

Standing for the West on Its Borderlands: Soft and Hard Security Dilemmas and Opportunities of the Baltic States

Baltics societies in 21st centuries: ethics and linguistics perspectives *Lect.S.Struberga*

Overview of ethnics and linguistics composition of Baltic societies (to be add more information)

The Soviet ethnic policy and its consequences in Latvia: 1945-1991 *Lect. I.Runce*

The Soviet ethnic policy was of high importance not only in the Soviet politics and in culture, but it was one of the most important instruments of economy and development, particularly in the occupied Baltic republics. The Soviet ethnic policy affected everyday lives of ordinary Soviet citizens, as well all ethnic communities present in the Soviet territories. This lecture will analyze the consequences of the implemented Soviet ethnic policy in the Soviet Latvia after 1945 and its long-lasting effects in the recent history and current cultural and political developments in Latvia after 1991.

Our Russians: community of the Russian Old believers in Latvia. History and cultural heritage *Lect. I.Runce*

This lecture will deal with a history and cultural heritage of community of the Russian Old Believers in Latvia. Latvian Old Believers historically is a particular ethno-confessional group residing on the territory of contemporary Latvia since the second half of the 17th century. During many centuries there have arisen specific cultural features of the Latvian Old Believers, they have retained traditions and customs of their ancestors not only in their religious, but also in everyday lives. The Old Believers are an essential part of the society in Latvia; they have been taking an active part in the cultural, economic and political life not only during many centuries of their presence, but also in contemporary Latvia.

Public Diplomacy in 21st Century: what have Great Powers to say and what does it mean for their Neighbours?

Lect. S.Struberga

Lectures will cover such issues as contemporary theoretical debates about public diplomacy as part of foreign policy realized by state, different interpretations of this phenomenon as well as the most prominent instruments used by countries within their PD strategies. PD of Russia, EU, France, Germany and US will be analysed. Particular attention will be paid to the structure, means and messages of Russian Public Diplomacy in Baltic states in order to describe the ways how public diplomacy further Russian foreign policy goals in Baltics and potential consequences of such policies.

Latvian-Russian relations

Asoc.prof. T.Rostoks

Russia looms large in Latvia's foreign policy, but Latvian-Russian relations have been mostly dormant since 2014. There have only been a few high-level official visits of Latvian political leaders to Russia, and no sitting Russian prime minister or president has visited Latvia. The lecture seeks to unpack Latvia's complicated relationship with Russia. It covers the 30 years since Latvia regained independence from the Soviet Union. The lecture looks at military, economic, historical, and political aspects of Latvia's relations with Russia, while also paying attention on Russia's potential to mobilize its so-called compatriots in Latvia.

Deterring Russia in the Baltic region

Asoc.prof. T. Rostoks

The annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the onset of the military conflict in East Ukraine have fundamentally altered NATO's relations with Russia. Since then, NATO has tried to deter Russia from initiating military aggression against the Baltic states, also known as the most vulnerable members of the Alliance. NATO's efforts to deter Russia have included clearly communicating resolve to defend the Baltics against potential Russia's aggression, more and more focused military exercises, and placing NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battlegroups in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The lecture evaluates the main components of NATO's deterrence posture in the Baltic states, including Lithuania's, Latvia's, and Estonia's own military capabilities, the effects of NATO eFP tripwire forces, military mobility, and the combined military and economic power of the Alliance. Although deterrence has seemingly succeeded, deterrence successes are notoriously difficult to identify. The lecture also examines gaps in NATO's deterrence posture in the Baltic region.

Propaganda, Disinformation, Misinformation and Other Communication Instruments as a Part of Communications for Information Power Projections.

Lect. S. Struberga

The aim of this set of lecture and seminar is to inform students about the meaning of such fashionable and increasingly important concepts as propaganda, information campaigns, misinformation, and disinformation, as well as many others related to the toolbox of political communication of different state and non-state actors for gaining power in the 21st century. With a help of practical tasks and the use of interactive learning methods during seminars, the lecturer will promote the development of the skills to realize a practical analysis of political information campaigns. Emphasis will be put on specific case studies and experiences of the Baltic States as the borderlands of EU and Transatlantic community, and the Western hemisphere in general. Analytical tasks will help to apply the accumulated knowledge accumulated in practice.

Humour as a communication tool: the case of New Year's Eve television in Russia

Prof. Žaneta Ozoliņa

Humour entertains, but can also be used for propaganda purposes if it reaches a large audience and influences their emotional response to specific topics. Prof. Ž. Ozoliņa will present results of case study which focuses on humour as a comprehensive concept: elements of humour that serve a propagandistic function, including shared knowledge, the target audience, the perception of humour, the functions of humour, and the communication process, are identified and analysed in New Year's Eve programming on Russian television

Narratives and events and manipulation with social groups

Prof. J. Škilters

Humans are segmenting their perceptual and cognitive environment into objects -- in case of space, these are topologically constrained and extended parts of the world; in case of time these objects are events. Events consist of objects and their configurations that are modified according to certain principles that normally fit into a narrative structure. Event borders are sensitive to human perceptual and cognitive processing. In my talk i will briefly explain the experimental evidence and theoretical background of the work on event perception and will show that individuals and social groups are sensitive to events both as containing shared past (and therefore generating common ground) but also as units linking attention. In the latter case humans might be attentionally blind and therefore get manipulated if their attention is guided by one event sequence (one narrative structure) while there is a parallel one that is outside of the attention. Several demonstrations and results of experiments will be provided. Human sensitivity to events can be used to impact or manipulate also for political purposes.

