The performativity of scale: the social construction of scale effects in Narva, Estonia

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Abstract. In their recent critique of the politics of scale literature, Marston, Jones, and Woodward (2005, “Human geography without scale” Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series 30 416 – 432) argue against the continued use of scale in human geography. While acknowledging that there are significant problems with scale as it has been conceptualized and operationalized in human geography, we argue that more, rather than less, attention needs to be paid to the political genealogy of scale ontologies, defined here as the historically contextualized analysis of the social production of scaled knowledge. As a first step in this direction, we develop a poststructural reframing using performativity, as an approach that explores the reiterative and citational practices through which scale effects are socially produced. We are especially concerned in this paper to examine the ways in which scale effects are produced and deployed as discursive devices that create timespace conjunctures and ruptures between place and identity. Using sites of memory as our analytical lens, we trace the citational practices that have naturalized and sedimented a series of scale effects in Narva, Estonia, and explore the consequences of these discursive rescalings for the articulation of place and identity.

Introduction

Scale, which is only just being discovered as a potentially useful tool for unpacking sociospatial relations outside the field of human geography, has recently been proclaimed so flawed a concept in its theorization and application that it should be written out of the discipline itself (Marston et al, 2005). Marston et al rightly note the great degree of confusion over the use of the term ‘scale’, as well as the tendency—even among those arguing that scales are socially constructed—to reify scales as relatively stable platforms existent in the world. Furthermore, Marston et al argue that, because hierarchical naming and thinking are such powerful, naturalizing devices that conflate scales both with levels of analysis (ie macro-, micro-) and with value judgments (ie superior, inferior), human geography would be better off if it did away with scale altogether (2005, page 420). Additionally, they adopt a social activist stance and assert that scale talking and scale thinking have helped to stabilize ‘top-down’ power relations as practised in places, and so it would be better for human geographers to eliminate the term from our analysis than to continue to prop up and breathe life into these hierarchical power structures.

Although there are problems with scale as it has been theorized and operationalized in human geographic research, there is a serious danger in the proposal to do away with scale as a subject of inquiry: writing scale out of human geography will help to hide the social constructedness of scales and the way they are discursively deployed

(1) The argument laid out in this paper has been greatly enhanced by both the wide-ranging responses to the paper by Marston et al (Collinge, 2006; Escobar, 2007; Hoefle, 2006; Jonas, 2006; Leitner and Miller, 2007), and the very detailed and illuminating reply by the authors (Jones et al, 2007).
to naturalize and sediment a set of sociospatial relationships through everyday practices. Indeed, excising scale as a subject of critical inquiry and research in human geography will almost certainly contribute to the stabilization of both scale ontologies and the hierarchical power relations partially based on them, in that scales will more easily return to the naturalized, taken-for-granted categories of analysis that they were perceived to be in the past. This is, of course, the very thing that Marston et al wish to eliminate from academic and political discourses and practices.

It is precisely because scale as epistemology—as a way of seeing, thinking, and organizing knowledge about the world around us—is such a powerful device in reifying and essentializing unequal power relations that scale deserves more, rather than less, attention than it has received to date. Following Foucault’s study of genealogy and Butler’s work on performativity that exposes the social constructedness of gender and sex (Butler, 1993; 1999), we argue for the systematic research and writing in human geography on what might be labeled the political genealogy of scale ontologies, an historically contextualized study of the naturalizing and sedimenting production of scaled knowledge, in order to expose the power relationships lying behind the truth claims about scales and scalar hierarchies. Much of the politics of scale literature to date has focused on debates surrounding ‘the nature of scale’ (ie arguments that scales are this and not that, and that scaling processes work like this and not that) rather than on constructing a political genealogy of scale ontologies which would seek to reconstruct the historical production of scaled knowledge, in order to understand how scales have come to be seen as real things in the world that are ‘like this and not that’. Although such a political genealogy of scale ontologies is clearly beyond the scope of the present paper, the goal here is to explore the performativity of scale as one element within this larger project. We argue that this is a much more productive response to the deficiencies found in the politics of scale literature to date than to abandon scale as a subject of critical inquiry in human geography.

