First Results* (Kantar Public Brussels, 2018) < file:///C:/Users/Daniel/Downloads/eb\_89\_first\_en%20(2).pdf > [Accessed May 7, 2019] (pg.13).

fact that 78% of Estonian citizens believe that they are also citizens of the European Union; a full eight points higher than the EU average.<sup>48</sup>

This amount of support for the European project is by no means an outlier. This measure has been part of an upward trend for the past 15 years since the country first joined the bloc in 2004. In the 62<sup>nd</sup> Eurobarometer (taken in 2004), the percent of Estonians who believed that membership was beneficial was 52%, which was a 21% increase between spring and autumn of that year.<sup>49</sup> This would further increase in 2007. By the end of that year, approval of the EU increased further to 66%.<sup>50</sup> In 2013, Estonians largely trusted the EU with 64% saying they fully trusted the future of the EU and only 33% not believing in the future of the EU.<sup>51</sup> What this illustrates is that, by-and-large, the country largely supports the EU and shows no real sign of trying to leave the bloc.

Thus, it must be asked, how and why EKRE has been able to conjure up so much support despite Estonians' strong support for the EU? One of the ways is that the party itself does not explicitly say that it wants to remove Estonia from the union. Additionally, even the most Eurosceptic members of the party, who reject the European Union and what it represents, admit that their stance is not representative of the party as a whole (this will be examined further in the thesis). Another answer can be found in one of the Eurobarometer questions from 2018. That question is "what do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?" Here, Estonians rank their two biggest fears as immigration (65%) and terrorism (25%).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> European Commission, 2018. *Standard Eurobarometer 89* (pg.36).

<sup>49</sup> European Commission, 2005. *Eurobarometer 62: Public Opinion in the European Union* (TNS Opinion & Social, 2005) < [http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb62/eb\\_62\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb62/eb_62_en.pdf)> [Accessed May 7, 2019] pg. 69.

<sup>50</sup> European Commission, 2007. *Eurobarometer 67: Public Opinion in the European Union* (TNS Opinion & Social, 2007). < [http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb67/eb67\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb67/eb67_en.pdf)> [Accessed May 7, 2019] Pg.96.

<sup>51</sup> European Commission, 2013. *Standard Eurobarometer 79: Public Opinion in the European Union First Results*. (TNS Opinion & Social, 2013) <[http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79\\_first\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_first_en.pdf)> [Accessed May 7, 2019] pg.11.

<sup>52</sup> European Commission, 2018. *Standard Eurobarometer 90: Public Opinion in the European Union First Results*, (Kantor Public, 2018). < [file:///C:/Users/Daniel/Downloads/eb90\\_FiR\\_en%20\(5\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Daniel/Downloads/eb90_FiR_en%20(5).pdf)> [Accessed May 7, 2019] pg.15.

These numbers are crucial, especially when you take into account that only 13% of Estonians believe that the economic situation is one of the two biggest issues facing the country (however 44% believe that inflation and rising prices are the biggest issues facing the country and these can be seen as economic concerns).<sup>53</sup> Overall, it would be a mistake to attribute the rise of EKRE to solely to economic issues or solely to the idea that certain segments of society feel left behind economically. Rather, as this thesis will show, social and cultural issues play a far greater role in the rise of this party.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the background information surrounding EKRE has been discussed and analyzed. It is important to provide context to the rise of EKRE. Firstly, this requires that a brief description of the political parties of Estonia. By the time the EKRE came into being in 2013, the various parties in Estonia were pro-EU parties and a consistently pro-EU government was in place. This chapter expediently describes the major parties that are represented in the Riigikogu. With the exception of EKRE, the vast majority of parties are pro-EU and pursue relatively liberal policies. It would be these moderate parties that would dominate the Estonian political arena. However, this would not last.

As the brief history of the Conservative People's Party shows, the party was able to emerge from humble beginnings and exploit certain feelings within the society. This rise of a relatively outsider party came as great surprise in 2015. Even during the financial crisis of 2008 and the period of economic stagnation between 2009-2013, Estonia did not have a notable far right party. Instead, this thesis will illustrate that it was a series of cultural and ethnic issues and concerns are what propelled this party into the prominent position that it currently finds itself in. After the 2019 parliamentary elections, EKRE saw its support further expand and its representation went from 8% to 19%.

Estonia is not the only country that has experienced this recent trend. Throughout the 2010s, there has been a rise of parties that are hostile towards Brussels and European

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid pg.19

integration. Consequently, it is necessary to examine other far right parties that are similar to EKRE in order to give a wider European context as to how this party compares to its fellow Eurosceptic organizations. The prominent anti-EU parties of Latvia and Finland were analyzed. While the parties analyzed should not be viewed as homogenous entities (especially in regards to foreign policy), they both look to address cultural fears in their respective countries.

This, in part, helps illuminate why a single-case study is necessary when dissecting this party. By using this research method, it becomes clear which individual, country specific aspects, influenced the rise of this right-wing party. This thesis aims to examine these aspects and will uncover. What becomes immediately apparent is that the sudden boom in popularity of this party in Estonia is rather surprising. This is a country that has been politically dominated by parties that are either fully supportive of or are at least sympathetic to the European project.

## CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction:**

This chapter accomplishes two goals. The first is that it will define and conceptualize the main concepts that will dominate this thesis. In total, there are three main concepts that must be defined in this chapter. They are: Euroscepticism, party-based Euroscepticism, and Euroscepticism fueled by nativist factors. In order to conceptualize the idea of Euroscepticism, Clive Archer and his examination of Euroscepticism in the Nordics will be examined. Within the field of party-based Euroscepticism, there are four main branches: the North Carolina School of party-based Euroscepticism (devised by Leonard Ray), Sofia Vasilopolou's three categories of Eurosceptic parties, Kopecky and Mudde's categorization of parties, and the Sussex School of party-based Euroscepticism (advocated by Taggart and Szczerbiak). While all of these theories provide their own advantages and disadvantages Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition will provide the backbone for this thesis. The idea of nativist influences on party-based Euroscepticism will be conceptualized using the definition created by Hans-Georg Betz.

The second goal of this literature review will be to explore what the existing literature has to say about both Euroscepticism as a whole, and in Estonia specifically. This review will illustrate that there is a lack of literature dedicated to EKRE's policies and how Euroscepticism fuels its nativism. As previously stated in the introduction, it is vital to study why this party has been able to gain so much influence in a country that is traditionally seen as broadly supportive of EU integration and the European project. This chapter will showcase how this thesis will contribute to the existing literature by filling in the gaps left by the articles and theories already crafted by different academics.

A key concept in this thesis is that EKRE is a populist radical right party that incorporates a hard-Eurosceptic message. Cas Mudde writes of populist radical right states that, "The key feature of the populist radical right ideology is nativism: an ideology which

holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native groups.”<sup>54</sup> As will be illustrated later in this thesis, EKRE’s hard-Eurosceptic stance is fueled by the nativism that is described by Cas Mudde. It is therefore necessary to not only examine the Eurosceptic rhetoric that motivates EKRE, but the populist rhetoric as well.

This chapter will further make the connection between far-right parties and populism later and in greater detail, highlighting an article composed by Margarita Gomez-Reino and Ivan Llamazares. While the point of this thesis is to examine EKRE’s Eurosceptic policies, only examining literature based on Euroscepticism will not give the whole picture. It is necessary to explore literature that explains the connection to populist radical right parties and Eurosceptic rhetoric. The main theories on populism that will be discussed are ones crafted by Benjamin Moffit and Cas Mudde. These two scholars have crafted texts that help define what populism is and how it functions in contemporary society. While Cas Mudde confirms that Euroscepticism is a key aspect of populist radical right parties, it will be Benjamin Moffit’s conceptualization of the concept (that populism is a style of politics) that will form the backbone of this thesis. This is necessary in order to see how this paper should define populism and how it applies to the EKRE political party.

This chapter will be divided into six main sub-sections. The first will briefly address the two main forms of party-based Euroscepticism. The next section will discuss the articles that further conceptualize Euroscepticism. The third section will address why party-based Euroscepticism is the best form of Euroscepticism to utilize. The following subchapter is devoted to examining literature reviewing Euroscepticism in Estonia. Afterwards, the fifth section will address the various academic articles devoted to populism. The chapter will end with a brief summarizing of the main points made and a statement of the argument of this thesis.

### **The Different Forms of Party-Based Euroscepticism**

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<sup>54</sup> Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy*. Location 349.



Before going deeper into the ideas of party-based Euroscepticism, the broader ideas of Euroscepticism must be defined and conceptualized. In order to broadly define this term, this paper will look at the definition composed by Clive Archer in his text, “Euroscepticism in the Nordic Region.” While examining the four Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland) the author broadly defines the idea of Euroscepticism. In his article, he writes, “Euroscepticism is judged in the Nordic region in terms of the acceptance by various groups of particular levels of integration.”<sup>55</sup> He goes on to break down the intensity of opposition to integration ranging from the highest opposition (the EU should only be a free-trade area) to the lowest level of opposition to integration (a federal European state).<sup>56</sup> Euroscepticism, consequently, will be conceptualized in this way, as opposition to European integration.

This is used because Estonia is similar to these four countries economically; all of these countries rely heavily on trade and being open markets. Therefore, these countries must be connected to Europe in some way shape or form. Like these countries, Estonia could not exit the EU in the same manner as England. Therefore, even a Eurosceptic party such as EKRE cannot advocate for a full divorcing with the EU due to both the heavy reliance on the organization and its popularity at home. Conceptualizing Euroscepticism as being fully opposed to the EU (and wanting to leave) would be inappropriate in the context of Estonia. As a result, Archer’s conceptualization of the term is best suited for Estonia and this thesis.

As Euroscepticism has been defined, it is now necessary to conceptualize party-based Euroscepticism. This involves examining different political parties and attempting to categorize them based on how Eurosceptic they are. While Archer has created a way to classify how Eurosceptic a party is, he does not devise a set of categories to sort these parties. There are, however, various groups of authors have attempted to define this term and provide a way to categorize certain parties based on how Eurosceptic they are. These

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<sup>55</sup> Clive Archer, ‘Euroscepticism in the Nordic Region,’ *Journal of European Integration*, 22 no.1 (2007), 87-114 (pg.87).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid 89.

six authors are Paul Taggart, Aleks Szczerbiak, Petr Kopecky, Cas Mudde, Leonard Ray, and Sofia Vasilopoulou. Taggart and Szczerbiak designed what is known as the Sussex school of party-based Euroscepticism, while Ray created the North Carolina school of party based Euroscepticism. Kopecky and Mudde devised their own definition and categorization of political parties as a counter to Taggart and Szczerbiak's model. Finally, Vasilopoulou divided the types of Eurosceptic parties into three distinct categories in an attempt to improve upon the shortcomings of both the Sussex school and Kopecky and Mudde's categorization of Eurosceptic parties.

For this thesis, Taggart and Szczerbiak's conceptualization of party-based Euroscepticism will be utilized. The roots of the Taggart, Szczerbiak idea of Euroscepticism can be traced back to 2000 when they divided parties into "hard Eurosceptic" parties and "soft Eurosceptic" parties. They define hard-Euroscepticism as "where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived."<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, soft-Euroscepticism is defined as, "where there is a not a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU."<sup>58</sup> These two academics utilize qualitative research methods in order to reach their conclusions. This involves examining party rhetoric and writings. As Mudde notes in his article, Taggart and Szczerbiak state that, "In measuring how Eurosceptical a party is, we therefore suggested focusing on a party's public statements, the parliamentary voting on key European issues (treaties), and published party programmes/manifestos' (Szczerbiak and Taggart 2008a, p. 9)."<sup>59</sup> The two authors created two texts in order to fully flush out their conception of Euroscepticism. The two texts are "Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism,"

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<sup>57</sup> Taggart and Szczerbiak, *Opposing Europe vol.I*. Location 180.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid Location 62

<sup>59</sup> Cas Mudde, 'The Comparative Study of Party-Based Euroscepticism: the Sussex versus the North Carolina School,' *East European Politics*, 28 no.2 (2012) 193-202, (pg.197).

volumes one and two. Volume one focuses mostly on case studies while volume two discusses the theoretical frameworks of Euroscepticism. While the first volume is very well done and contains many important observations (Estonia was one of the countries examined), the second volume will be more closely examined. The most important chapter in this text comes at the end of the text. This is where Taggart and Szczerbiak outline the problems that plague the process of defining Euroscepticism.

This is an important segment because it illustrates why there is so much confusion surrounding the term and its application. They write that one of the key ideas to remember is that, “definitions of party-based Euroscepticism are not over-inclusive and should refer specifically to party attitudes towards the European Union in principle and the EU’s current or future trajectory.”<sup>60</sup> This clarification is a direct response to the various claims that have been made against their categorization of Eurosceptic parties, especially by Kopecky and Mudde. This chapter is also useful in that it helps explain and further clarify the terms hard and soft-Euroscepticism as defined by Taggart and Szczerbiak. It is partly because of this increased clarification that the Sussex School of party-based Euroscepticism is the best research method for this thesis.

Despite the clarifications made by Taggart and Szczerbiak, there are still authors who believe that this conceptualization requires further work or have developed their own way to categorize these parties. It is important to examine these theories, to both investigate the literature on the subject, and to look at their flaws and why they were not considered for this paper. As alluded to earlier, one pair of authors emerged to challenge Taggart and Szczerbiak’s categorization of Eurosceptic parties. Those two authors are Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde. Like Taggart and Szczerbiak, the two authors examine each party using qualitative methods. However, these authors state that they define Euroscepticism as, “less inclusively, yet more precisely...by distinguishing between ‘diffuse’ and ‘specific’ support for European integration.”<sup>61</sup> The authors go on to define

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<sup>60</sup> Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism vol.II* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2008), Location 2839.

<sup>61</sup> Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde, ‘The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe,’ *European Union Politics*, 3 no.3 (2002) 297-326, (pg.300).

diffuse support as supporting general ideas of European integration and specific support as supporting the practice of European integration.<sup>62</sup> These two devised a new categorization of Euroscepticism that has four separate classes to arrange political parties. They are: Euro-enthusiasts, Euro-pragmatist, Eurosceptic, and Euro-reject.<sup>63</sup> These groups are categorized by whether they are a combination of Europhile, EU-optimistic, Europhobe, and EU-pessimist.<sup>64</sup> In Kopecky and Mudde's research of Euroscepticism, the authors examine the eastern European states of Hungary, Poland, Czechia, and Slovakia (the Visegrad four countries).

The question that then inevitably arises is, how is Taggart and Szczerbiak's categorization of Eurosceptic parties still valid if this theory works to improve upon its predecessor? Kopecky and Mudde have devised a definition that utilizes more categories, is more precise in defining what a "Eurosceptic" party is and takes into account diffuse and specific support for the EU. However, there are still valid criticisms that can be levelled against this categorization of Euroscepticism. The first, and most prominent criticism, is that the categories created by these two can oftentimes lead to some uncomfortable pairings. For instance, the PiS party (Poland's current ruling, Eurosceptic party) is placed in the Eurosceptic category of their spectrum.<sup>65</sup> While this may seem to be the correct placement, the actual way in which the authors define Euroscepticism creates some issues.

Kopecky and Mudde claim that Eurosceptic parties are still Europhiles. However, even PiS's more "Europhilic" statements are couched in the idea that Europe must be a primarily white, Christian entity. Another issue is that some of the categories are somewhat contradictory. For instance, the "Euro-pragmatist" category can prove confusing. Since it describes parties that are "Europhobe" as still being "EU-optimist," confusion can arise as to what parties belong in this section based on their policies.<sup>66</sup> This is a sentiment echoed

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid 300

<sup>63</sup> Ibid 303

<sup>64</sup> Ibid 303

<sup>65</sup> Ibid 316

<sup>66</sup> Ibid 303

by Taggart and Szczerbiak in their second volume regarding Euroscepticism.<sup>67</sup> Another criticism brought forward by Taggart and Szczerbiak is that the term “Euro-enthusiast” is too broad. They write, “Kopecky and Mudde’s default ‘Euro-enthusiast’ category is too inclusive and does not capture the full range of approaches to the EU that are encompassed within it.”<sup>68</sup> Once again, this leads to categorizations of parties into the same group despite having widely different views on Europe and European integration.

