

# Discourses and Depictions: Nations (Re)Imagining Themselves

11 December 2025, Lydia Hotel, Ülikooli 14, Tartu, Estonia

## Invitation

We invite you to participate in the conference “Discourses and Depictions: Nations (Re)Imagining Themselves” and its discussion circles exploring the continuous change in national identity construction and its impact on state foreign policy.

This conference examines the multiple and intersecting ways in which national identity has been shaped and reimagined over the past 35 years, a period marked by the simultaneous rise of democratization and authoritarianism, new projects of regional and global integration, and shifting patterns of interaction between states and societies. Today, questions of belonging, exclusion, and representation remain central to understanding how communities (re)imagine themselves and others, and how they negotiate continuity and change across diverse regional contexts.

The conference discussions engage with the concepts of **nationalism**, **national identity**, **Self and Other**, and **minority identity** from diverse disciplinary and methodological perspectives. Contributions address how identity elite and mass discourses influence nation-building, integration policies, and external relations; how narratives of belonging and exclusion circulate in public debates; and how communities (re)imagine themselves and Others within broader geopolitical frameworks. Case-based analyses span multiple regions, including Estonia, Latvia, India, offering comparative insights into the complex identity transformations shaping societies today.

## Organizers

This conference is organized by the project “National identity and Estonian-Russian relations: a longitudinal study of elite and mass discourses”, funded by the Estonian Research Council grant PRG 1052.

# Conference Schedule

- 9:30 - 10:00 Registration and Welcome Coffee
- 10:00 - 11:00 PRG 1052 Project findings presentation
- 11:00 - 11:15 Break
- 11:15 - 12:45 Panel 1 - *The Making of National 'Self' and 'Other'*
- 12:45 - 13:30 Lunch provided to registered participants
- 13:30 - 14:30 Keynote address
- 14:30 - 14:45 Break
- 14:45 - 16:15 Panel 2 - *Minorities and the Nation-State*
- 16:15 - 16:30 Break
- 16:30 - 18:00 Panel 3 - *National Identity and the 'Other'*
- 18:00 - 19:00 Concluding remarks and light reception

## Sessions

### PRG 1052 Project Findings Presentation

Chair: Aigerim Nurseitova, University of Tartu

- Alar Kilp, PRG 1052 Principal Investigator, University of Tartu: "Counting Identity Innovatively in a Small State: Mapping Elite–Mass Discourses, Dominant Narratives, and Marginal Voices in Post-Soviet Estonia"

### Panel 1 - The Making of National 'Self' and 'Other'

Chair: Oksana Belova-Dalton, University of Tartu

- Martin Mölder, University of Tartu: "Estonian identity map: Trends and outlines"
- Lelde Luika, Latvian Academy of Culture / University of Tartu: "Order or Individualism? Discourses of Democratisation in Estonia and Latvia during the Transition Era"

### Keynote address

Chair: Maili Vilson, University of Tartu

- Vello Pettai, European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI): "When Ted meets Rogers: Studying national identity and foreign policy in a triadic landscape"

### Panel 2 - Minorities and the Nation-State: Inclusion, Exclusion, and Identity Politics

Chair: Azniv Tadevosyan, University of Tartu

- Elena Pavlova, University of Tartu: "Lack of knowledge as an obstacle to integration"
- Inta Mieriņa, University of Latvia, Centre for Diaspora and Migration Research: "Re-shaping of identity boundaries of the Russian minority in the Baltic region after 2022"

### **Panel 3 - National Identity and the 'Other': Reimagining the Self in IR**

Chair: Heiko Pääbo, University of Tartu

- Andrey Makarychev, University of Tartu: "Studying pro-Russian Narratives in Estonia: a Critical IR Perspective"
- Amit Julka, Ashoka University: "Identity and its Discontents: Testing the Limits of a Concept"

## **Registration Information**

Attendance at the conference is free but subject to prior registration. Please register yourself [here](#) by 9 December 2025.

We look forward to welcoming you to the conference!