The politics of scale

The strengths as well as the limitations within the politics of scale literature in human geography derive from its neo-Marxian political economy origins. There have been several surveys of this literature (Brenner, 2001; Cox, 1998; Delaney and Leitner, 1997; Herod and Wright, 2002; Howitt, 2003; Jonas, 1994; Marston, 2000; Paasi, 2004; Sheppard and McMaster, 2004; Smith, 1992; 1993; Swyngedouw, 1997; 2000), and it is not the purpose of the present paper to provide yet another one. Rather, we wish to offer an alternative poststructural framework for thinking through the utility of scale as a focus of critical research and analysis. Before beginning this, however, a brief overview of the political economy framing of scale is necessary.

Proceeding from Taylor and the revival of political geography in the Anglo-American academy through his adaptation of Wallerstein’s world economy model (Taylor, 1982; 1989), research into the politics of scale has increased markedly in human geography, and has recently also attracted growing attention from sociology, political science, and anthropology. Despite this proliferation, the overwhelmingly dominant mode of scale

(2) Although Marston et al themselves move in a different direction, this is something that they also advocate (2005, page 420), making our approaches more complementary than they may at first appear.

(3) Some of this work has already been done. As an example of work that contributes to a political genealogy of scale ontologies, see Larner and Walters (2004), who argue the need for a ‘genealogy of globalization’. Several of the works by Taylor, Smith, Swyngedouw, Marston, and Brenner—although written with other goals in mind—also help to fill in pieces of the ‘political genealogy of scale ontologies’ puzzle.
thinking and scale analysis continues to be framed using a political economy lens. This focus has not only provided the field of human geography with an understanding of the social constructedness of scales and their hierarchical arrangements (Brenner, 1998; 2001; Marston, 2000; Smith, 1993), but also emphasized the power of scaling practices to establish and stabilize unequal relations within the capitalist world system (Herod and Wright, 2002; Smith, 1984; 1992; Swyngedouw, 1997; 2000; Taylor, 1982). In addition to Taylor’s structuralist model of the global ‘scale of reality’, the state ‘scale of ideology’, and the urban ‘scale of experience’ and Smith’s historical analysis of the rise of the ‘nation-state’ as the dominant political scalar fix in the world capitalist economy, political economy approaches to scale politics have given us assessments of the temporary scalar fixes resulting from processes of scalar structuration that facilitate capitalist expansion (Brenner, 1998; 2001); power shifts toward ‘global’ and local actors, ‘glocalization’, and the new authoritarianism associated with the hollowing out of the state (Swyngedouw, 2000); and also the potentiality of scale politics to empower the disadvantaged through ‘scale jumping’ (Smith, 1993; Swyngedouw, 1997), the latter of which has also been employed productively in studies of environmental movements (Kurtz, 2002; Towers, 2000). The greatest contribution of this literature may be the conclusive evidence provided that scale is a socially constructed instrument of power.

The problems or limitations identified within the politics of scale literature also result from its political economy framing. First, much of the growing research on the politics of scale explores the process of globalization. However, rather than investigating the discourse of globalization as governmentality (Larner and Walters, 2004), the vast majority of this literature accepts the dominant status of globalization and the global scale, and is designed to assess their consequences at other geographic scales—particularly ‘the state’ and ‘the local’, but also ‘the community’, ‘the household’, and ‘the body’. The growth of the politics of scale literature alongside the rise of globalization as a way of seeing the world is not coincidental, but, rather, marks studies of scaled politics as a component part of the metanarrative of globalization. Academics engaged in researching the politics of scale associated with globalization—even if many are pointedly against the process itself—are partially responsible for the reconfiguration of power/knowledge around the reification of the world as a globalizing place.