The main source of data for the Sussex school and Kopecky and Mudde’s theory is “qualitative analysis of party positions.”<sup>69</sup> Mudde notes that a major issue that arises from this is that different authors, when using this definition of Euroscepticism, could come to different conclusions when examining the same parties.<sup>70</sup> However, this leaves a potential gap that can be filled by this thesis. This is due to the fact that this thesis utilizes interviews with party members, instead of only analyzing party literature. This can bring a different perspective to the theory by receiving information directly from party figures. While this still proves the problem of consistency (researchers could interview different politicians or politicians could provide different answers to the same questions), it does solve the issue of subjective interpretation. This is attributable to the fact that the views and opinions are coming directly from those who shape party policy. This means there is room for interpretation that comes with examining speeches and party literature. This thesis, therefore, works to help shore up the validity and reliability of the measurements used in the Sussex school of party-based Euroscepticism.

One author who attempted to ameliorate the problems of both the Sussex-school and Kopecky and Mudde’s theory is Sofia Vasilopoulou. She created three categories to place parties that utilize Eurosceptic language: the rejecting type, the conditional type, and the compromising type. In regards to rejecting parties, she writes, “rejecting’ type consists of parties that are against the principle of ceding national sovereignty to non-national

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<sup>67</sup> Taggart and Szczerbiak *Opposing Europe Vol.II*. Location 2982.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid Location 2896

<sup>69</sup> Kopecky and Mudde, ‘The Two Sides of Euroscepticism’: 299

<sup>70</sup> Mudde, ‘The Comparative Study of Party-Based Euroscepticism,’ (pg.197).

institutions and utterly disapprove of... enhanced legislation at the EU level.”<sup>71</sup> The second classification of parties is the “conditional” group of parties. These parties, “acknowledge that the principle of cooperation in Europe at a multilateral level is...beneficial...but for them unification is detrimental to the interests and the sovereignty of their country.”<sup>72</sup> The final category this author lays out is the compromising party. In order to be placed in this group, a party, “compromised their position to recognize that a degree of power transfer to supranational institutions, while not politically desirable, is necessary in order to achieve economic prosperity.”<sup>73</sup> In order to gather the necessary data for this conceptualization, the author uses the research first developed by Benoit and Laver, who examined party literature by taking data from the Comparative Manifesto Project.<sup>74</sup>

Vasilopoulou devises a thorough categorization for Eurosceptic parties. Like Kopecky and Mudde, she tries to improve upon the apparent weakness of the Sussex School of party-based Euroscepticism: its over-generalizations. However, Vasilopoulou comes closer to improving upon the Sussex school than Kopecky and Mudde. The categories that she creates avoid the confusing and contradictory nature of Kopecky and Mudde’s categorizations. There are still areas that must be addressed when examining her theory. The main problem emerges when she writes, “The main findings of the article are that first, parties that ‘reject’ European integration are highly authoritarian.”<sup>75</sup> EKRE stands out as a party that in many ways, based on their based on their rhetoric, reject many aspects of the EU and political integration. However, they do not possess this anti-democratic essence (as they advocate for direct democracy).

The North Carolina School of party-based Euroscepticism represents a different way to categorize political parties. This form of analysis was initially devised by Leonard Ray in 1999. A key aspect of this research is that unlike the Sussex school of party-based Euroscepticism, this form of analysis uses the opinion of experts when analyzing a party’s

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<sup>71</sup> Sofia Vasilopoulou, “Varieties of Euroscepticism: The Case of the European Extreme Right,” *JCER* 5 no.1 (2009) 3-23, (pg.9).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid* 7

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid* 7

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid* 7

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid* 19

position on European integration. Another key aspect, as Mudde states, is that, “The data of the North Carolina School are both its strength and weakness. Its strength... is that the dataset is longitudinal, quantitative, and easily accessible. Its weakness is the source of the data, i.e. the so-called ‘experts’ that fill out the surveys.”<sup>76</sup> Of course, this weakness occurs due to the fact that it is difficult to replicate the findings of a study. Because “expert” can include a relatively large number of individuals, it is possible that one researcher can ask one group of “experts” while another individual asks a different set of individuals. This can lead to a party (or set of parties) being categorized differently in different research papers. Another drawback of this this technique is that it relies far more on quantitative analysis than the Sussex school does. Mudde even states himself that “the dataset is longitudinal [and] quantitative.”<sup>77</sup> Additionally, another reason why the North Carolina School of party-based Euroscepticism is not the best fit for this thesis is due to the scope of its research. As Mudde writes, “The North Carolina School also moved much further beyond party-based Euroscepticism... most study (also) Euroscepticism at the mass level (i.e. individual attitudes) and in the media (notably newspapers).”<sup>78</sup> Seeing that this paper will only examine one party in one state, the Sussex school of party-based Euroscepticism is the more appropriate conceptualization.

### **Nativism and party-based Euroscepticism**

While the previous section discussed the theories that helped outline the different categories of Euroscepticism, further conceptualization must be done in order to further flesh out the term Euroscepticism. This section will examine articles that discuss the motivations for populist radical right and Eurosceptic parties. While economics can play a role in the rise of these parties, it should not be viewed as the soul catalyst or the key component to this phenomenon.

Before discussing the articles that address the nativist impacts on party-based Euroscepticism, this paper must illustrate what is meant by nativist effects on party-based

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid 197

<sup>77</sup> Ibid 197

<sup>78</sup> Ibid 198

Euroscepticism. In this thesis, nativist effects will be conceptualized as thoughts or rhetoric that appeal to a specific ethnic group. More specifically, the threats that are posed to this ethnic group are what need to be thoroughly examined. These threats are: threats against demographics, traditional values, and sovereignty.

As Hans-Georg Betz writes, there are three ways to look at the concept of nativism. These three facets are,

“nativism, centred on the notion that jobs should be reserved for native citizens; welfare chauvinism, based on the notion that native citizens should be accorded absolute priority when it comes to social benefits; and symbolic nativism, advancing the notion that government should do everything to defend the cultural identity of a given national society.<sup>79</sup>

For this thesis, the facet of “symbolic nativism” will provide the definition of nativism. In this form of nativism, the government’s duty is to isolate the country from any perceived aliens who threaten the cultural cohesion of a specific country. Throughout the interviews conducted for this thesis, the interview subjects framed their nativist inclinations around the idea that Estonia and its culture was under attack from the supranational ideas of the EU.

However, there are authors who do not believe that nativism and immigration fears should not be used when explaining the rise of Euroscepticism. The first article that showcases this is, “Putting Brexit into perspective: the effect of the Eurozone and migration crises and Brexit on Euroscepticism in European states,” by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak. The authors, in this piece of writing, frame four different aspects of modern Euroscepticism. Those four aspects are: economics, immigration, concerns over democracy and sovereignty, and national-specific concerns.<sup>80</sup> While economics are

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<sup>79</sup> Hans-Georg Betz, ‘Facets of Nativism: A Heuristic Exploration,’ *Patterns of Prejudice*, 53 no.2 (2019) 111-135, (pg.111)

<sup>80</sup> Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, ‘Putting Brexit into Perspective: The Effect of the Eurozone and Migration Crises and Brexit on Euroscepticism in European States,’ *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25 no.8 (2018) 1194-1214, (pg.1204).



mentioned in this paper, many Eurosceptic parties possess different economic issues. This adds on to the idea that economic downturn is not the best predictor of Euroscepticism. Additionally, the paper states that the recent migrant controversies have not played a large role in the party politics of the Baltic states.<sup>81</sup> This claim refutes the idea this thesis. As will be illustrated by this thesis, the idea of an alien group of people settling in Estonia helps fuel the Euroscepticism that is espoused by EKRE members. This suggests that, at the least, in the case of Estonia, nativist threats are an exception to this rule.

The second article that refutes the idea of nativism playing a role in Euroscepticism is, “Going Soft or Staying Soft: Have Identity Factors Become More Important Than Economic Rationale When Explaining Euroscepticism,” by Marijn Van Klingeren, Hajo G. Boomgaarden, and Claes H. DeVreese. This article examined two periods of time (1994 and 2005) to see how important economic and identity factors were in Eurosceptic sentiments within European populations. The article, like many other more current pieces of literature, states that economics play very little into Eurosceptic feelings. What is interesting is that the article states that “National pride and a possible increase of cultural threat (by immigrants) do not always lead to more Euroscepticism.”<sup>82</sup> Once again, this thesis disagrees with this author’s findings. At least in the case of Estonia, EKRE bases much of their Eurosceptic attitudes around the idea that cultural threats could potentially infiltrate Estonia. Martin Helme even stated in his interview, “100 years ago there were a bit more than 100 Muslims in Holland and now there are 1.5 million. Things can change very rapidly.”<sup>83</sup> This presents another gap that this thesis can potentially fill.

While these various authors dispute the motivations behind Euroscepticism, one article presents the fact that Euroscepticism has been a facet of Europe for decades. That article is, “From Euroscepticism to Resistance to European Integration: An Interdisciplinary Perspective,” by Amandine Crespy and Nicolas Vershueren. These

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid (pg.1207)

<sup>82</sup> Marijan Van Klingeren, Hajo Boomgaarden and Claes DeVreese, ‘Going Soft or Staying Soft: Have Identity Factors Become More Important Than Economic Rationale when Explaining Euroscepticism,’ *Journal of European Integration* 35 no.6 (2013) 689-704, (pg.701).

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Martin Helme

authors make the claim that while Euroscepticism has seen a marked increase over the years, it has always been a contentious and sensitive matter for the various states involved in the European project.<sup>84</sup> This indicates that it is a concept that is immune to economic prosperity, as it has been a feature of politics even before the 2008 financial crisis. However, they argue that the idea of Euroscepticism must be reshaped and the term, “resistance” must be utilized instead.<sup>85</sup>

### **Why Utilize Party-Based Euroscepticism:**

There have been many articles that further support the claim that political parties are the driving force behind Euroscepticism. These articles serve to justify why party-based Euroscepticism is the optimal theory to utilize when analyzing support for the European project. It is necessary to briefly touch upon these articles because they serve to illustrate why party-based Euroscepticism is the driving source of analysis for this thesis rather than popular-based Euroscepticism.

The first article that helps support the usage of party-based Euroscepticism is, “Does the Messenger Matter? A Comparison of the Effects of Eurosceptic Messages Communicated by Mainstream and Radical Right-Wing Parties on Citizens’ EU Attitudes,” by Michaela Maier, Silke Adam & Jürgen Maier. The article finds that individuals are most likely to take their cues from their political party and are more receptive to messages provided by their parties.<sup>86</sup> It states that societies and people are more effected by Euroscepticism that is propagated by more mainstream parties.<sup>87</sup> This supports the idea that the political parties are largely influential in creating a Eurosceptic attitude amongst a population and that as a party becomes more mainstream, it can create

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<sup>84</sup> Amandine Crespy and Nicolas Verschuere, ‘From Euroscepticism to Resistance to European Integration: An Interdisciplinary Perspective,’ *Perspective on European Politics and Society*, 10 no.3 (2009) 377-393, (pg.378).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid* (pg.379)

<sup>86</sup> Michael Maier, Silke Adam and Jürgen Maier, ‘Does the Messenger Matter? A Comparison of the Effects of Eurosceptic Messages Communicated by Mainstream and Radical Right-Wing Parties on Citizens’ EU Attitudes,’ *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 27 no.3 (2017) 330-349, (pg.341).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid* (pg.341)

more influence. This is crucial because it backs up the idea that it is the political party that is the driving force behind Euroscepticism.

Another text that discusses Euroscepticism within the framework of political parties is “Europeanisation, Euroscepticism and Party Systems: Party-Based Euroscepticism in the Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe,” by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak. In this article, the authors discuss the importance of political parties in both European integration and the rise in Euroscepticism. One of the main findings by the authors is that Euroscepticism has always been a feature in the political systems of the new member states.<sup>88</sup> Once again, this reinforces the idea not only that Euroscepticism is not a new phenomenon, but also that political parties guide the Europeanization process and, therefore, the amount of Euroscepticism that a country experiences.

While these articles serve to justify why the examination of political parties is important, it is also necessary to analyze why a party can become Eurosceptic. The piece “It takes two: how Eurosceptic public opinion and party divisions influence party positions,” by Jae-Jae Spoon and Christopher Williams helps shed light on to why this can occur. This article states that when parties are divided on the issue of European integration and have a constituency that is leaning more towards Euroscepticism, then that party will itself adopt a more Eurosceptic stance.<sup>89</sup> While this article is useful for understanding party-based Euroscepticism, it only examines parties in power. Therefore, this thesis works to expand and aid this literature by examining a party that is still attempting to attain the power of high office.

Another piece of Eurosceptic writing that examines how a party becomes Eurosceptic is, “Party based Euroscepticism and EU domestic coordination: longitudinal analysis of central and eastern countries,” by Petr Kaniok and Johana Galuskova. The main

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<sup>88</sup> Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak ‘Europeanisation, Euroscepticism and Party Systems: Party-Based Euroscepticism in the Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe,’ *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 3 no.1 (2008) 23-41, (pg.26).

<sup>89</sup> Jae-Jae Spoon and Christopher Williams, ‘It Takes Two: How Eurosceptic Public Opinion and Party Divisions Influence Party Positions,’ *West European Politics*, 40 no.4 (2017) 741-762, (pg.742).

argument of this article is that “the setup of a country’s central coordinating body, for instance, accurately indicates the manner in which its leading politicians view the European agenda.”<sup>90</sup> They find that when a government centralizes its EU agenda, then it will more likely be Eurosceptic. This implies that high ranking government officials (such as presidents and prime ministers) are more willing to directly control the EU agenda, resulting in growing Euroscepticism.<sup>91</sup> This article would serve this thesis by explaining why EKRE would want to control the European agenda if it were in power. In the interviews, if the subjects lean more towards directly controlling European policy. Also, it would be worth noting if EKRE has caused the ruling parties to directly interact with the European project more than in the past.

### **Euroscepticism in Estonia**

Finally, the works that have been crafted that address the Euroscepticism in Estonia must be analyzed. It is important to examine how the existing theories and works devoted to Euroscepticism can be applied to Estonia. This will also help illuminate where the current literature on Euroscepticism in Estonia is lacking. The first article that examines this country is, “E’lite vs. People? Eurosceptic Public Opinion in Estonia,” by Raivo Vetik. This article examines the attitudes both ordinary citizens have of the European Union and the attitudes found amongst Estonia’s political elite. Unfortunately, this article was composed in 2003, right before the country acceded into the EU. Therefore, its findings that Estonians were some of the most Eurosceptic people entering into the European Union does not remain valid in present day.<sup>92</sup> However, this does represent somewhat of a lack in the literature that this thesis aims to fill in.

The second article that examines Euroscepticism and Estonia is, “Discursive Opportunities for the Estonian Populist Radical Right in Digital Society,” by Andres

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<sup>90</sup> Petr Kaniok and Johana Galuskova, ‘Party Based Euroscepticism and EU Domestic Coordination: Logitudinal Analysis of Central and Eastern Countries,’ *East European Politics*, (2018) 1-18 (pg.1).

<sup>91</sup> Ibid 15

<sup>92</sup> Raivo Vetik, ‘E’lite vs. People? Eurosceptic Public Opinion in Estonia,’ *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 16 no.2 (2003) 257-271, (pg.1).

Kasekamp, et. al. Here, the authors discuss how the radical right in Estonia utilize social media and other new forms of media in order to propagate their message. It is also one of the articles and pieces of literature that goes into relative depth about the EKRE party and its stances. The authors go into detail regarding how the party spreads its ideas, including its anti-Russian and anti-immigrant stances.<sup>93</sup><sup>94</sup> It concludes that EKRE relies heavily on alternative media and uses it to espouse its ideals. It also states that its messages are able to reach a wide audience by using anti-establishment and populist rhetoric.<sup>95</sup> While this article is new, relevant, and focuses on EKRE, it does not interview party members or heads directly.