Emotions (individual and social) and their impacts on large-scale groups

Prof. J.Škilters

In my presentation I will (a) show the complexity of the definitions that are applied to emotions within different theoretical frameworks in the 21st century, (b) explore differences between individual and collective (community level) emotional reactions, and (c) show some evidence that large-scale social groups can be strategically manipulated by coordinating their emotions (examples from recent cases in social network communication will be provided). Finally, some generalisations will be formulated emphasising the costs and benefits of emotional reactions in large-scale social groups but also the danger of emotional impacts in respect to political contexts will be highlighted.

Critical thinking and information analysis

Doc.A.Svece

The idea of critical thinking has a long history and it has always had a political aspect to it. Nevertheless, the contemporary perspective on critical thinking as part of a state's security setup is relatively recent. In order to achieve this goal, we should look at critical thinking as an array of tools that combine argumentative and analytic skills with rhetorical analysis, visual communication analysis, and media literacy.

Media literacy in a "post-truth" age

Lect. G.Spurava

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused *infodemic* described by the World Health Organization as overabundance of information, some accurate and some not. The stormy flow of rumours, conspiracy theories and other fabricated content related to corona virus in social media are mixed with journalistic news and significant number of official statements. People don't understand what is true and what is not and where to get reliable information. However, pandemic has just intensified and deepened information crisis that have been present longer time ago and is related to more profound transformations in media ecosystem. Changes mainly are caused by the rising dominance in information infrastructure of algorithm-based social media and search engines and can be related to the specific of their business logic. These transformations cultivate information disorder (misinformation, disinformation, malinformation), amplify erosion of truth and trust thus posing a serious threat to democracy and challenging human rights. What led to the "post-truth" era and erosion of truth and trust? Is media literacy a magic anti-erosion measure for trust and truth? Can it help citizens to address the information chaos and face problems created by *infodemic*? We are aiming to search for answers to these questions together.

LATO (Latvian Transatlantic Organization)

LATO is a non governmental organization established on March 21, 2000 with the aim of bringing together like-minded individuals who want to promote Latvia's membership in NATO. What does LATO do:

- distributes information and encourages discussions about questions relating to Latvia's defence and security policy;
- encourages research on Latvian and international security issues;
- organizes seminars, lectures, conferences, and other events;
- participates in forums on international security policy;
- cooperates with organizations in Latvia and abroad that support the aims of LATO.

<https://www.lato.lv/>

STRATCOM (NATO Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence)

NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence is multi-nationally constituted and NATO-accredited international military organization, which is not part of the NATO Command Structure, nor subordinate to any other NATO entity. The Centre provides comprehensive analyses, timely advice and practical support to the Alliance, designs programs to advance doctrine development, conducts research and experimentation to find practical solutions to existing challenges.

<https://stratcomcoe.org/>

The Parliament of Latvia (Saeima)

The Saeima is the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia. There are 100 MPs in the Saeima. Latvia is an independent democratic republic. The sovereign power of the State of Latvia is vested in the people of Latvia. The people of Latvia exercise their will by electing one hundred representatives to the Saeima. The Saeima and the people have the right to legislate, in accordance with the procedures of and to the extent provided for by the Constitution of Latvia (the Satversme). The current convocation – the 13th Saeima – started its work in 2018. The first Saeima was elected in 1922.

<https://www.saeima.lv/en>

Jūrmala

Jūrmala, a seaside city and resort in Latvia, is well known for its natural resources - curative mud, mineral waters and pine forest. Find out how you can enjoy a weekend or holiday in Jūrmala during the summer.

<https://www.latvia.travel/en/>

Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia

Just a half hour's drive from Riga's center, nestled in a pine forest, one of Europe's oldest and largest outdoor museums can be found alongside the shore of Lake Jugla. It is called the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia. Since its establishment in 1924, the museum has collected 118 historical buildings from all over Latvia. Riga and all of Latvia's regions, Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale, and Latgale, are represented here. The buildings have been set up to give visitors a sense of Latvia's rural landscape. At the Open-Air Museum you can find farmsteads of Latvian farmers, craftsmen, and fishermen. They all contain permanent exhibitions – household and working tools, interior furnishings – which characterize the time period, the district, and the owner's vocation.

<http://brivdabasmuzejs.lv/en/>

Latvian National Museum of Art

Latvian National Museum of Art is the largest depository of professional art in Latvia and takes an important place in collecting, preserving and popularizing the cultural values in Latvia and foreign countries. It regularly organizes art exhibitions, educational activities and cultural events.

<https://www.lnmm.lv/en>