Second, the vast majority of politics of scale research continues to focus on capital—labor relations. When relations outside the workplace are examined, these studies tend to treat sociocultural relations as appendages to capitalist production, and frame such culturally focused research as the scaled politics of social reproduction. Even Marston, whose 2000 paper on the social construction of scale was written in large part as a critique of the dominance of capital—labor relations within the politics of scale literature and as an effort to add a sociocultural dimension, can only conceive of gender relations and ‘the household as scale’ in the realm of social reproduction and consumption. While we agree with Marston that sociocultural relations outside the capitalist workplace deserve a great deal more attention than they have received by those writing on the politics of scale, the problem goes deeper than this: within the politics of scale literature sociocultural relations and cultural politics can be conceived of only as ‘social reproduction and consumption’, because of the political economy framing of the research. More poststructural understandings of the cultural politics of place, and of the power of scale as a discursive practice deployed to reconfigure the

(4) See also Marston (2004, page 171), where she states that her interest in the roles of gender and the household in the social production of scale is in gaining “a better grasp of the totality of the political economy of contemporary capitalism—especially the ways in which social reproduction is tied up with production (particularly through the relationship between capital and all forms of labor).”
intersections of power, place, and identity, are for the most part absent both from theoretical works and from empirical studies of scale.\(^{(5)}\)

Additionally, although one of the main objectives of political economy theorizing about scales is to denaturalize them by emphasizing their social constructedness, much of this literature ends up reifying scales as the end products of social construction—as things in the world and as the actors that matter. This undoubtedly derives from the Marxian foundation of political economy with its emphasis on materiality, and consequently from the more structuralist understanding of social construction as a process that produces solid, relatively stable constructs ‘out there’. This is most evident in the work of Smith, where scales though socially constructed are materially produced as things in the world, even if they undergo processes of dynamic reconstruction over time.

“The construction of scale is not simply a spatial solidification or materialization of contested social forces and processes .... Scale is an active progenitor of specific social processes ... scale both contains social activity and at the same time provides an already partitioned geography within which social activity takes place .... It is geographical scale that defines the boundaries and bounds the identities around which control is exerted and contested” (Smith, 1993, page 101, emphasis in original).

Although Smith’s thinking on the politics of scale has developed significantly since 1993, he continues to define scales “as materially real frames of social action ... geographical scale is socially produced as simultaneously a platform and container of certain kinds of social activity”, and as “the spatial resolution of contradictory social forces ... of competition and cooperation” (2003, page 228). Similarly, Swyngedouw’s structural approach conceives of scales as the “arenas around which sociospatial power choreographies are enacted and performed” (2004, page 132). And, even though for Swyngedouw (2004, page 133) “scales are never fixed, but are perpetually redefined, contested and restructured in terms of their extent, content, relative importance and interrelations”, scales nonetheless are fixed as material realities.\(^{(6)}\) This ‘reification of scales’ problem is true even of Brenner (1998; 2001), whose scalar structuration approach continues to view scales as things in the world whose very existence is not questioned, even if they are things whose power positions vis-à-vis other scales are variable and dependent on the vantage point of the viewer.\(^{(7)}\) This treatment of scales results not only in the reification of scales as units of analysis, but also in discourses of scales as the actors that matter in the world. Scalar fixes—the stabilization of hierarchical power relations among scales—ultimately depend on the fixity of scales or on scales as fixtures, as known essences ‘out there’. Even though reconceived as socially

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\(^{(5)}\) See Silvern (1999) and Sidorov (2000) for exceptions to this general rule. In addition to this, explorations within feminist geography have also been more attendant to sociocultural place-identities and to the scale talk and scale politics that construct and reconfigure them. See, for example, Silvey’s (2004) review of gender, difference, international migration, and the politics of scale, as well as Merrill’s (2004) assessment of the politics of scale associated with racialized cultural politics in Italy, though the latter continues to use political economy phraseology to frame her study. Feminist geographers have also devoted significant attention to the performative ways in which the scale of the body is socially constructed, though much of this work does not explicitly engage with the politics of scale (see, for example, Longhurst, 2000; 2001).

\(^{(6)}\) See Collinge (2005) for a detailed poststructural critique of Swyngedouw’s work on scales and scaling processes.