The third article that examines the phenomenon of Euroscepticism in Estonia is entitled, “Russians, Refugees and Europeans: What Shapes the Discourse of the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia,” by Louis Wierenga. In this article, the author looks at the rise of EKRE and the rhetoric that surrounds it. The author of this text brings up many of the same points that this thesis brings forward. Additionally, Wierenga utilizes interviews to obtain many of his information. For instance, Wierenga writes that in an interview with Jaak Madison, the interviewee remarked how, “the EU is one of the most undemocratic systems, citing penalties for not accepting EU mandates and rules.”<sup>96</sup> This is a very similar sentiment that was expressed by the same individual in an interview for this thesis. However, there are some key differences between the text crafted by Wierenga and this thesis. One of the most prominent differences is that Wierenga does not use the Sussex-school of party-based Euroscepticism to analyze EKRE. Instead, he utilizes the populist radical right criteria in order to define and illustrate the position of the party.<sup>97</sup> Another key difference between the article and this thesis is the overall focus. In the

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<sup>93</sup> Andres Kasekamp, Mari-Liis and Louis Wierenga ‘Discursive Opportunities for the Estonian Populist Radical Right in a Digital Society,’ *Problems of Post-Communist*, (2018) 1-12, (pg.5).

<sup>94</sup> Ibid 7

<sup>95</sup> Ibid 9

<sup>96</sup> Louis Wierenga, ‘Russians, Refugees, and Europeans: What Shapes the Discourse of the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia?,’ *Uptake working paper*, no.6 (2017) 1-20, (pg.7).

<sup>97</sup> Ibid 4

writing by Wierenga, the main conclusion that is drawn is in how EKRE views the large Russian minority that is present in the country. He writes that:

“The conclusion is reached that EKRE is an Estonian nationalist party and would accept Russian-speakers as members provided that they speak Estonian and present themselves as Estonian nationalists. The party would accept this type of Estonian nationalist, with a Russian background, but will not change their campaign literature to the Russian language.”<sup>98</sup>

This illustrates that the main focus of the paper is on how the party views the Russian minority in the country. However, it also illuminates another key fact about EKRE. That is the pragmatism of the party. This willingness to work with the Russian population shows that the party is willing and able to cooperate with certain groups and entities in order to further its overall agenda.

The fourth article that examines the rise of EKRE in Estonia is entitled, “The ‘New’ Wave of Populist Right-Wing Parties in Central and Eastern Europe: Explaining electoral Support for the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia,” by Siim Trumm. As the title suggests, this article examines how and why this particular party has been able to gain such monumental support. The main conclusion that is drawn from the research is that, “anti-immigration sentiment was not the key driver for EKRE support at the 2015 parliamentary election, voters’ self-perceived identity was important in understanding who voted for the party.”<sup>99</sup> This article, therefore, presents a foil to the main claim made by this thesis. This will be discussed more later in the analysis chapter.

These various articles on Estonia and Euroscepticism highlight two main ways in which the current literature is lacking. The first is that there is a lack of articles that directly interact with EKRE politicians via interviews. While Wiengra utilizes interviews with key

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid 15

<sup>99</sup> Siim Trumm, ‘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*, 54 no.4 (2018) 331-347, (pg.341).

party figures, his paper does not examine the level of Euroscepticism of EKRE using the Sussex school of party-based Euroscepticism. Instead, he uses the categorization method developed by Vasilopoulou. This is the void that this thesis hopes to fill-in. By conducting direct interviews with party members, a new way of examining the EKRE will be brought to the forefront of the analysis of the group. Secondly, none of the articles discussed analyze the party using the Sussex School of party-based Euroscepticism. Since this is the backbone of this paper, a further aspect of viewing this party and analyzing its position.

### **Populist Literature:**

While the goal of this paper is to examine the Eurosceptic policies and beliefs of EKRE, the various pieces of literature devoted to populism are also very useful. This is attributable to the fact that EKRE is a populist radical right party. For parties that fall into this category, Eurosceptic rhetoric plays a large role in its attempts to gain votes. This is exemplified in the article, “The Populist Radical Right and European Integration: A Comparative Analysis of Party–Voter Links,” by Margarita Gomez-Reino and Ivan Llamazares. This article helps establish a link between populist radical right parties and Euroscepticism. In their research, the authors find that, “all populist radical right parties are more Eurosceptic than the weighted national party system average, and all populist radical right party voters but two hold more Eurosceptic orientations than their respective national averages.”<sup>100</sup> While EKRE is not mentioned in their analysis, this statement helps to illustrate that, as a populist party, EKRE would be more likely to use Euroscepticism as a rhetorical device. This article also shows that this Eurosceptic attitude is able to connect to the party’s voters and that supply-side factors are the most important factor for a populist party’s success.<sup>101102</sup>

Consequently, it is vital to analyze the theories and definitions that are central to the idea of populism. There are two authors that best discuss and define the concept of

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<sup>100</sup> Margarita Gomez-Reino and Ivan Llamazares, ‘The Populist Radical Right and European Integration: A Comparative Analysis of Party-Voter Links,’ *West European Politics*, 36 no.4 (2013) 789-816, (pg.800).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid 802

<sup>102</sup> Ibid 808

Euroscepticism. Those two individuals are Benjamin Moffit and Cas Mudde. The two books that deserve special attention are “The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation,” by Benjamin Moffit and “On Extremism and Democracy in Europe,” by Cas Mudde. These two books help further contextualize the rise of EKRE and its tactics.

The first book that should be mentioned is “The Global Rise of Populism,” by Benjamin Moffit. This book provides one of the best and clearest definitions of populism. Moffit states that previous definitions of populism have proved to be too broad and or too vague. For instance, Moffit states that Ionescu’s and Gellner’s definition of the concept is “rather frustrating, with the results veering from unwieldy lists of the descriptive features of populism...to attempts to delineate the structural conditions of the emergence of populism...”<sup>103</sup> The author dissects other notable definitions, finding them all unsatisfactory. Writing that populism is neither an ideology, strategy, discourse, or political logic, Moffit states that, “contemporary populism is a political style that is used by a wide range of actors across the world.”<sup>104</sup> He goes on to further state that populism is comprised of three key features: “appeal to the people versus the elite; bad manners; and a crisis breakdown or threat.”<sup>105</sup> It is Moffit’s conceptualization that will serve as the definition of populism in this thesis.

This text is crucial to understanding what populism is because it is able to explain how various different populist leaders, who come from varying parties on the political spectrum, can be defined as populist. By playing and performing certain roles, certain actors are able to appeal to a wide variety of people within a society. Additionally, Moffit comes to the conclusion that populism is harmful to democracy in the long run (though it can provide some benefits).<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Moffit, *The Global Rise of Populism*. Pg.14

<sup>104</sup> Ibid 28

<sup>105</sup> Ibid 29

<sup>106</sup> Ibid 148



Another key text that deals with populism is “On Extremism and Democracy in Europe,” by Cas Mudde.” In this book, the author makes the claim that populism is not a pathology of democracy, but rather as a “pathological normalcy”<sup>107</sup> This term implies that populism is not a concept that can be eliminated within democracy. Instead, it will always be a part of it. The populist radical right parties that have been emerging over the years can be attributable to “resentment around immigration, crime, and party politics...”<sup>108</sup> This is important because it goes against the idea that it is economics that provide the main catalyst for successful radical right-wing parties. However, Mudde is determined to make it clear that populist radical right parties are not responsible for many of the right-leaning tendencies in Europe that have emerged in the past few years. For instance, he makes it clear that these parties were not responsible for the Eurosceptic turn of Europeans nor were they the catalyst behind the more authoritarian politics that have dominated the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>109</sup> Rather, Mudde states that “it has been the mainstream right-wing that has pushed West European politics to the right, in part in response to media and popular responses to relatively recent developments.”<sup>110</sup>

In addition to populism, Mudde also devotes a section of his book to the idea of Euroscepticism. Mudde uses a portion of this chapter (as well as throughout his book) to lament against the political elite of Europe. He believes that they have, by and large, opened the door to allow populist parties to gain a foothold in mainstream politics. Additionally, he accuses these elites of fearmongering when discussing far right and Eurosceptic parties. For instance, he cites Jean Claude Juncker when he stated, “I am chilled by the realization of how similar circumstances in Europe in 2013 are to those of 100 years ago.”<sup>111</sup> Mudde cites various statistics that illustrate the small percentage of rightwing party gains during the 2014 European elections. He writes, of the 2014 elections, “this reflects the ongoing trend of fractionalization in national party systems, in which big

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<sup>107</sup> Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy*. Location 290

<sup>108</sup> Ibid Location 533

<sup>109</sup> Ibid Location 542

<sup>110</sup> Ibid Location 559

<sup>111</sup> Ibid Location 1657

parties are shrinking...the number of represented parties is growing.”<sup>112</sup> This quotation supports Mudde’s claim that European parties are merely changing and are not necessarily drifting rightwards.

These two books are both important when discussing Euroscepticism and the EKRE party in Estonia. Mudde and Moffit both provide context for how the party has been able to gain in popularity over the years. Moffit’s definition of Euroscepticism as a performance helps explain the tactics that EKRE utilizes in order to appeal to various individuals. Also, by removing the idea that populism is an ideology or strategy, he is able to showcase how this party is able to utilize at times strategies that may appear to be contradictory. Additionally, Mudde’s text is invaluable because it bucks the trend that both populism and Euroscepticism are new phenomena to Europe brought about by economic reasons.

However, there are various points of contention within these two texts, especially with Mudde’s. The first detail that is missing from these texts is that neither discusses the country of Estonia. This illustrates that there is a lack in the literature regarding this country and its growing populist radical right party. Another problem with this book is that a lot has changed since it was first published. For instance, Mudde states in one of the earlier chapters that rise of Eurosceptic populist parties “were [greatest] in Southern and Western Europe, while Eastern Europe was remarkably stable on average.”<sup>113</sup> This is no longer the case as Eastern Europe has seen its own rise in Eurosceptic parties. This not only includes EKRE, but also PiS in Poland. Another weakness of Mudde’s book is that it focuses almost solely on Western Europe. This is understandable as the states west of the new member states saw the greatest increase in far-right parties in the 2014 EP elections. However, this is no longer the case and requires an update.

While Moffit’s text does not have any inherent flaws, throughout the book, there is not a single chapter devoted to a case study. This is not necessary to his argument, as he

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid Location 1781

<sup>113</sup> Ibid Location 1780

believes that most of the works done on populism are focused on Europe, Latin America, and North America.<sup>114</sup> However, this provides another path in which this thesis can contribute to existing literature. By examining a Eurosceptic, populist party that has emerged in a stable and prospering country like Estonia, this thesis can illustrate how Moffit's definition is applicable to countries outside of Western Europe.

In addition to these full-length books, there are other articles and shorter-length pieces of literature that address populism in a way that relates to this thesis. The first is titled, "Balancing Between Solidarity and Responsibility: Estonia in the EU Refugee Crisis," by Viljar Veebel. This article examines why Estonia adopted a relatively conservative policy regarding the migrant crisis that plagued the EU in the mid-2010s. The authors argue that the roots of the policy can be traced to numerous factors, including fears of the country becoming a transit country during the early post-Soviet years, to the fact that the state does not have the financial means to cope with new arrivals. However, the main point made by the authors is that, "Recent public opinion surveys in Estonia clearly indicate strong opposition both to the growing influx of refugees in Europe in general and to the decisions taken by the government of Estonia with regard to country's obligations in particular."<sup>115</sup> This is a crucial point because it points to a possible root as to why the EKRE political party is able to gain a foothold in Estonia. Additionally, it helps refute the idea that financial reasons are behind Eurosceptic parties rising in popularity.

### **Conclusion:**

This literature review has worked to paint a picture of the current theories and analysis of party-based Euroscepticism. It has also worked to illustrate the gaps in the literature that this thesis hopes to fill in. The major way in which this paper will contribute to the existing literature is that it will present the case of a country that is not widely addressed in party-based Eurosceptic literature. Additionally, much of the literature on

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<sup>114</sup> Moffit, *The Global Rise of Populism* pg.4

<sup>115</sup> Viljar Veebel, 'Balancing Between Solidarity and Responsibility: Estonia in the EU Refugee Crisis,' *Journal on Baltic Security*, 1 no.2 (2017) 28-61, (pg.42).

party-based Euroscepticism focuses on parties that are already in power. Very little is devoted to examining parties that are aiming to either gain power or increase their notoriety.

It was also critical to fully define the concept of Euroscepticism. Specifically, this chapter was used to fully flesh out the concept of party-based Euroscepticism. The subjects of this analysis were Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak who support the Sussex School of party-based Euroscepticism, Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde who devised their own form of party-based Euroscepticism, Sofia Vasilopoulou who attempted to repair the flaws in the latter two theories, and Leonard Ray who devised the North Carolina School of party-based Euroscepticism. While both definitions are well defined and thought-out, the Sussex form of researching Euroscepticism proved to be the best fit for this thesis.

This literature review has also served to justify why the Sussex School of party-based Euroscepticism was chosen as the primary methodology for this paper. Due to the scope and the dataset that will be used, it makes more sense to utilize the technique developed by Taggart and Szczerbiak. Also, these two authors have done more to define and address the potential weaknesses associated with their categorization of Eurosceptic parties.

The concept of populism is also undeniably associated with Euroscepticism. As previously stated, while this paper is not devoted to the topic of populism, it is an important concept that must be addressed. Benjamin Moffit provides one of the clearest and concise definitions of populism. By describing it as a political performance rather than trying to define it as an ideology and or strategy Moffit brings a whole new perspective to this concept. This helps explain why populism is a phenomenon that is visible throughout the political spectrum. Additionally, the work done by Cas Mudde is also invaluable. Being able to illustrate the populism is a normal aspect of democracy, Mudde highlights a key aspect of populism that often goes unnoticed by other academics.

The central argument of this thesis is as follows: EKRE is a populist radical right party that takes a hard-Eurosceptic view of the EU. The party positions itself as the

protector of the Estonian nation. This nativism then motivates and shapes the Eurosceptic policies and ideas of EKRE. The party is hostile towards the European Union because, from its perspective, the union forces Estonia to submit to policies that are inherently detrimental to the survival of the nation state. Therefore, economics do not have any influence on the rise of this particular far-right party in this particular country. The idea of globalization leading to vast numbers of alienated and economically downtrodden citizens to gravitate towards a Eurosceptic party is false. Rather, it is the fear of losing the unique culture that is synonymous with Estonia. This fear arises from an increasingly integrated European Union that appears to threaten the sovereignty and homogeneity of the country.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

As previously explained, this paper will gather the appropriate data by collecting interviews from different members of the Estonian EKRE party. The goal of this methodology is to answer two questions. The first question is, what kind of Eurosceptic party is EKRE? The methodology used in this thesis will help illustrate that according to this school of thought, EKRE is a hard-Eurosceptic party as defined by Taggart and Szczerbiak. The second main research question is, does nativism fuel this hard-Eurosceptic view? That method is in-depth interviews with high ranking EKRE party members. Overall, two EKRE MPs were interviewed. The first was party vice-chairman Jaak Madison. The second interview was with party leader Martin Helme. The method of analysis for these interviews was coding. Finally, this section of the paper will work to assess the success and the drawbacks of this methodology.

The chapter will be divided into four sections. The first section will serve to justify and contextualize why this specific form of methodology was chosen for this thesis. The next section will provide information on the actual methodology used by this thesis. The third section will describe the method of analysis used to examine the data gathered from these interviews. The final section will examine how successful the use of interview questions was in the gathering of information. This chapter will conclude with a brief conclusion that will summarize the previous points made.

### **Why Interviews and a Single Case Study:**

Interviews were chosen for this paper for a variety of reasons. The first main reason is that by using the Sussex School of party-based Euroscepticism with interviews, a new source of data collection for the theory is provided. As previously stated in the preceding chapter, Sussex-based analysis of European parties relies heavily on the use of discourse analysis. This analysis relies heavily on party pamphlets and pieces of party literature. However, in their two volumes of “Opposing Europe,” neither Taggart nor Szczerbiak

discuss the use of direct interviews with party members as a way of gauging how Eurosceptic a party is. Therefore, the use of interviews can be seen as a new way in which to gather qualitative data for analysis.

Another reason why interviews were utilized for this thesis was due to the fact that interviews can help eliminate the possible unreliable results of only interpreting party literature. By conducting face-to-face interviews, the data gathered was directly from those who craft and shape the policies of the party. Additionally, the interviewer is able to ask directly where on the political spectrum the party in question lies. This helps eliminate part of the ambiguity that can possibly arise when utilizing party-based Euroscepticism.