\(^{(7)}\) This is one of the downsides to Brenner’s insistence that studies of scale must focus on the interrelationship among a ‘plurality’ of scales rather than on the social construction of ‘singular’ scales, which he sees as more appropriately a study of place-making, or deterritorialization and reterritorialization (2001). By taking the focus off the social construction of scale per se, there is a tendency to take scales themselves—or at least the ones that matter to Brenner—for granted.
constructed and dynamically changing, scales take on the appearance of naturalized, sedimented ontological categories.

There are several ways of redressing this issue short of abandoning scale altogether. One approach would follow Brubaker’s admonition to view and study categories such as nation, ethnicity, race, and identity not as units of analysis or things in the world, but as categories of practice, or ways of seeing the world (Brubaker, 1996; Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Brubaker et al, 2004). Such an alteration in perspective decisively undermines the tendency, even if unintentional, to treat scales as ontological ‘categories of analysis’, since it forces the researcher to focus his or her inquiry on the discursive practices through which scales become.

This approach conforms to Jones’s treatment of scale as epistemology, as a set of iterative and contested representational practices (Jones, 1998). She concludes that “scale may thus be understood as situated relationally within a community of producers and readers who give the practice of scale meaning” (page 26). Approaching scale as epistemology forces us to attend to the representational practices and the actors who practice them—that is, on scale as a category of practice, as well as on the sociohistorical contexts that work to naturalize and sediment scales in the popular imagination and thus give the representational practices of scale/scaling their power.

Jones’s approach to scale as epistemology, and especially her view of scale politics as representational practice, fits well with our findings from fieldwork in the borderlands of postsocialist space. Scales do not exist as ‘things out there’ that stabilize political, economic, or cultural relations. Rather, scales are performed by sets of actors through the scalar stances they take within particular sociospatial contexts as they engage in the politics of everyday life. Our conclusion from fieldwork supports Collinge’s view that “a system of nested scales does not ... inhere as such within terra firma but is performed through the practices that comprise actant-networks” (2006, page 249). This shift in analytical focus from that found in political economy approaches—from scales that are socially constructed as the actors that matter, to scale as a category of practice performed by actors/actants—is not subtle, and places attention squarely where we argue it belongs: on the enacted discourses through which scales become.

The performativity of scale

While one poststructural pathway to follow—and the one chosen by Collinge (2006)—is an actor network theory (ANT) or post-ANT framework, we have opted instead to assess scale using a performativity approach. There are several reasons for this choice. First, reframing scale as epistemology and attending to actors performing scale is well-aligned with Butler’s treatment of performativity as “the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names”, and as the “reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains” (Butler, 1993, page 2). Performativity does shift the analytical focus from scale discourses and practices as a form of representational or identity politics, to citational practices and the scale effects they produce as a process of signification. One of the major changes necessitated with this shift is in the way agency is conceptualized, not as a question of choices individuals have as to whether or not to participate in the process of signification, but rather “as a question of how signification and resignification work.”

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\[(8)\] Moore (2008), whose work on the more cognitive approach to scale follows Brubaker et al (2004) and their treatment of ‘ethnicity as cognition’, as well as the cognitive approach found in Lakoff (1987), was instrumental in drawing our attention to the applicability of the ‘categories of analysis/categories of practice’ distinction, emphasized by Brubaker, to the politics of scale.
Since “signification is not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition ... ‘agency’, then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition. If the rules governing signification not only restrict, but enable the assertion of alternative domains of cultural intelligibility ... then it is only within the practices of repetitive signifying that a subversion of identity becomes possible” (Butler, 1999, pages 183–185, emphasis in original). This does not mean that conscious efforts to subvert or displace identity are foreclosed, as some critics have suggested (Nelson, 1999; Rose, 1999). Although there may be no choice as to whether or not to repeat the discursive practices themselves, there is room for conscious decision making about “how to repeat” (Butler, 1999, page 189). While fully autonomous agentic acts are not possible, more situated semireflexive strategies are.