### **The Methodology Used:**

Four categories of questions were developed for these interviews. The first set of questions attempt to grasp how Eurosceptic EKRE is. This was accomplished by asking how the party views the European Union, what future policies the party would push for in the European Parliament and what other parties they would cooperate with, how individual party members would classify their party, and their views on an EU army. The two questions that are directly related to the European Union are: is there a democratic deficit and is it an elite driven organization. There are both relatively straightforward in what they are trying to ascertain. These two questions are attempting to see if the party and its members are opposed to the EU on “where there is a principled opposition” (hard Eurosceptic) or if there are, “concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU (soft Eurosceptic).”

The questions related to the parliaments is once again trying to ascertain if the potential policies that EKRE would propose are harmful or beneficial to the European Union and its future integration efforts. Additionally, this question served to see which parties EKRE feels comfortable cooperating with and if they are hard-Eurosceptic parties. Finally, the most straightforward question, where would you position the party on the political spectrum, simply is trying to have the members state they feel about the party

The second set of questions, as stated before, was created in order to determine what attitudes or beliefs the party possess in regards to the society as a whole. The first question to do this relates to the idea of what it means to be Estonian and how the party wants to preserve this unique culture. Of course, there is nothing exclusively right-wing about this, however, as will be discussed in the results and analysis chapters, this question wanted to see if there were certain phrases utilized by these party members that appeal to certain right-wing sensibilities. The second question, relating to the Russian and Muslim minorities in the country followed a similar goal as the previous question. This question wanted to see how the party members viewed the minorities of the country and their relation to the Estonians. The interviewer wanted to see if the EKRE parliamentarians viewed potential refugees from North Africa and the Middle East in a different light compared to the large Russian minority in the country. The final question, dealing with what the perceived biggest threat to Estonia is, is one of the main aspects of the thesis. This question is designed to see if economics is ever mentioned as the biggest threat. If the main threat towards the country, and therefore primary focus of the party, is not economics, then it is logical to assume that the party is more focused on more nativist concerns.

The third category focuses on the policy aspects of the party. These questions all serve a different purpose. The question related to how EKRE plans on bringing in new people is asked because the interviewer wanted to see how the party planned to move into the future. Would it soften its tone, would it become more hardline, etc. The question regarding the Blue Awakening organization is also related to how the party plans to move forward in the future. The researcher wished to see how the organization planned to conduct its relationship with the youth organization. This question was posed because the researcher wanted to see how the party planned on replenishing its ranks in the future. Specifically, if EKRE planned on using the group to further spread its populist and nativist ideas.

The other question of this section regarded the issue of direct democracy. The purpose of this question was to unearth two ideas. The first has to do with populism. Direct democracy is typically associated with populist governments as it is a policy that claims to give power to the people. Another reason this question was asked is that it can expose how



a party views minorities. Since direct democracies are geared towards satisfying the majority, they can potentially ignore the minority populations. That is why the question, “are there any drawbacks,” was added. The final two questions of this category addressed EKRE and the national parliament. These questions addressed potential policies that EKRE would enact if in a coalition government and any potential coalition partners. These were asked to gauge what potential Eurosceptic or populist measures the party wished to implement if in power.

The final category of questions that were posed to the interviewees did not directly address whether the party was hard-Eurosceptic or what type of rhetoric they used. Instead, these were more miscellaneous questions that were either background questions or were believed to illicit possibly useful or interesting answers for this thesis. For instance, questions in this category included, “what attracted you to politics,” or “why did you want to join EKRE.” Questions such as these were useful in that they provided context for the various answers that these interview subjects provided.

### **Method of Analysis**

In order to extract information from the interviews themselves, the process of coding was used. The coding was done manually since there was a relatively small number of interviews. This meant that the researcher could simply examine the transcribed texts and manually match certain key words and terms to the categories that were created for this research. There are three categories for the various codes developed. The first category of codes is based on Euroscepticism. The second category focuses on nativism. The third and final code dealt with populism.

The first set of codes, dealing with the Euroscepticism, are simply, “hard Eurosceptic” and “soft Eurosceptic.” These codes are based on how Taggart and Szczerbiak conceptualize the idea of hard and soft-Euroscepticism. Therefore, hard Eurosceptic phrases are those that, “where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to

being opposed to the whole project of European integration.”<sup>116</sup> Meanwhile soft Eurosceptic statements are those where, “there is a not a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU.”<sup>117</sup>

The second set of codes, dealing with nativism, are as follows. The first code is “tradition.” This code is used to categorize the terms and phrases used by the participants that invoke an ideal set of qualities that are unique to the Estonian nation. This would also include any mention of family values or the importance of family to the nation. The idea of going back to the past is also a term that would fall under this code. For instance, this can refer to phrases or claims that emphasize religious ideals or glorify a country’s past.

The second code that is a member of this category is “demographics.” This code refers to the statements made by the interviewees that have to deal with the population and the make-up of the population residing in the country. If an interviewee discussed how Estonian children needed to be born, this would also be coded as demographics. More often than not, the phrases that fall under this code refer to the threat of ethnic Estonians becoming marginalized in the country.

The third code for this category is “sovereignty.” This code is used to describe statements that were made that are dedicated to maintaining the independence of the Republic of Estonia. Typically, comments that were made related to this code often referred to the idea that Estonia needed to maintain its ability to control its borders and that it had to refute any EU principles that supposedly infringed upon Estonia’s independence (such as the Schengen zone and supranational laws).

The final primary code that was used during the analysis was “populism.” This code encompassed phrases from the interview that were deemed to be populist. In order to gauge which phrases met these criteria, the definition provided by Benjamin Moffit was

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<sup>116</sup> Taggart and Szczerbiak, *Opposing Europe vol.I*. Location 181

<sup>117</sup> Ibid 192

utilized. As stated in the literature review, as a political style populism is a political style that attempts to, “appeal to the people versus the elite; bad manners; and a crisis breakdown or threat.”<sup>118</sup> Therefore, statements that were deemed to be appealing to the masses and or critical of any perceived elite was deemed to comply with this definition. These statements will then be compared to party literature, statements, and acts in order to establish that EKRE is engaging in a political style. The following chart can help provide the reader with examples of the types of sentences that corresponded with specific codes.

Additionally, when examining populism, statements and phrases used by EKRE party members in public interviews and statements were utilized. As this thesis uses Benjamin Moffit’s conceptualization of populism, a party’s political style must be analyzed. It would not be enough to present only information gathered from one-on-one interviews. It is also necessary to examine what the various politicians say and how they act in public. The following chart will help provide examples as to what phrases will be associated with certain codes and sub-codes.

<b>CODE</b>	<b>SUB-CODE</b>	<b>PHRASE</b>
Hard-Euroscepticism	EU as anti-democratic	Well I think the antidemocratic nature of the EU is not a bug it’s a feature it’s the way the system was designed I find it absolutely repugnant that we have some 8000 directives and some 6000 what’s the other thing they do...directives are the ones that you can change a bit and the other ones come direct...anyways we have well

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<sup>118</sup> Moffit, The Global Rise of Populism. pg.25

		of a ¼ of a million pages of legislation in EE and absolute majority of them are EU
Soft-Euroscepticism	Current EU trajectory	I think that the very risky way the EU is going now is getting larger and getting new member states especially from the western Balkan
Appeal to Tradition	Lutherianism	and that that's all part of our and the heritage and generally the Lutheran work ethics which I have to say regretfully together the decline of lutherianism is declining as well
Concerns over sovereignty	Border control	And the second one is control of borders. Immigration needs to be under EE control you can only do that when you control your borders. Which is to say that also within EU we would have to start checking documents on harbors and airport and keeping the immigration to an absolute minimum.
Concerns over demographics	Small immigration	but as small immigration as possible the numbers should be really tiny which they are not right now

Populist	Deep state	We learned that it would have been vulnerable to outside manipulations sort of the deepstate it would have been corrupted by the deep state
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### Success of the interview method

This subchapter serves to examine how successful the technique of interviews was. Overall, it can be said that this technique was successful and worthwhile. The interviewees were very open and provided in-depth answers to all of the questions. Additionally, the use of interviews allowed the researcher to gain incredibly valuable insights about the party and its views on the current events both in the country, and in Europe as a whole. However, despite the overall success of the methodology used, there are still some potential drawbacks that will be discussed and examined.

The first, and most obvious problem, is that the interviews were conducted in a language that was not the subjects' primary language. Due to the fact that the interviewer was not a native Estonian speaker, it was necessary to conduct these interviews in English. The main problem with this technique is that there is a risk of miscommunication or the interviewee potentially using a word in English that either does not properly translate into Estonian or otherwise misusing an English word. Another potential tactic would have been to utilize a translator in order to allow the subjects to speak in their native language and potentially avoid any miscommunications. However, this would have presented its own (graver) drawbacks. The main drawback is that there would be a filter between the interviewer and their subject. Even if the translator was highly skilled and recommended, there would still be elements of interpretation throughout the translation. Therefore, it is better to have the subject directly (even if imperfectly) speak to the interviewer rather than have their message be reconstructed by a third party. Additionally, both of the interview subjects speak English at a proficient level.

A third potential criticism that can be levelled against this paper is that interviews were only conducted with a small number of MPs of the EKRE party, and not with a larger amount of EKRE MPs or with other parliamentarians that are members of different parties. The accusation could be made that by only interviewing members of one political party, the insights of the paper may be more aligned with their beliefs rather than providing an objective review of the party. However, there are two main issues with this critique. The first major issue is that interviewing members of parliament would have only been possible if all parties that currently have seat in parliament could have provided individuals to be interviewed. This would mean that not only EKRE but also the five other parties would have to have been interviewed. This would have increased the scope of the paper beyond reason. Also, as this methodology uses the Sussex school of party-based Euroscepticism, the thesis only concerned with the language and opinions of EKRE and its leading members.

The second rebuttal to this potential critique is that, as a populist radical right party, EKRE would have a very hierarchical party structure. As Karl Magnus Johansson states, “When it comes to CEE, many of the newly created parties, like populist ones, tended to emerge in a top-down manner (van Biezen and Mair 2006: 105), and to remain centralized.”<sup>119</sup> Therefore, if the majority of the decisions regarding party will be concentrated at the top echelons of the party. That is why so few interviews were conducted. Because these interviews were conducted with high level members, the researcher was able to ascertain the attitudes of the party and its policies without having to interview large numbers of party members.

Despite the myriad of potential criticisms that can be directed towards the use of interviews in this thesis, the overall process should be hailed as a success. Each interview yielded a large amount of useful and useable data was gathered. These interviews allowed the researcher to analyze the speech of the interview subjects. The interviews were highly informative and those interviewed gave long, in-depth answers to the various questions

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<sup>119</sup> Karl Magnus Johansson, ‘How Populist Parties Organize,’ *PESO* Research Report no.2 (2014) 1-46 (pg.22)

asked. None of those interviewed appeared to hold back any information or try and dodge a question. However, it is crucial to remember that the interview subjects can withhold certain pieces of information or moderate their views.

## **Conclusion**

The goal of this chapter is to both explain how the methodology used answers the research questions asked and to give an in-depth description of said methodology. In order to gather the data necessary to answer these questions, interviews were carried out with high ranking members of the political party. The codes that were used to analyze these interviews can be divided into three categories: themes of nativism, populism, Euroscepticism, and more miscellaneous questions that provide both background information and ask questions that are indirectly related to the research questions. While the use of interviews does illicit some potential problems, this chapter worked to illustrate that these problems were either minor or were not harmful to the results of the thesis.

In order to analyze the data gathered, qualitative content analysis was used to dissect the answers that were given by the interview subjects. As stated, this method of analysis was chosen because it allowed the interviewer to further dissect the answers provided by the subjects. The codes that were crafted for this thesis were designed to answer the two main research questions described earlier in the paper.

## **Chapter 4: RESULTS**

### **Introduction:**

The results of the interviews will be divided by the code categories. Therefore, the subchapters will be: Euroscepticism in the interviews; nativism in the interviews; and populism in the interviews. The methodology chapter stated that in order to more effectively examine the interviews, coding was utilized, and specific phrases and quotations were examined and categorized. Overall, six major codes were utilized for this thesis (hard-Euroscepticism, soft-Euroscepticism, tradition, demographics, sovereignty, and populism). Additionally, each of these codes, all had their own sub-codes. The overall results of the codes are as follows: the mention of hard Eurosceptic terms numbered thirty-two times; soft Eurosceptic rhetoric was used ten times; policies and views steeped in tradition was used eleven times; demographics was used twenty-two times; the issue of sovereignty was brought up a total of eight times; and finally populist rhetoric was espoused sixteen times. Terms that were more miscellaneous were mentioned a total twenty-eight times.

This chapter will only have three subchapters. Each subchapter will coincide with a specific theme from the interview. Each section will illustrate what codes were used in the answers and the number of times certain codes were mentioned. The deeper analysis and the connection of these interviews to certain themes will be explored more in the following chapter.

### **Euroscepticism in the interviews:**

Throughout the interviews, the interview subjects expressed reservations about the power of the EU. The coding of this section finds that the party members interviewed are far more likely to utilize hard Eurosceptic rhetoric. Additionally, during these conversations, the party very rarely, if ever, discussed economic reasons for its Eurosceptic positions.



In the first interview with party vice chairman Jaak Madison, sub-codes for hard Eurosceptic phrasing was used a total of sixteen times, while soft Eurosceptic phrasing was only used a total of four times. Similarly, in the interview with party vice president Martin Helme, hard Eurosceptic rhetoric was used a total of sixteen times while soft Eurosceptic phrases were only utilized six times.

### **Nativism in interviews:**

The second theme of the interview was to illicit from the interviewees the forms of nativist rhetoric and phrasing the party uses to fuel its Euroscepticism. In the interviews one of the main goals was to see if economic or more nativist factors that caused individuals to vote for this party. The codes from this category help support this idea, as various phrases were exclaimed during the interviews that pointed to the idea that socio-cultural fears were behind the rise of this party, rather than economics. However, like the previous section, the respondents also discussed Eurosceptic topics in these questions.

For the questions regarding nativism, there were a total of three codes that were devised in order to ascertain the rhetoric that motivated the policies advocated by EKRE. The results of the first interview with Jaak Madison will be examined first. During this interview, nativist codes were mentioned a total of fifteen times. From there, the tradition code was discussed five times; the demographics code appeared nine times; and the sovereignty code was discussed once.

When examining Martin Helme's interview, it is critical to note that his interview was notably longer than the one with Jaak Madison. The interview with Helme ran almost fifty-nine minutes while the interview with Madison ran at a hair under forty-five minutes. This should be kept in mind when looking at the numerical differences in the amount of codes used in each conversation. That being said, the total number of times that phrases related to tradition were used numbered six times. For demographics, the number of code-able phrases numbered thirteen. Finally, sovereignty, and topics related to this, was mentioned seven times.

## **Populism:**

The final main code of this thesis was the code of populism. Although this code does not directly relate to the ideas of Euroscepticism, this is a concept that is a major aspect to this thesis. As previously stated, populism is coded as statements that were deemed to be appealing to the masses and or critical of any perceived elite. Statements that fit these criteria permeated throughout the interview and can be found in multiple areas. This is especially true in the interview with Martin Helme. Overall, the number of populist statements made by Jaak Madison in his interview was only two times. On the other hand, the number of these forms of statements in the Martin Helme interview numbered fourteen. As will become apparent in the analysis of these interviews, these results are not surprising, as Martin Helme was noticeably less moderate than Mr. Madison in his interview.

## **Discussion of the results**

Before analyzing the results in the next chapter, a discussion of the outcomes of these interviews is necessary. First, the Eurosceptic codes will be examined. What becomes immediately apparent is that terms that are deemed hard-Eurosceptic vastly outnumber those that can be viewed as soft-Eurosceptic. This indicates that the party members that volunteered for these discussions were far more comfortable using remarks that indicated a staunch opposition to European integration and the European project.

The second set of codes, involving nativist issues, also gave the researcher various interesting points of data to analyze. In the “tradition” code, there were various key sub-codes that emerged. For instance, codes such as, “connection (to an identity),” “fear of the other,” and “unique (referring to Estonian qualities)” were all prevalent when examining sub-codes that fit under the umbrella code of tradition. Additionally, the code of “sovereignty” also produced various prominent sub-codes. Two sub-codes that emerged from the interviews were “border protection” and “nation state (in referring to its necessity).” Many times, these sub-codes emerged when the interview subjects were voicing opposition against the EU and its supposed attempts to swallow up the small Estonian state.

Another major trait of this interview is the issue of demographics. In both of these interviews, the code for demographics appeared more than any other nativist code. Both Jaak Madison and Martin Helme relied heavily on this code, as their mention of demographic issues far outnumbered the other codes that fell under the same category. This indicates that the issue of what ethnicity dominates the country is arguably the biggest concern for these top party members. While this will be more flushed out in the next chapter, this points to the idea that for the top party members in the party, there is a fundamental need to preserve the dominance of the Estonian ethnicity within the country.

The third key takeaway from this chapter is how much more vocal Martin Helme was in comparison to Jaak Madison. While his exact rhetoric will be analyzed in the next segment, the sheer number of codes that his speech covered noticeably outnumbered the number of codes mentioned by Madison. This hints at the heterogeneity of the party, at least at the top of the party leadership. Helme even alludes to this in his interview when he stated that his high degree of Euroscepticism is not necessarily mimicked by other party members. This heterogeneity is also evident from the different issues that were emphasized by the two politicians. While both individuals voiced their concerns over demographics, Helme's interview contained far more populist terms and phrases than Madison's.

However, while Jaak Madison did not use populist rhetoric nearly as often as Martin Helme, the fact that both used phrases that can be seen as populist help reinforce the claims made earlier in the thesis. Namely, that this party, is a populist radical right party and its Eurosceptic rhetoric is fueled by nativism. By constantly voicing disapproval against the elite, EKRE is able to position itself as the voice of and defender of the common citizen. The answers that these men gave regarding the issue of direct democracy (as will be discussed next chapter) help support this.

There was one final set of codes. While these were not officially part of the three main categories of codes that were examined (Euroscepticism, socio-cultural rhetoric, or populism), they still shed light on the mindset and the policies advocated by these men. While these "miscellaneous" terms were present throughout the interview, they mostly

emerged in the early sections of the interviews. It was here that the interview subjects often spoke of what attracted them to the party and to politics in general. Here, codes such as, “early exposure (to nationalist rhetoric)” and “opportunity to advance (within the party)” emerge to help give context to the beliefs of these individuals. Additionally, there were many remarks regarding the surprising success of the party and how it “shocked” the political establishment.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has taken the interviews that were conducted and illustrated how the various codes were devised and applied to said interviews. Both interviews contained phrases and statements that were hard-Eurosceptic in nature and these statements far outnumbered the ones that could be deemed soft-Eurosceptic. Additionally, both interviews were flush with instances of the volunteers using terms terminology that discussed fears grounded cultural fears about the future of the country. The interviews were also abundant of instances of populist rhetoric designed to appeal to the people while railing against the supposed status-quo. The results that have been discussed here have helped lay the foundation for the analyses that will be examined in the next chapter. It is not enough to simply state that this is a hard-Eurosceptic party just because the rhetoric used in the interviews was largely based on that concept. The various quotations still need to be analyzed in order to ascertain why they are hard-Eurosceptic or why they indicate that cultural issues are more important than economic issues.

## **Chapter 5: Analysis of Results**

### **Introduction**

Throughout this thesis, the statement has been made that EKRE is a populist radical right party that is, by nature, also hard-Eurosceptic. Additionally, its hard-Eurosceptic nature is fueled by nativism. It is not economic down-turns that drive this rhetoric, but rather the idea that Estonia is a nation under threat from the supranational entity that is the EU and “foreign” cultures and people from far-away lands. It is now time to finally prove this assertion. In order to accomplish this goal, the results from the previous chapter will be examined through the lens of the authors mentioned in the preceding literature review, as well as a handful of others. The main focus of the analysis will be on the language that was used by the interviewees.

There will be two ways in which this analysis is carried out. The first method will be an examination of direct quotations from the interviews. This technique will directly analyze the language employed by the interview subjects in order to see how said language fits into the analysis of Euroscepticism provided by other authors and analysts. The second way in which the information will be analyzed is through the various codes that are found within the various interviews. This method examines the information in a slightly more indirect manner. While the interviewees might not directly mention a certain topic, the language employed by them might certainly hint or strongly suggest a certain theme.

This chapter’s subsections will be divided according to the major code categories. Therefore, the first sub-section will analyze the miscellaneous codes; the second sub-chapter is dedicated to the parts of the interviews that examine the position of the party on the Eurosceptic spectrum; the third sub-chapter will analyze the quotations and phrases related to the party’s rhetoric; the fourth section will deal with the populist language of the interviews. This chapter will end with a brief conclusion that will summarize the findings.

### **Analysis of Miscellaneous Codes**

The background questions of the various interviews were geared more towards easing the interview subjects into the interview and establishing a rapport between the interviewee and the researcher. However, this does not mean that the answers provided in these questions should be ignored. In fact, there are notable instances where the answers provided in this section helped provide context as to why these politicians possess their specific world views and promote certain policies.

Martin Helme provides the most obvious example of his background laying the foundation for his current world view. In his interview, he stated that, “my family...were all very anti-communist and what it was and what it had done to our relatives what mass killings and occupation I knew it since I was a child so I was a well-informed youngster.”<sup>120</sup> This provides perhaps the clearest instance of how an individual’s upbringing influences how they perceive the world around them. Throughout the conversation with Martin Helme, he not only denounces the EU as an undemocratic entity, but also compares it to the former USSR.<sup>121</sup>

Another key aspect of Martin Helme’s interview was his brief description of how the party came into being. At one point he described how, “We learned that it would have been vulnerable to outside manipulations sort of the deepstate it would have been corrupted by the deep state.”<sup>122</sup> This helps illustrate the mindset of the party. The idea that the central government potentially is able to access and manipulate the various parties, including EKRE, plays into the populist message of EKRE. Helme portrays the government as a collection of unelected individuals secretly controlling society.

Jaak Madison’s answers in the background questions reveal a slightly different motivation for joining EKRE. When he was deciding between which party to join, he said of EKRE, “or [I could] join with an absolutely new party who doesn’t have anything almost with no money no popularity but you can do what you think is the right thing to

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<sup>120</sup> Helme, Interview

<sup>121</sup> Ibid

<sup>122</sup> ibid

do.”<sup>123</sup> For Jaak Madison, his decision to join EKRE was highly influenced by his potential ability to become a prominent member in the party. This is not to say that Madison does not believe in the statements that he makes, but rather it indicates what attracted him to the party at such a young age.

### **Analysis of Euroscepticism in the interviews**

This is one of the three major components of this thesis: to both prove that EKRE is hard-Eurosceptic party. Various sub-codes were devised that illustrate how EKRE fits in with the other hard-Eurosceptic parties within Europe and the EU. The sub-codes for this main code include: “undemocratic,” “limit integration,” and “cultural Marxism.” This illustrates the core terms that the party uses when it is trying to discredit the legitimacy of the European Union and portray its goals as antithetical to the prosperity of the various member states. By using these specific codes, the politicians that were interviewed illustrated that they have a fundamental problem with how the EU is structured and functions. It is less a case of soft-Euroscepticism in which there is criticism towards only a few policies. As stated by the Sussex school of party-based Euroscepticism, if the party and its members are fundamentally opposed to the current integration progress of the EU, then they must be categorized as hard Eurosceptics.<sup>124</sup>

Throughout the interview process, there was one common theme voiced about the European Union. That is the idea that the EU is an undemocratic entity, especially the European Commission. Jaak Madison exclaimed in his interview, “the biggest problem is that we have the most un-democratic institution and that is the European commission which is actually believing that states are somehow enemies...or they are against integration...they are seeing that smaller national states are too closed and they are looking on their own interests.”<sup>125</sup> This quotation illustrates a feeling that Europe’s institutions,

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<sup>123</sup> Madison, Interview.

<sup>124</sup> Taggart and Szczerbiak *Opposing Europe* Vol.I Location 180

<sup>125</sup> Madison, Interview

specifically the European Commission, alienates the rights of the individual nation states of the European Union. This quotation does not exist in isolation either.

This helps lead to the conclusion that, based on Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition, EKRE is a hard-Eurosceptic party. The various claims that the EU and its institutions are un-democratic lead to the conclusion that EKRE is, "being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived." For the key party members to describe the EU as an "undemocratic and socialist entity," and that Brussels to be committing "power grabs," infers that the party believes the EU must radically restructure its internal composition and integration patterns.

Of course, the official party line does not emphasize a departure or exit from the EU. In fact, EKRE does not advocate for any form of divorce from the European Union. However, as mentioned before in the literature review chapter, the fact that EKRE does not directly advocate for an exit from the EU does not mean it cannot be classified as a hard-Eurosceptic party. Due to Estonia's size and economic structure, there would be no party, no matter how Eurosceptic, that would advocate for the country's exit. Therefore, within the context of a small, Baltic Sea country, EKRE is very much a hard-Eurosceptic party.

Earlier in the thesis, Clive Archer's explanation of Euroscepticism in the Nordic countries helps further explain how EKRE can be classified as Eurosceptic. Since his definition involves gauging how opposed to European integration a country is, it is possible to see how EKRE can be classified as a Eurosceptic party. Of course, with EKRE, there is the obvious rejection of political and cultural integration within the EU. In Archer's scale of Euroscepticism (a scale of 1-11 with 11 being the most enthusiastic about integration and 1 being the least enthusiastic), EKRE at the very least, places no higher than a 5, based solely on their cultural rhetoric.<sup>126</sup> However, it becomes less clear when it comes to the more economically based guides on the scale. Throughout the interviews, neither candidate directly addressed any potential economic threats posed by the EU nor

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<sup>126</sup> Archer, (pg.89).



did they make any statements that criticized the customs union or the Eurozone. Jaak Madison even stated that there needs to be some form of free trade and economic Union.<sup>127</sup>

However, Martin Helme did allude to the supposed dangers of the current economic policies of the EU. He exclaimed how,

“The other thing of course is that the EU is very similar to the USSR in that one size fits all. You have the same interest rates in Ireland Portugal and Germany that’s nuts that is absolutely nuts that’s the reason why the countries are bankrupt that’s the reason for all the banking crisis you have similar standards for agriculture in countries like Finland were you have polar nights and countries like Italy and Spain where you have deserts.”<sup>128</sup>

This quotation helps puts EKRE’s thoughts on economics into perspective. This would suggest that EKRE should be placed on the lower end of Archer’s Eurosceptic scale (indicating that it is a Eurosceptic party). Of course, it is only Martin Helme who made this claim, so the logical counter argument is that he does not represent the economic views of the party or the other leaders. However, the preceding quotation fits into the ideas that the EU is trying to subsume its member states and infringe on their sovereignty. Additionally, because of the strict hierarchy of the party, it is easy to make the claim that his views reflect the direction of the party.

Another way in which to examine EKRE’s classification as a hard-Eurosceptic party is to examine the other European parties that it identifies with and sees as potential allies in the European Parliament. As Martin Helme stated, “My favorite government right now in Europe of course is in Italy and but it is encouraging to see the Austrian governments the Czech government the Polish government you probably start looking from your allies form that circle.”<sup>129</sup> The various governments that were mentioned by Helme in this statement, with the exception of perhaps the Czech government, are all

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<sup>127</sup> Madison, Interview.

<sup>128</sup> Helme, Interview.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid

widely known for clashing with the European Union. The fact that both Martin Helme and Jaak Madison feel more comfortable associating with these parties speaks to the world view of these men who help shape the direction of EKRE.

### **Analysis of Nativism:**

This set of analysis focuses on the nativist themes that serve to explore the rhetoric used by EKRE and how it fuels its Eurosceptic views. As previously stated throughout the thesis, this analysis will illustrate that this party chooses to either directly use nativist rhetoric or to indirectly invoke it using specific language and phrases. For this political party, it perceives cultural threats represent a true danger for the country. Ideas such as multiculturalism and immigration are the concepts that pose the greatest danger to the country. While the cultural threats of globalization often came up during the interviews, the economic threats of this phenomenon very rarely, if ever did.

Various sub-codes are additionally used throughout the interviews that help support this idea that nativist issues are what dominate EKRE's rise to power. For the issue of demographics, sub-codes were said that hinted at how the party and its leadership viewed minorities and how an Estonian majority had to be maintained. Common sub-codes that were utilized here include, "preserve Estonia," "family values," and "immigration." This illustrates the main principles that the party believes must be followed in order to achieve a cohesive state. As some of their direct quotations will illustrate, a country can only be viable and successful if it is a relatively homogeneous state.

One of the questions that was posed to the respondents regarding socio-cultural issues was what the respondents viewed as the biggest threat to Estonia was. While Jaak Madison responded that it was the military threat posed by Russia, Martin Helme responded in a very different manner. During his interview, he stated that, "the long-term threat is demographics. Everything boils down to demographics... that is the main issue that should overarch everything. If we don't have enough kids, nothing we do has any

point.”<sup>130</sup> This quotation drives at the heart of EKRE’s philosophy. The idea that the Estonian nation is at risk of being erased in its own state is a fear that is not only expressed by these individuals, but by the party itself.

Another author who can offer some insight into this is Louis Wierenga. In his text on EKRE, the author discusses the idea of ethnofuturism. According to the author, this concept refers to the idea in where,

“nationalist doctrine [is] intended to create a new European civilization based upon identity and roots and led by Eastern Europe.” Additionally, the driving idea behind this idea is that, “Bringing about the destruction of both American and Russian imperialism and replacing them with white ethnostates is a goal of ethnofuturism.”<sup>131</sup>

It is here that some of the motivations of EKRE’s rhetoric can become apparent. Of course, none of the members came out and directly said that they desired a purely white ethno-state (Jaak Madison even noted with enthusiasm that EKRE contained a handful of non-Estonians). However, the party’s, and especially Martin Helme’s, fear about demographic proportions illustrate a desire to create an almost purely homogeneous nation state.

In this context, it would make perfect sense as to why the party would pursue the hard-Euro-sceptic pathway that it has. The creation of an ethnically homogeneous state would require the rejection and reversal of many of the EU’s current integration policies and supranational tendencies. This view is echoed by Martin Helme when, during his interview, stated how, “We can’t compare ourselves to Germany with its eighty-five million population milder climate better capitalization of industry and stuff like...we have no chance of competing with them but we have our own advantages we are small and dynamic.”<sup>132</sup> This quotation underlines the idea that the various nation states that comprise the country are too heterogeneous to be forced to comply to the same rules under one

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid

<sup>131</sup> Wierenga, (pg.12).

<sup>132</sup> Helme, Interview

supranational organization. Therefore, a very prominent and clearly defined nation state is the only way to truly prosper. This, of course, runs counter to the pro-integrationist and pro-EU groups that are found in the country.

While demographics play a large role in its Eurosceptic attitudes, there are other key components to their socio-cultural motivated Euroscepticism. One of these is the idea of sovereignty. This is a key issue for many conservative, right-wing, and Eurosceptic parties. EKRE, like most of these other parties, frames the EU as an organization that restricts the freedoms and independence of Estonia. During the interview, both politicians lamented how the EU imposes its laws and world views onto the Estonian people. As a result, there were key sub-codes that emerged that can be classified under sovereignty.

The vast majority of the terms that can be categorized under this code have to do with maintaining borders and promoting the primacy of the nation-state. Therefore, sub-codes such as “immigration control,” “invasion,” and “nation-state” are all integral aspects of their opinions. As will be showcased, this emerges from the idea that the EU is an oppressive supranational entity that attempts to strip autonomy from its member states in an effort to establish its own laws.

Additionally, the interview subjects voiced their beliefs that the EU was threatening to become a federalized entity rather than the intergovernmental organization that it currently is. Jaak Madison said in his interview that, “they haven’t understand the main problems that they have done and if we don’t solve the problems of outside borders or...federalization.”<sup>133</sup> This plays into the idea that the EU is a massive and oppressive system that attempts to strip states of their sovereignty.