Second, performativity as an antifoundational approach to identity is particularly well suited to the need to denaturalize and de-essentialize scales as things in the world. Performativity views social construction as an ongoing “process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter” (Butler, 1993, page 9). Butler’s work focuses not only on the practices that naturalize and sediment the boundary, fixity, and surface of the sexed and gendered subject, but also on the “gaps and fissures” that open up to contest or challenge, and reconfigure, those boundary, fixity, and surface effects (page 10):

“As a sedimented effect of a reiterative or ritual practice, sex acquires its naturalized effect, and yet, it is also by virtue of this reiteration that gaps and fissures are opened up as the constitutive instabilities in such constructions, as that which escapes or exceeds the norm, as that which cannot be wholly defined or fixed by the repetitive labor of that norm.”

Here, social construction is only ever a becoming, and subject positions such as sex and gender are not constructed as things in the world, but rather come to appear as such through the reiterative practices that performatively naturalize and sediment these identification processes in our sociospatial imaginings through the boundary, fixity, and surface effects produced. The power of social norms as well as the power to contest and resist such norms are not exerted coercively from the top down or mobilized from the bottom up, but exist and circulate through the reiterative practices themselves. Indeed, within Butler’s performativity approach reiterative practices are power. “There is no power that acts, but only a reiterated acting that is power in its persistence and instability” (1993, page 9). We argue that scales, as well as identities, materialize through the repetition of sets of citational practices that stabilize as well as challenge the boundary, fixity, and surface effects that materialize.

Third, performativity offers a clearer vantage point to explore the ways in which scale talk and scale politics insert themselves into two other performative categories of central concern to this research: identification processes and place making. As Collinge noted in his summation of Swyngedouw’s work (2005, page 203), “The term ‘scale’ stands in-between society and space both as a dividing line that attempts to secure these as distinct spheres that interact dialectically, and as a conduit that subverts this distinction and mediates their semantic confusion” (emphasis in original). The daily citational practices that naturalize and sediment scale effects also at the same time produce ruptures as well as conjunctures in the intersectionality of place and identity. Below, we examine this deployment of scale in the case of Narva, Estonia.

While performativity as elaborated on by Butler was explicitly designed to understand the social construction of sex as a category of practice, it has been productively employed to help think through the social construction of other identity categories such as race and ethnicity (e.g. Bell, 1999; Mahtani, 2002), as well as the social construction of spaces and places (Gregson and Rose, 2000; Harris, 2006; Secor, 2003;
Thomas, 2004; 2005) and geographies of resistance (Rose, 2002). Gregson and Rose are particularly useful here for working through the performativity of space that occurs alongside the performativity of identity (2000, page 441):

“performances do not take place in already existing locations: the City, the bank, the franchise restaurant, the straight street. These ‘stages’ do not preexist their performances, waiting in some sense to be mapped out by performances; rather, specific performances bring these spaces into being.”

The performativity of scale focuses attention not on the production of scales and scalar hierarchies as end products of social construction, but on “the reiterative and citational practices by which discourse produces the effect” (Butler, 1993, page 2) of scale. Instead of treating scales as things in the world that (inter)act, a framing that all too easily reproduces the scale ontologies that most analysts of scale argue against, performativity approaches scale as a naturalized way of seeing the world, and explores the enacted discourses that over time work to produce ‘scale effects’. In the process, hierarchical interscalar relationships are socially constructed for each particular naturalized and sedimented scalar materialization. The performativity of scale keeps the focus on scale as epistemology, on the actors that engage in ‘scale talk’ and ‘scale politics’ through the scalar stances they take, and on the naturalization and sedimentation of scalar norms as a tactic of governmentality that is both sustained and undermined through the reiterative process. In other words, the performativity of scale attends not only to the practices that socially construct scaled ways of thinking and seeing, but also to the ‘gaps and fissures’ that destabilize these scalar epistemologies.