By playing on this fear of a supranational entity encroaching on the freedoms of its, especially smaller, members states, the top party brass of EKRE are actually taking advantage of a certain phenomenon. As Karlis Bukovskis notes in the book “Euroscepticism in Small EU Member States,” “European integration has resulted in a

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<sup>133</sup> Madison, Interview.

complicated framework of rules and regulations...Humans naturally fear and dislike issues they do not understand, especially if those issues are often seen as unfair.”<sup>134</sup> The EU is a mass of beauracracy and regulation that appears at many times to be incredibly tedious. By greatly simplifying the EU as a force that is attempting to consume its member states.

Martin Helme echoes this fear when he exclaims that the EU barrages Estonia with countless laws and regulations that inhibit the independence of the country. He exclaimed how he, “find(s) it absolutely repugnant that we have some 8000 directives and 6000...anyways we have, well of a ¼ of a million pages of legislation most of them are EU.”<sup>135</sup> Of course, the obvious implication of this statement is that the EU forces states to conform to its laws and regulations at the expense of its own ability to create legislation.

The third form of expressing Euroscepticism through nativist expressions can be found in how the respondents viewed tradition and tried to promote traditional ways of life. They expressed concerns about tradition many times in the same way that they portrayed the issue of sovereignty. That is, the supranational EU attempting to impose its own values onto Estonia, thereby erasing the uniqueness of the country. Jaak Madison echoed this sentiment in the interview when he exclaimed how, the party’s promotion of traditional party values is a key aspect of EKRE.<sup>136</sup> Of course, there is the fact that by promoting “traditional values,” the party appears to be representing the common people. They are not trying to bring in foreign or alien ideas but are rather defending the Estonian people from the “liberals” of the EU.

Like the previous description of codes, this code contains various expected sub-codes that correspond to the promotion of more conventional norms. For instance, “Lutherism,” “family,” and “alien” are all sub-codes that emerge during the various discussions. As will be shown when the interviews are analyzed in depth, this fear of more traditional values being uprooted by a new set of values. Of course, the EU earns the brunt of the

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<sup>134</sup> Karlis Bukovskis, *Euroscepticism in Small EU Member States* (Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Riga, 2016) pg.8

<sup>135</sup> Helme, Interview.

<sup>136</sup> Madison, Interview

criticism from the party. Throughout the interviews, the interview subjects believed that the values that made Estonia unique were being eroded away by foreign forces.

Martin Helme encapsulates this feeling in his interview. He states that, “the heritage generally the Lutheran work ethics which I have to say regretfully the decline of lutherianism is declining as well.”<sup>137</sup> Here, the desire, and in some ways deification, of a supposed past attribute of the region and people plays an important role in the world view of this politician. This is not the only allusion to tradition. In both interviews, the idea of the traditional family (marriage between a man and woman) are constantly discussed.

This promotion of family values largely manifests itself in the opposition of gay marriage (specifically the cohabitation law of 2014) and the maintenance of gender roles. In his article about EKRE, Kaasekamp writes, regarding the Istanbul Convention, that, “prominent EKRE leader, Urmas Espenberg, referred to the conspiracy of “feminists and liberal socialists” that is subverting traditional gender roles, propagating childlessness, and causing general moral decadence.”<sup>138</sup> He additionally writes how, “roles, EKRE uses the classical conservative frames: biological determinism of heterosexual relations and argumentum ad antiquitatem...It is a typical identity-frame of the contemporary radical right that depicts the majority group (indigenous heterosexual families) threatened and suppressed by minority groups (gays, feminists, childless couples).”<sup>139</sup>

Throughout the interviews the interview subjects, especially Martin Helme, pushed the idea of these new values posing a threat to society was a constant worry for them. Of course, the EU was to blame for this influx of anti-Estonian beliefs. Helme states in the interview that the EU is naturally going to promote these values due to its nature. He stated, “Plus you add to that the regulated left-wing progressive cultural Marxist ideology that they are enforcing quite happily and quite openly.”<sup>140</sup> This allows EKRE to position

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<sup>137</sup> *ibid*

<sup>138</sup> Kaasekamp, (pg.7).

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid* (pg.7).

<sup>140</sup> Helme, Interview.

itself as the defenders of Estonian values and against the inherent goals and policies of the European Union.

However, not every academic believes that the socio-cultural dog whistles are behind EKRE's rise to prominence. One author is Siim Trumm. In his paper, he writes about the factors that cause individuals to vote for this party. In his paper, the author writes that, "Whereas mistrust of the political establishment was a key driver of electoral support for EKRE, as was opposition to the adoption of socially liberal policies, Euroscepticism and antiimmigration feelings were not."<sup>141</sup> This, of course, directly goes against part of the claims made by this thesis. There are two ways to counter this. The first, is to look at the article composed by Kasekaamp et al. In it, they write that, "EKRE has capitalized on four primary issues of value priorities in Estonian society to "light the fuse" (Pytlas and Kossack, 2015) and capitalize on socio-cultural cleavages."<sup>142</sup> Those four issues are: anti-Russian stance, refugees, European integration, and family values.<sup>143</sup> These researchers found that these were the primary messages that were featured on the party's social media outlets. This showcases that EKRE believes that these are the main messages for attracting votes (and judging by their recent parliamentary success it has worked).

The second way to counter Trumm's argument is to look at the interviews themselves. In the interview, Jaak Madison stated, "we have like very big support for traditional family values."<sup>144</sup> This supports the claims made by Kasekaamp in his article. Since EKRE frames the EU as a bastion of anti-traditional values, it can then frame European integration as a force that threatens Estonian values. Once again, Kasekaamp writes of EKRE's portrayal of European integration as something, "that destroys "nation-states." Dietmar Loch and Ov Cristian Norocel (2015) note that a significant link exists between the success of the PRR in Europe and de-nationalization."<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Siim Trumm (pg.340).

<sup>142</sup> Kasekaamp (pg.10).

<sup>143</sup> Ibid 1

<sup>144</sup> Madison, interview

<sup>145</sup> Ibid (pg.5)

## **Populism:**

The final area that needs to be examined is the populist rhetoric that was utilized by the two interview subjects. While many of the preceding codes and quotation that have been used can be described as populist in nature, for this section, rhetoric that specifically targets the “elite” or attempts to appeal to the “common man” shall be analyzed. Jaak Madison, when defending the use of direct-style democracy, claimed that, “today I think the problem is that the people are getting this political propaganda for two months before the elections and then for three and half years there is nothing you can collect your signatures and make the news but if you don’t like this policy but you can’t make anything”<sup>146</sup> This is illustrative of one of the ways in which EKRE attempts to garner popular support. By claiming to advocate for a political system that tries to accommodate the people’s will, EKRE is directly claiming that the current system, and therefore the current political class, do not.

Martin Helme echoes these beliefs in his interview as well. He noted how EKRE is, “the only party in Estonia, at least only party in the parliament, that has the members vote the candidate list. I think it is rather a radical departure from what the others are doing and I think that it is part of our success.”<sup>147</sup> This argument is similar to the argument that is made about direct democracy. EKRE is able to portray itself as the voice of the people because they allow all of the party members to vote for its candidates. This way they are able to portray their opposition as out-of-touch and dismissive of their own constituents.

In addition to these quotations, there are many examples of codes that fall under the category of populism. As expected, many of the sub-codes that are utilized in this section have to deal with the idea of appealing to the people while targeting and berating the “elite ruling class.” For instance, such terms as “people’s support,” and “waste of taxes,” are phrases that point to the party trying to appeal to the common citizen. Meanwhile, sub-codes such as, “deep state” and “recalling officials” serve to highlight opposition to an

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<sup>146</sup> Madison, Interview.

<sup>147</sup> Helme, Interview.



ignorant and self-serving elite. Oftentimes, these codes are tied in with many of the party’s more Eurosceptic views. This helps illustrate that the party’s populist rhetoric cannot be separated from its Euroscepticism.

Cas Mudde’s conceptualization and theory on the populist radical right can be implemented in analyzing this populism. Mudde’s examination of populist parties can be summed up when he writes, “Grand Coalitions are perfectly democratic...but they can further strengthen the appeal of the populist parties by leaving them as the only real opposition.”<sup>148</sup> This is a scenario that perfectly encapsulates the situation in Estonia (in both the 2015 and 2019 elections). In the country there are numerous parties across the political spectrum. However, all of them broadly support the EU and many of its integration policies. Therefore, EKRE can be seen as a way to voice the general dissatisfaction with the current system. It is important to remember, however, that just because a party is populist or utilizes populist rhetoric, does not necessarily mean that it is Eurosceptic or right-wing. There are numerous examples of left-wing parties that utilize populism in their platforms.

All of these codes and phrases that were utilized by EKRE during the private one-on-one interviews with the researcher must be combined with other, more public displays of populism. This is because in this thesis, populism is defined as a political style in which politicians use bad manners, appeal to the people, and try to present a crisis. Moffit provides a chart in his text that highlights how these politicians present themselves with these tools to the media.<sup>149</sup>

Populism as a Political style	Corresponding Aspects of Media Logic
Appeal to the people	Dramatization and polarization Prioritize conflict Anti-establishment attitude
Bad Manners	Personalization Stereotypization Emotionalization

<sup>148</sup> Mudde, *On Extremism and Democracy* Location1298.

<sup>149</sup> Moffit, (pg.76).

Crisis, breakdown, threat	Intensification Simplification Focus on scandals
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EKRE has shown that it is willing to utilize these tactics when it is exposed to the media. For instance, in a March 2019 interview with Deutsche Welle, Martin Helme utilized all of the above techniques when being questioned by the reporter. In order to appeal to the people, Helme used language such as, “And you trust the government always” and “the government lies.”<sup>150</sup> This presents an anti-establishment message that directly implies that the government should not always be trusted. In regards to bad manners, in the interview, Martin Helme dismisses two of his critics as “arch-liberals.”<sup>151</sup> This serves to stereotype his rivals. Finally, when presenting a crisis, at one point in the interview, Helme states, in regards to immigrants that, “it doesn’t make any difference to us who they are...whether they are from Ukraine or from Nigeria, It’s the matter that they are not Estonians.”<sup>152</sup>

Mart Helme also utilized these tools of populism when addressing the media. For instance, he stated, “Kersti Kaljulaid isn’t just a woman, but rather the President of the Republic. She reads one article, is so emotionally upset as a woman that she immediately passes judgment on the fly.”<sup>153</sup> Once again, this plays into the populist use of media in two ways. First, it satisfies the idea of bad manners. Helme is personalizing his attack on the president and is arguably playing into the stereotype of the hyper-emotional woman. However, it also plays into how the populist party utilizes the media. As Moffit writes, “populist leaders can become quasi-celebrities, known as much-or sometimes more-for their media performances and stylistic outbursts.”<sup>154</sup> The statement made by Mart Helme helps prove this aspect of populism as a performance by utilizing this quotation. The

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<sup>150</sup> Martin Helme, “Estonian Far-Right Leader: We are the Mainstream (interviewed by Tim Sebastian for Deutsche Well) (Estonia: DW Conflict Zone March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019).

<sup>151</sup> *ibid*

<sup>152</sup> *ibid*

<sup>153</sup> ERR, ‘President Kaljulaid 'emotionally upset as a woman,' says Helme,’ *ERR* (Published May 2, 2019) <<https://news.err.ee/935907/president-kaljulaid-emotionally-upset-as-a-woman-says-helme>> [Accessed May 7, 2019]

<sup>154</sup> Moffit, (pg.85).

language chosen was specifically designed to garner attention as there would have been other, less controversial language.

### **Conclusion:**

The findings of this chapter help shed light onto the EKRE political party, its motivations, and its position on the political spectrum. First, the answers that were provided by the interviewees decisively show that the party is a hard-Eurosceptic party. Between the amount of hard-Eurosceptic terms used and the specific language utilized by the party, it is hard to argue with the idea that EKRE is anything but an organization that is firmly opposed to the idea of future European integration and even wants to see the current EU reformed. All of the statements made easily fall into the hard-Eurosceptic category conceived by Taggart and Szczerbiak.

The second main findings of this chapter showcase how important socio-cultural stances and beliefs are for this party in its desire to attract votes. The codes for tradition, sovereignty, and demographics were all prominently discussed during the interview. Demographics was the code that was especially prominent throughout the interviews. This helps to discount the idea that economics plays a large role in the support for EKRE. Throughout the interview, the politicians being questioned had various opportunities to discuss the economic downsides of globalization and European integration. However, they chose to focus on cultural issues.

Finally, the numerous populist terms that were utilized helped reinforce the fact that EKRE is a populist party that attempts to appeal to the “common” people. This manifested itself in populist codes that both attacked the “elites” and their institutions as well as support the average Estonian. While this was not part of the two main research questions that this thesis posed, it was important to make the connection that EKRE was a populist radical right party. The analysis of this party illustrates that even in countries that are a bastion of EU support, there is a potential for a strong Eurosceptic party to emerge.

## Conclusion

The rise of a hard-Eurosceptic party in Estonia has been rapid. At first, the increase of populist radical right parties had bypassed the northern Baltic country. The parliamentary elections of 2015 and 2019 proved that EKRE has the ability to consistently attract voters and is now a prominent voice in Estonian politics. This paper attempted to examine this party and what policies it used to catapult it into this successful position. Emerging from the old nationalist party, EKRE was able to sweep to prominence by using nativist rhetoric and talking points in order to capture a large segment of the Estonian population who felt that the old parties of the country were largely ignoring their voices and concerns.

Of course, while EKRE and its various sister parties have been labelled as Eurosceptic, it is important to conceptualize and define what is meant by Eurosceptic. First, the definition provided by Clive Archer was the most appropriate for examining a small Baltic state such as Estonia. This implies that while no party would advocate for Estonia's exit from the EU, a Eurosceptic party can still oppose different levels of integration. The next step was to define what is meant by hard and soft-Euroscepticism. While this paper discussed and analyzed the various definitions that have been provided by numerous authors (such as Leonard Ray, Petr Kopecky, and Cas Mudde), the definition provided by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak proved to be the most useful for this study. Finally, the idea of nativism was defined by Hans-Georg Betz.

In order to prove the two research questions that were posed by this paper, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with prominent ranking politicians within the EKRE political party. After the interviews were conducted, they were examined for codes that dealt with hard-Euroscepticism, concerns over sovereignty, demographics, and maintaining tradition, and populism. These codes were found throughout the interviews and served to confirm the notion that EKRE is both a hard-Eurosceptic party, and one that relies on socio-cultural fears to garner votes. Additionally, the party also is comfortable

using populist policies and often advocates for measures to be taken against the “elites” and to serve the “common people.”

The question that follows is: why does this study matter? This is a single case study, so its ability to make generalizations 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. Despite this list of potential drawbacks, this thesis does address key issues. The first is that, 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 second issue that this thesis addresses is that it shows a Eurosceptic party does not have to advocate for a country’s exit from the union in order to be hard-Eurosceptic. If a party such as 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 to be viewed as a hard-Eurosceptic party.

The third major point of this paper was more theoretical. This thesis helped prove that Taggart and Szczerbiak’s conceptualization can be applied to this specific case. The importance of this is twofold. First, it showcases that Taggart and Szczerbiak’s form of examining parties is still valid and, despite the presence of other conceptualizations of Euroscepticism. The second reason that this is important is because, as mentioned earlier, this thesis helped illustrate that interviews can be a useful and applicable tool when utilizing Taggart and Szczerbiak’s conceptualization of hard and soft-Euroscepticism. By using the single case study of Estonia, this paper has contributed to the theory that initially used speeches and party literature as the primary tool for placing a party on the spectrum of Euroscepticism.

The final question is, what does the future hold? Now that EKRE is firmly established as a viable and influential party, what next? As of this writing, EKRE is part of the government as a coalition member alongside Isamaa and the Center Party. While EKRE has professed that it has various redlines that it will not cross, it is highly unlikely that it will be able to enforce these redlines. A common theory is that once far-right and

overtly populist parties come to power, they are forced to moderate their stances. However, an April 6<sup>th</sup> coalition plan stated that Estonia will not take any refugees and a referendum was set to take place in 2021 that would ask if marriage should be between a man and a woman (a direct attack against the cohabitation bill of 2014).<sup>155</sup> This inclusion of a referendum also points to the party's wish for a more direct-style democracy being at least partially fulfilled. What these coalition talks have shown is that EKRE has had a drastic influence on the Estonian political field. While it is impossible to say whether this will be a permanent rightward shift for Estonia, in the short to medium term, it is hard to argue that EKRE has not achieved its goal of bringing Eurosceptic sentiments to the forefront of Estonian society.

Populist radical right parties that utilize Euroscepticism are now prominent throughout the EU. All throughout Europe there are parties that view Brussels with a tremendous amount of trepidation and hesitancy. This is especially true in eastern Europe. What was once viewed as a bastion of pro-EU sentiment, the former communist countries now have begun to follow their western European counterparts. However, it is impossible to know whether this uptick is merely a trend or if it is indicative of how society will look in the future. That is why studies such as these are important. They allow future researchers to examine what allowed developments in specific countries to occur.

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<sup>155</sup> Tarmo Virki, 'Three Estonian Parties, Including Far-Right EKRE, Agree on a Coalition Plan.' *Reuters* (Reuters, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019) <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-estonia-politics-government/three-estonian-parties-including-far-right-ekre-agree-on-coalition-plan-idUSKCN1RI0F0>>[May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019]

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## Appendix 1

### **Interview Questions:**

#### Background Questions:

Could you please give us some background information on yourself? What made you want to go into politics?

And what was your experience with politics before joining (and or leading) the EKRE political party?

What attracted you to EKRE?

#### Questions regarding society:

Can you please describe for me, what it means to be Estonian? Specifically, what are the cultural traits or specific attributes that makes Estonia and the Estonians so unique? How will EKRE maintain the Estonian-ness in both the EU and the world at large?

How would you describe your party's view on the Russian minority in Estonia? Do they have a place in Estonian society? Would you describe them as different from the Muslim minority in Estonia and in Europe as a whole?

What is the biggest threat currently facing Estonia?

#### Party policy questions:

Of course, one must ask, how EKRE hopes to expand and bring in new people? Estonia has a very high level of EU approval among its citizenry. Is this an obstacle?

What is the importance of the Blue Awakening group in the party's strategy?

Can you describe what actions and policies your party will enact if it would ever won a majority in parliament and be the dominant party in the country? What parties in the EU does EKRE either looks to emulate or identifies with?

Would you be willing to be part of a coalition government? Would the party change any of its party policies to gain a position of power?

EKRE advocates for a direct democracy in Estonia. Why is this? What are the benefits and drawbacks?

#### EU questions:

In your own words, how would you describe the general position of EKRE? What does it wish to accomplish with its stated goals and potential policies?

Do you believe that there is a democratic deficit in the EU?

In the past, there has been talk of a pan-European army that could exist alongside NATO. Would your party support this?

It is often said that the EU is an elite-driven organization. Do you feel that these elites ignore the needs and desires of the common people? How would EKRE solve this problem?

If EKRE was able to enter the European Parliament, are there any specific parties that you would look to join? What actions would you take once in the parliament?

**Appendix 2****Code List:**

Jaak Madison Interview:

<b>Phrase</b>	<b>Sub-code</b>	<b>Code</b>
So, the small national movement joined with the farmers party and that made us a new party with a new party name and programme and new leaders	New Party	Miscellaneous
and we are growing more and more but it started in 2013 for me.	Fast Growth	Miscellaneous
time I knew that I would be known as a young member who has to act as the leaders say or to join with an absolutely new party who doesn't have anything almost with no money no popularity but you can do what you think is the right thing to do	Opportunity	Miscellaneous
you can't be any part of nationality just overnight. So, I can speak Swedish but I can never be Swedish. so even if I move to Sweden and I live there I cannot be Swedish. Because I would be an Estonian in Sweden	Requirement	Demographics
So Estonian as a nationality, of course at least one parent should be Estonian and of course you should speak Estonian.	Requirement	Demographics
So of course you have to feel this connection and this identity like with Estonian culture and history. Like, so, this very deep thing you feel inside and that's part of the nationality what we are saying.	Connection	Tradition

And I think sometimes its very similar to the Jews like in Israel as they are identifying We are not saying that your mother and father must be Estonian and then you are Estonian as they are doing or your mother has to be a Jew and then you can be a Jew otherwise you are not a Jew. But otherwise the biggest part of nationality is at least one parent has to be Estonian.	Requirement	Demographics
We are, our party is the most Euro-realistic. Some are saying a skeptical or populist party against the European Union but its not very correct because we are saying that too much integration can't be good for every country and every nationality	Euro-realist	Soft Euroscepticism
limit of the integration	Limit integration	Hard Euroscepticism
So sometimes it feels that some kind of ideologies parties are just dreaming to make European Union as a copy paste of United States.	Fighting elites	Populism
for the Estonians we have only about 900,000 so under one million so even like in European Union, Estonia is like a second place where the people are not Estonians. So Latvia is the first place. I think they have about 40% are not Latvian, especially the Russians. We have about 25%. Even In Germany, non-Germans are about 6-7% of the population. so for the smaller countries and nationalities too much integration is a risk.	Non-Estonians	Demographics
un-democratic institution as the European commission who is really believing that	Undemocratic	Hard-Euroscepticism

states are somehow enemies or against federalization in the EU or that they are against integration so and of course they are seeing that smaller national states are too closed and they are looking on their own interests		
great future in EU when we have the one minister of finance like the French guys are dreaming now we don't want a federal army like European Union like NATO so and of course the EC the president and VP can't really understand	European Commission Cannot Understand	Soft-Eurocepticism
Like in Germany you can't really understand what it is like to be in Luxembourg, the smallest state in the EU	Small state	Sovreignty
So with the muslim community in Europe that is one of the few questions where Estonians and Russians in Estonia where we are of the same opinion	Europeans versus aliens	Tradition
So with the Russians, we have three types of Russians. We don't have any problem with the first part of Russians who are very well integrated. They are very well integrated, they are speaking Estonian they are working here and paying taxes. They are normal citizens who want to be living in Estonia and not looking over to border to Russian society	Proportions	Demographics
So, the third part is the biggest problem who are living in the most part, who are getting news from Russian media. So they are getting up in the morning and watching Russian news on TV and they are reading Russian	Threatening Estonia	Demographics



<p>newspapers. So, they are getting information from the other side and it is not very friendly to about Estonia and they are the biggest problem actually and of course that has been a part of the political games for the past 25 years</p>		
<p>So it has been hard for the children of Russian families who are going to the Russian kindergartens and Russian schools finishing their schools and are in a pretty bad situation because it is almost impossible to get into universities or into the labor market to get the same possibilities as Estonians have</p>	Heterogeneity	Demographics
<p>getting but the main problem is language. So there are different kinds of Russians But yea, we don't see any problem, you can be Chinese or even Japanese, like I said we have national language and EE constitutions and we are accepting that. It doesn't matter where you are or what national language you are talking at home.</p>	Preserve Estonian Language	Demographics
<p>we have to start from KD. There has to be the same school system. We can't imagine that we have the double school system like in the US where the Mexicans are only speaking Spanish and they will not speak English. Or like in Germany where you have different school systems that you can learn only in Turkish and you don't know anything about German. But this is the problem that we have in EE</p>	Assimilation	Demographics

Like we have Russians who are finishing the school but are spending 3-4 hours per week (learning EE) but its hard when you don't have any friends and like communication in the EE language. We have the same problem. We have to learn RU in the 6 <sup>th</sup> grade but of course it is not enough if you are not using this language you are not getting anything.	Family Values	Tradition
conservative like the right wing party and of course like the conservative values we have like very big support for traditional family values	Family values	Tradition
With European policy it is going to be like our position is very similar with the Polish guys and also FPO of Austria so we have relations with them	Similar Parties	Hard-Euroscepticism
So we have never said we need to leave the EU like the British guys did, but we have to take a few steps back in history	Steps back	Hard Euroscepticism
We need economic union and free trade and that's the main reason why the EU was made on 50s. Today it is very political system where you are working with parliaments where over 50% of the laws we are making here it is coming from the EU laws so that's even average questions of life is regulated at the European level and there's some question is it fair or is it needed to do it and of course in this topic we are very conservative.	EU Laws	Hard Euroscepticism
do you agree that EE should say no to the laws of the EU even if we lose money and	Approval Rating	Hard Euroscepticism

<p>64% of the people said yes. We have to say no to the laws of the EU even if we lose money. So it means that 2/3 are saying we must take a step back and that we went too far with integration</p>		
<p>So there is a big support for the union but for the EU as a union of independent states. So that's why we don't have any problems with new members of the party. It has been growing I think we have the most new members of any party. So I think from last summer of 2018 we got about 570 new members, so more than you need for a new party. Somewhere is limits is the support but we can say it is about 25-30%.</p>	Independent States	Hard Euroscepticism
<p>It depends on the results of the reform party and the center party is getting. if there is a possibility that they can form a government with just the two parties, the center party and the reform party, then they will not prefer our party</p>	Being Part of the Government	Miscellaneous
<p>When you are 15 you can join the movement between 15 and 18 and when you are 18 you can join directly with the party and that's why we're supporting joining directly with the party so they are not so, they are not part of the future strategy of the party</p>	Not part of Future	Miscellaneous
<p>What we know today is that there is going to be a new political group after the elections because the ECR is broken because the UK is leaving and they had the biggest power in the ECR also in the ECR they have Polish</p>	Similar parties	Hard Euroscepticism

<p>guys and Finns party the True Finns and they both know the ECR is pointless because they don't have the British and they know that the main point is to work together like the FPO and AfD and Lega Nord those three parties are together so they're trying to cooperate now to try and get new parties into a new political group with the PiS party, Finns party and probably our party because if the Finns are joining with a new group together with FPO and AfD it means that the also the Swedish and Danish parties are also joining</p>		
<p>For us it is easier to be part of a political group if we also have the Finns there and Polish guys, especially I like their Russian policy. Especially there we have different views than the Italians and Austrians. But probably it will be a new political group with those parties</p>	<p>Similar parties</p>	<p>Hard Euroscepticism</p>
<p>Of course I think there are many things that we have to look over especially there is like the simple thing like free moving in the Schengen area it's a nice thing but it doesn't work when the member states aren't following the rules. So like for one rule saying that you have to protector your outside borders when you want to be part of Schengen but we see today that Greece and Italy does not protect its outside borders so but if we see we have states who do not follow the rules with the Schengen rules, then that for the two weeks you can restore your border controls</p>	<p>Borders</p>	<p>Hard Euroscepticism</p>

it is problematic that you have to ask the EC for permission to restore your border control if its needed also the Eurozone policy, how should we go forward. Especially if there is a new financial crisis like we had in Greece. So should we like really save all the banks in Greece what is very useful only for the Germans or we have to make it clearer that we cant burn our money and our taxpayers money in the EU to the European banks because they were making bad loans.	Dominant European Commission	Hard Euroscepticism
and our idea is very pretty much a copy past from the old constitution of the 20s and also from the constitution of Switzerland so the main idea has been always that there has to be some key for the people between the elections	The past	Tradition
Today I think we have the main problem is that the people are getting this political propaganda and campaign for two months before the elections and then for three and half years there is nothing so you can collect your signatures and make some letters or the news but if you don't like this policy but you can't make anything.	Key for the people	Populism
I think that the very risky way the EU is making now is getting larger and getting new member states especially from the western Balkan	Risk	Soft-Euroscepticism
So it has been the way of the policy of the next 5-10 to get new states like Albania or Kosovo and BH and I think it is a very risky way because if we haven't solve the problems	Oppose further integration	Hard-Euroscepticism

that we have today and we have the Brexit 2.5 years		
EC like Timmermans like okay it is very easy to say the biggest problem of Brexit was the populist movements and lying to the people and okay you can say that it's their fault but have you done also done something wrong from the EC that the millions of brits are not believing anymore in the EC and the EU and like, No no they still haven't understand the main problems that they have done and if we don't solve the problems of outside borders, or the Schengen zone or the Eurozone crisis	European Commission out of touch	Hard Euroscepticism
we are moving and in the same time to play on the idea to get new member states in the Union I don't think it's a very right way to so because it's the question of what happens when the next country says no we're going to have a referendum about EU so that is why I don't believe they are very realistic	Halt Integration	Hard Euroscepticism
oh yes absolutely because even like if there is its like a double standard. Like if there is a Brexit referendum, then for the most pro-EU guys to say that there was only I think it was 55-60 percent went to the referendum and that's not enough and we need every last person to vote in order to determine the future at the same time the EP elections in EE that's about 35% in EE so one out of every 3 people is deciding the future of Europe and even in southern Europe its only about 20%	EU is un-democratic	Hard Euroscepticism

now the EC is the most undemocratic institution in the EU and nobody is electing the president or vice president of the EC and at the same time the biggest problem is that a bigger population means that you have more seats in the EP so it means that you have more voters and more MEPs so that's the deficit of the democracy in the EU	EU is un-democratic	Hard Euroscepticism
of course Hungary and Poland voted against but it was also duty for them because there is a rule in the EU where if at least 55% of the member states are deciding in one way its gonna be also rule for the other side for those who are voting against	Duty	Miscellaneous
typical. It's a dream. It would never happen. The problem is if they can't protect themselves, how will they build a European army who's going to make this Euro Army and will be a part of this army. And today the main problem of Macron saying that is that the line between the French and German Defense companies and Americans.	Against EU army	soft Euroscepticism
But at the same time if you don't like the American influence in the EU you have to pay yourself easy but if you are paying 1.5% on defense system then its not enough	Contributions	Miscellaneous
So how will you protect the eastern part of Europe from Finland to Romania if you don't pay enough for your own defense system	Bad allies	Miscellaneous
I don't think its very realistic dream of a Euro Army at the same time the Germans are making deals with the	Bad allies	Miscellaneous

Russians especially with Nord Stream 2		
I think of course in defense policy its Russia	Russia	Miscellaneous
So the biggest question for the Russian foreign policy is to prove that the NATO is not working and that the NATO is not very stable	instability	Miscellaneous
on the same time you have Turkey who's making deals in Syria with the Russians so should we activate this article number 5 I'm pretty sure then maybe Turkey would say wait lets wait a minute its not very clear yet and the Germans too would wait are they really Russians is it organized by the Kremlin	Bad allies	Miscellaneous
the problem is of course Latvia because they have this professional army with 4000 guys	Bad Allies	Miscellaneous



**Martin Helme Interview:**

<b>Phrase</b>	<b>Sub-Code</b>	<b>Code</b>
Well I have to say that its probably my calling	Destiny	Miscellaneous
The background Is that I'm a child of the revolution. When the Soviet Union began started to collapse in the late 1980s and Estonia regained its independence in 1991 when I was 15 years old so my formative years were a time where it was a tumultuous period in Estonian society.	Independent Nation	Miscellaneous
And of course the further background is that my family and my parents and grandparents were all very strongly anti-communist throughout the Soviet occupation and we were very well aware what the Soviet Union was and what it was and what it had done to our relatives what mass killings and occupation that was, I knew it since I was a child. So I was a well-informed youngster	Early Exposure	Miscellaneous
towards this century at the beginning of this century more and more things began to irritate me in politics things went from bad to worse	Dissatisfactoin	Sovereignty
abandonment of the sort of national pride and sovereignty and all those things rubbed me the wrong and I still didn't think that I would be a career politician	Abandon Sovereignty	Sovereignty
. My sort of debut in politics was the referendum campaign in 2003 where Estonia joined the EU and I was in the No camp. And our main argument was for sovereignty. Everything logically follows from there if you don't have	Argue for sovereignty	Sovereignty

sovereignty you don't have control of taxation or over value decisions and I have to say that 15 years later everything that we warned of has come to pass		
Everything that we said would happened, happened. We were right, they were wrong and we are right again I think	Mission	Miscellaneous
Before building up EKRE, because I have been here since the beginning, I was one of the driving forces behind in creating it, before that I was sort of a lone wolf in politics	Driving Force	Miscellaneous
but in 2006 we created with some like-minded people and created a pressure group, an activist group called the Estonian nationalist movement that centered around the debate on what to do with soviet monuments	Activist	Miscellaneous
We learned that it would have been vulnerable to outside manipulations sort of the deepstate it would have been corrupted by the deep state	Deep state	Populism
And so but what it did was to create and to weed out a few dozen people who were trustworthy and likeminded and had some political experience	Loyalty	Miscellaneous
We said it was doable project if we change the name of the party changed the program changed the constitution of the party or the statute of the party and they said okay lets do it and it was a total remake of the organization and also a thorough remake of the ideology	Reorganize	Miscellaneous
absolute majority of the membership who are mostly sort of rural people and small	Support Family Values	Tradition

town people and mostly also sort of middle aged to older age people were naturally inclined to support the policies we were proposing. the family values the sort of nationalist patriotic message the sovereignty issue and all anti-corruption		
we had to deal with quite a great debt that was inherited and all that. And what we immediately did was made the decision to put extra effort into build the grassroots movement and build the local organizations and this is the logic that is embedded into the constitution of the party and is the bottom up logic of the party	People's Support	Populism
We are basically the only party in EE at least only party in the parliament that actually has the members vote the candidate list. So, I think it is a rather radical departure from what everyone else are doing and I contribute part of our success to it, of course I was one of the authors of it	Members Vote	Populism
So then came the 2014 EP elections which went better but because the threshold is very high we didn't get a mandate	Better Results	Miscellaneous
and ah okay I forgot the 2015 parliamentary elections which no one thought that we would actually succeed but we surprised them and here we are	Surprise	Miscellaneous
we didn't have any really representation but again we were in the big league and we had our own candidate we were in all the debates and we shifted the debate towards the	Shift Discourse	Miscellaneous

themes that we wanted to and in a strategic way it was an important mile stone.		
Well I don't think I can really answer what makes an Estonian. In the short hand It's a question of identity of course. A lot of our opponents especially on the left of the political spectrum mind-numbingly, stupid-idly try to make the issue a genetic issue its not a genetic issue	Identity	Miscellaneous
issue it's a cultural issue its your identity and its everything from the temperament of the Estonians to the weather and to our literature and to our national heroes and well we have precious few heroes but tons of national tragedies which makes us the way we are and which is part of our sort of our understanding of the world and our suspicion towards the world and makes us quite an introvert	Culture As identity	Tradition
way that the Estonians behave I think part of it is explained how we've faired in the past I don't know 500 years, every 100 years someone comes and kills half the people so and its of course one of I think one of the biggest components of the Estonian national identity is the language	Unstable Borders	Sovereignty
Its quite an unusual language linguistically. Its sort of our secret code and it used to be during the Soviet times and the Tsarist times and when the German landlords were ruling	Unique	Tradition