The performativity of scale is perhaps most easily seen in the case of globalization as a discursive practice producing the effect of ‘the global scale’, which has become naturalized and sedimented as a real thing existent in the world in the popular socio-spatial imaginary of at least the population living in core economies. The case of ‘the global’ as a scale effect of the reiterative and citational practices of globalization discourse is especially striking, because it has occurred relatively rapidly. According to Larner and Walters (2004, page 502), “it was not until the early 1990s that the term ‘globalization’ began to gain widespread currency.” Despite its recency, ‘the global scale’ has become a nearly unavoidable representational trope used to describe and even to explain—in a taken-for-granted way—the geopolitical, economic, and sociocultural changes occurring in the world today. ‘Global studies’ have replaced area studies as the primary scale of social scientific teaching, research, and analysis on many campuses across the United States, and ‘global trends’ and phenomena have become dominant framing devices for the news media, for grant and fellowship competitions, and for policy analysts and political decision makers. The discourse of globalization—naturalized as the way the world works today—has reiterative power to produce ‘the global’ as a scale effect in other ways as well, as evidenced by representatives of transnational corporations seeking to open up new labor and consumer markets in the underdeveloped regions of the world with the argument that ‘the world is a globalizing place, and you’d better get on board or you’ll be left behind’. This is an effective citational practice that has led to the rapid proliferation of export processing zones, which in turn allow transnational corporations increasingly to expand their operations ‘globally’.

As discussed above, much of the contemporary debate in human geography regarding the politics of scale concerns what is and what is not considered to be a ‘scale question’. Approaching scale as performative avoids the unnecessary and unproductive debates about whether analyses of scale should focus on the social construction of ‘singular’ scales (eg the state, the global, the local) or on ‘plural’ interscalar relations (Brenner, 2001; Marston, 2000; Marston and Smith, 2001). The singular vs plural stance
regarding the politics of scale dissolves when we think through the epistemological ways in which scales and scalar hierarchies are socially constructed—or come to matter—by a wide variety of actors and the scalar stances they discursively practice in everyday life.\(^{(9)}\) From the perspective of performativity, both are critical to the larger project of reconstructing a political genealogy of scale ontologies. The reiterative practices that produce the effect of scale and the actors that practice them through the scalar stances they take in their engagement with the politics of everyday life are crucial if we are to uncover the process through which particular scales have come to be naturalized and sedimented in the popular sociospatial imagination. The reiterative practices that produce the fixity effect of distinctive hierarchical arrangements of ‘the scales that matter’—and even the citational practices that produce the confusion and conflation of scale effects with levels (macro-, micro-) and/or values (superior, inferior)—are all equally significant subjects of inquiry within the analytical treatment of scale as performative. Indeed, these scalar confusions and conflations do not result from terminological slippage or slipshoddiness so much as they occur as part of the production of power/knowledge associated with the performativity of scale. A particularly important research project would be to examine the historical constitution of knowledge through which such confusions and conflations (eg the global, the macro, superior) came to be, and it would tell us a great deal more about scale politics than do the contemporary debates with which the field is engaged. If we view scale as performative, no singular construction of scale is possible, both because scales are not made but practised, and because all reiterative and citational practices that produce scale effects can be performed only within a multiscalar discursive field.

Through the performativity of scale, it is also possible to more fully explore the mosaic interconnectivity of scalar hierarchies (Brenner, 2001). Focusing on the scalar stances actors take in each particular social construction of scale—on why they take the stances they do, and to what effect—allows for a much more historically contextualized and nuanced exploration of the mosaic interconnectivity among scalar hierarchies, which when more fully elaborated will provide the field with a political genealogy of scale ontologies that it currently lacks.

Seeing scale as performative allows us to think through the ways in which scale is performed in and through an individual place such as a border town or a specific site within it. Our own fieldwork from Narva, Estonia (as we discuss below), supports Collinge’s recent conclusion that “There are as many globals and locals, and as many ways of relating these to one another, as there are sites that project such objects, and the relationships between such relations—between scale schema—is not resolved in advance in favor of consistency” (2006, page 249).