Estonia it was the thing that differentiated us from the others		
and that that's all part of our and the heritage and generally the Lutheran work ethics which I have to say regretfully it's together with the decline of lutherianism is declining as well	Lutherianism	Tradition
Its not just keeping the old stuff. What we are saying is you constantly have to continue and reinforce and build up the national sort of culture and the national identity you can't say the way things were we want to preserve it of course we want to preserve it but we also want to build on it so its not just a reactionary way of looking things but it is also proactive way of looking there's no point of copying Hollywood or trying to be like I don't know, Swedes. It's the exact opposite. the point is the exact opposite. The point is to be ourselves and what makes us so special. Becasue everyone needs to believe in some way we are special. I think everyone has to believe that we are special	Special People	Demographics
we should emphasize what is different what makes us like ourselves.	Unique	Tradition
Well the Muslim minority was miniscule in Finland and in Sweden 10 years ago and it can change very rapidly and 100 years ago there were a bit more than 100 muslims in Holland and now there are 1.5 million. So it can change very rapidly	Muslim Minority	Demographics

one of the things is that it is much closer cultural background than anything further out from Africa or Middle East	Culturally closer	Demographics
but we have been fighting with the Russians for 1000 years. The first big war was in the 11 <sup>th</sup> century. So we know them we know the language we know the faith	Culturally Familiar	Tradition
we know the national sort of psyche we know them we might not like everything about it but it is not as alien as someone from Sub-Sahara or Pakistan	Aliens	Demographics
We had, not every Russian in here is a minority. What we have that is considered a minority is everyone who lived here before the Second World War. And there is a small number of them. I think about 5-7-8% of those people	Minority	Demographics
the main bulk came the main number came after the 70s and 80s we consider them to be the colonists of the occupation	Colonists	Demographics
The first chunk is the Russian citizens the people who have actually taken the Russian citizenship and there are over 100,000 of those now they this is the most problematic bunch of people	Russian speakers	Demographics
And then there is the second sort of bunch of them which have not taken any citizenship at all there is a 75,000 of them in EE its slowly diminishing because they are either take Russian citizenship or EE citizenship or actually some of them go to the EU and its slowly declining the number but its still a big problem	Russian speakers	Demographics

<p>And then there is a third which is about 130,000 Russians maybe a bit more than that who have actually naturalized and gone through the process of doing the language exam and doing the citizenship exam and who mostly even they are not enthusiastically patriotic are more or less loyal to EE.</p>	Russian Speakers	Demographics
<p>demographic sense is to make sure that the that both the number and the proportion of Estonians in EE is increased both the number and the proportion that we will grow as a nation and we will be in an increasing majority and when we are talking about the Russians in EE or the Ukrainians in EE how do we achieve it is</p>	Proportions	Demographics
<p>but as small immigration as possible the numbers should be really tiny which they are not right now</p>	Small immigration	Demographics
<p>The number of Russians who want to leave EE and not necessarily go to Russia or to Finland or the US or UK should be encouraged and the ones who are staying here should be not be integrated but assimilated. And that is a long process that takes two generations at least. But that is the plan</p>	Number of Russians	Demographics
<p>well we are conservative nationalists as the name implies. And Center-right that's true. But I wouldn't put... I think they are...we are hearing in Europe and the United States a lot of labeling far-right far right doesn't mean anything some of the parties that are labelled far-right are</p>	Opposed to Federalization	Soft Euroscepticism

economically far-left quite collective in their approach to economics		
We are not. we are center right when it comes to taxation and regulation and stuff like that and the individual responsibility stuff like that	Personal Responsibility	Populism
I am not a skeptic I wholeheartedly quite readily admit that I Am against the EU against EE membership of the EU I think EU membership itself is a horrible organization undemocratic blatantly left wing it's a socialist endeavor.	Against EU	Hard Eurosceptic
So the party I'd say is quite Eurosceptic, the most Eurosceptic party in EE that's probably true and the main issue or question of our party is sovereignty and the ever increasing power grabs by Brussels which makes democracy a mockery	Brussels Power Grab	Hard Eurosceptic
When everything is decided in Brussels then Democracy in EE is pointless you can't really enforce your policies if everything has to go first through Brussels	Democracy is pointless	Hard Euroscepticism
First of all I think that it is a manipulation to say that Estonians are very pro-EU Estonians like borderless travel in Europe Estonians very much like to get subsidies from the EU and Estonians like the inaccurate thought that the EU is somehow a defense against Russian invasion	Transactional	Soft Euroscepticism
when you are asked if you support common common immigration policies or quota refugees an overwhelming Estonians are against when you ask whether the EU view	Insane Bureaucracy	Hard Euroscepticism



<p>that same sex marriage is a human right absolute majority of Estonians is against it. when you ask whether Estonians are okay with the insane amounts of bureaucracy that just flows from Brussels Estonians are against it. So, I think it's a matter of explaining that its how you view the entire project its got a lot of levels and aspects to it I think the skepticism towards the superpower or the federalization of EE is very high</p>		
<p>what you hear often in EE is that I support joining the EU but I don't support what it has become and I don't support it becoming a federalist entity to which if you are intellectually honest you say that well the EU didn't even bother to change course or slow down when the Brits warned that if it doesn't change they would leave</p>	What it has Become	Soft Euroscepticism
<p>which puts the question to us rather soon whether we want to be a part of that federalized entity or this undemocratic socialist entity or whether we want to leave it and my answer is quite clear which way we should go.</p>	Undemocratic	Hard Euroscepticism
<p>You have to explain your view this is the thing that my dear colleagues in other parties and my colleagues in my own party oftentimes they want to go the easy way they want to find out what's the mood of the people</p>	Maintain Position	Miscellaneous
<p>you have to offer them a plan and that is usually going against the current. Usually</p>	Go Against Current	Miscellaneous

you have to open up another front and its not an easy and it doesn't bring you immediate popularity and it doesn't bring you percentage points but it does what it does is vastly broadens your political playing field and it also mines your opponents but mines under them and you choose your battles yourself and this is what I think we're really good at		
We are after something different what we are after is first of all what we want is to attract young people to our ideology and you have to have young people explaining that	Young People Spread Message	Populism
It might work but I don't have the vocabulary. I don't know what an Instagram streak is or whatever and but they do and so they connect more easily.	Connect	Populism
we want to bring that sort of sentiment to our organization and of course it's a headache it's always a headache they are loose canons and you never know what problems they may cause but it is worth taking. Because I mean of course we could say that we want a to sort of put them under our structure and make them take orders but that's not the point it would kill off the point of it	Un-structured	Populism
Let them have fun and also they're the consumary revolutionaries. The counter culture revolutionaries and they can do things that would not be good to do for an MP.	Counter-culture	Populism
We don't have natural coalition partners we are quite apart from the others and that's the problem for us we are different from all the rest	Stance on the EU	Soft Eurosceptic

<p>of them partly because of our stance on the EU and partly because of other things but to answer to the question the question who would we like to have a coalition with quite easily it with the ones that we would have a better deal and of course we get to the point of what's the thing that matters to you what makes a deal a good deal</p>		
<p>first of all on our list are two subjects that are absolutely red lines for us and we can't compromise on them. First of all the cohabitation law has to go that it is a metaphysical fight that is a fight over the soul of the Estonian nation there is no compromise there is no compromise there. It has to go. And the second one is control of borders. Immigration needs to be under EE control you can only do that when you control your borders. Which is to say that also within EU we would have to start checking documents on harbors and airport and keeping the immigration to an absolute minimum.</p>	Border control	Sovereignty
<p>that when we enter the coalition negotiations our tax plan is something that we will press very hard because we are seeing that EE is suffocating under high taxation a heavy regulation regime</p>	High taxes	Populism
<p>we want Estonians to become richer we want to be a welfare society in the sense that when you work hard you will be well off.</p>	Richer Estonians	Populism
<p>of course there are a ton of things in education and social sphere and what Dave</p>	Waste of Taxes	Populism

<p>Cameron once called the Bonfire of the quangos, I don't know if you know the term, quangos is the governmentally organized NGO and there are, it is very expensive to the Estonian taxpayer to subsidize all sorts of do nothing-NGOs who are just parasites. So we want to get rid of them. That will be an ugly fight.</p>		
<p>But it will be a group that emphasizes or concentrates on sovereignty of nation states in Europe. That wants to transfer power from Brussels to national capitals. It will be an anti-federalist entity. My favorite government right now in Europe of course is in Italy and but it is encouraging to see the Austrian governments the Czech government the Polish government, the Hungarian government you probably start looking from your allies from that circle</p>	<p>Similar parties</p>	<p>Hard Euroscepticism</p>
<p>there are small and competing groups there that have historic reasons why they don't get along and some of them have age old grievances against each other. and some of the Eurosceptics and that's the problem. Euroscepticism</p>	<p>Distrust</p>	<p>Hard Euroscepticism</p>
<p>So its quite different and that's the point of it and I don't know if we can find common ground with Front National for instance I am not sure I don't know if we can actually work with the Italian Lega I don't know them. I know we have a similar view of the world of Europe as some of the Eastern European countries</p>	<p>Nation state</p>	<p>Sovereignty</p>
<p>they are all probably very much afraid that including a</p>	<p>Racist</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p>

well known racist amongst themselves them is bad publicity you know how it works out because I am well aware that if you google me in English there's nothing good coming for me		
I see direct democracy or referendum initiative by the people as a best antidote to globalization because what the problem is with representative democracy is that you have elections every four years everyone makes noises about defending your national interests and then of course once the elections are over everything is the same old same old and the I think it's a crisis of democracy	Antidote to globalism	populism
the solution to the crisis of democracy is not to have less democracy or to fight the populists or whatever but the solution is to have more democracy In our programme one of the things that we propose is the referendum initiative the second thing is direct presidential elections also some changes to the way the mandates are handed out in the elections to make the elections more equal between different constituencies and also we have proposed that we should look at a way of recalling elected officials so we want to see a recall mechanism in EE	More Democracy	Populism
and I think that what it will do is strengthen democracy and it will make the political class more inclined to hear what the people want or don't want	More democracy	Populism
Well I think the antidemocratic nature of the	EU as Anti-democratic	Hard Euroscepticism

<p>EU is not a bug it's a feature as they say it's the way the system was designed. I find it absolutely repugnant that we have some 8000 directives and some 6000, what's the other thing they do...directives are the ones that you can change a bit and the other ones come straight...anyways we have well of a ¼ of a million pages of legislation in EE and absolute majority of them are EU</p>		
<p>Well what's the point of having different parties then? what's the point of having elections with different platforms? If there are things that we don't like then we won't have it in our laws and that's it.</p>	EU over nation state	Hard Euroscepticism
<p>The other thing of course is that the EU is really very similar to the USSR in that one size fits all. You have the similar interest rates in Ireland Portugal and Greece Estonia and Germany that's nuts that is absolutely nuts that's the reason why the countries are bankrupt that's the reason for all the banking crisis that's absolutely nuts you have similar standards for agriculture in countries like Finland where you have polar nights and countries like Greece Italy and Spain where you have deserts</p>	Similar to USSR	Hard Euroscepticism
<p>We cant compare ourselves with Germany with its 85 million inhabitanace and much more milder climate better capitalization of industry and stuff like that we have no chance of competing with them but we have our own</p>	National Advantages	Sovreignity

advantages we are small and dynamic and we've got our own energy and stuff like that and we are just throwing that away all of our advantages away that's nuts its delusional self-harm.		
And of course everything that I have just described is a left-wing utopia that by decreeing something from Brussels and the people that are decreeing answer to no one absolutely no one the Commission answers to absolutely no one and all of the sudden it has legitimacy for 550 million people its rubbish	Left-wing Utopia	Hard Euroscepticism
regulated left-wing progressive cultural Marxist ideology	Cultural Marxist	Hard Euroscepticism
the open hostility towards nationalism or nation states the open hostility towards the nation state the open hostility towards self sustainable economic models that is an ideological project that has no legitimacy. Has no democratic control over it. And is making life more miserable to people of Europe than anything that they ever dreamed of so, no no no no no, its got to go	Hostility Towards nation state	Hard Euroscepticism
Oh no it has done everything in its power, its by design that they have isolated themselves from the popular consent. It is an objective itself that they have isolated themselves from the consent of the people from the democratic process. So it cant work. The only way it can work is if they use, quite openly use, totalitarian methods and that would bring bloodbath to Europe which I think is quite a possible	Isolate from popular consent	Hard Euroscepticism

scenario anyway. Because we are just fighting now for Freedom		
Absolutely against it. It is just diabolic. For quite practical reasons as well. First of all it's a parallel structure to NATO and drains resources and creates confusion	Against EU army	Soft Euroscepticism
Also, for the reason that emulating the same model that the EU does is that its not really putting any resources of its own but hijacking the resources of the nation states and taking them under their control and using them to advance their own political goals. Many of them is to strengthen their own centralization of power	Hijacking resources	Hard Euroscepticism
So we will keep putting in 2% of our GDP to defense forces but it will not be up to us when to use and where to use it but someone in Brussels decides to now is the time to go to Mali for instance or when we are attacked by the Russians, someone in Brussels decides that no no stand down. Absolutely I rule out that we will if we are in power entirely disentangle ourselves from that	Against EU Army	Soft Euroscepticism
well the long term threat is demographics. Everything boils down to demographics There is of course not a simple thing its Immigration emigration birth rates stuff like this. But that is the main issue that should overarch everything. If we don't have enough kids nothing we do has any point. If we have enough kids but they are still swarmed by immigration we are making	Threat is Demographics	Demographics



<p>our lives a hell anyways. If we are having enough kids but they are moving out then that is also a pointless policy So we have to make all of those things work in a proper way</p>		
<p>Now in the short term, I think that the instability of the European project will create political and economic stress that will be very high that will create political and societal instability as well in EE as well and we have to be prepared for that and we have to also be prepared that for whenever the European project starts to unravel and I am quite sure that it will much sooner than people actually realize, Russia will not let that opportunity pass without creating some major problem so this is walking the tight rope in the next I don't know 5 years.</p>	<p>Europe will unravel</p>	<p>Hard Euroscepticism</p>

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supervised by Heiko Paabo, PhD.

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