In order to demonstrate the utility of a performativity of scale approach, in the following section we explore the reiterative and citational practices producing scale effects in the city of Narva, Estonia. The cultural politics of memory serves as the focus of the case studies discussed, both because ‘memory work’ has been a highly politically charged arena within which scale is discursively practiced, and in order to demonstrate the utility of a poststructural analysis of the ‘cultural politics of scale’ that goes beyond the political economy constraints of capitalist production/social reproduction found in the vast majority of the current politics of scale literature.\(^{(10)}\) In the empirical analysis

\(^{(9)}\) Following Butler (1993), we are using ‘matter’ here to refer both to the social construction of boundary, fixity, and surface effects that are the matter of scales, and to the relative importance of scales vis-à-vis one another in multiscalar schema.

\(^{(10)}\) Sidorov’s historically contextualized study of national monumentalization in the case of Moscow’s Christ the Savior Cathedral (2000) provides another excellent example of the scaled discursive practices through which the cultural politics of memory unfolds.
that follows, we trace through the reiterative practices used by actors taking particular scalar stances as they engage in ‘memory work’ in Narva, and the impact that scale effects have had on identification processes and place making in this city during the postsoviet period.

The performativity of scale in Narva, Estonia
Since independence from the USSR, scale talk and scale politics have become ubiquitous features of life in the postsocialist borderlands, and this is nowhere more apparent than in Narva. Situated in the northeastern corner of Estonia on the political border with Russia (figure 1), Narva is in many ways on the epistemological ‘frontlines’ of scale, and is one of the central nodes where scale effects are socially constructed and contested, where Narvan-ness, Estonian-ness, Russian-ness, European-ness, Western-ness, and Eastern-ness are made, unmade, rank ordered, and rehierarchized. A wide variety of actors in Narva—especially those engaged in ‘memory work’—have adopted scalar stances as a central feature of their daily political lives.

The performativity of scale is nothing new in Narva. This place and its people were the focal point for scale talk and scale politics many times in the past. This was certainly true following World War II and the forcible incorporation of Estonia into the USSR, when actors promoting sovietization discursively scaled Narva as a proletarian international city. During the soviet era, the inter-republican border drawn between two nominally sovereign states did not exist on the ground, Narva–Ivangorod developed as an ‘international’ transborder city, and the population in its reiterative practices eliminated the border from daily life, producing a transnational ‘space of flows’ in the borderlands.

The new scalar discourses and practices aimed to internationalize not only the place but also the identity of the people living there. Narva was devastated by the war, and nearly all of the distinctive Swedish baroque architecture had been destroyed. The mostly Estonian population of prewar Narva had been evacuated from the city by

Figure 1. Map of Estonia.
the Nazi army near the end of the war, and as part of the internationalization campaign
soviet policies prohibited the return of the prewar population and supported the
in-migration of young non-Estonians (for the most part ethnically Russian) from
the surrounding soviet republics, who came to rebuild the city after the war. The
near-total de-Europeanization and de-Estonianization of the city set the stage for an
especially rapid sovietization and internationalization in Narva. The changing appear-
ance and importance of Narva were attributed to the “voluntary labor of the soviet
peoples, who were building communism” through their efforts (Krivosheev and Mikhailov,
1968, page 53).

Narva’s history was similarly rewritten to highlight the socialist international
credentials of the people and place. In particular, the labor movement and strikes at
Krenholm Textile Manufaturing in 1872 were made the focus of research, publications,
and a series of monuments erected during the soviet era. A monument to the strike
was constructed in honor of the 100th anniversary in 1972. A statue was erected and a
street and house of culture were named in honor of Vasilii Gerasimov, referred to as
a “glorious proletarian warrior” (Krivosheev, 1983, pages 52–53). Avgust Abel’, the
‘embodiment of internationalism’ who participated in the socialist democratic party
and in the civil war on the side of the Red Army, and Amalia Kreisberg, a Krenholm
labor leader and socialist democratic organizer in the early 20th century, were both
honored with statues (pages 53–54). A monument was built to celebrate the 50th
anniversary of the Estland Workers’ Commune that was declared in Narva in 1918,
and the city’s history as the first capital of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic was
also marked in calendars and celebrated.

This ‘memory work’—bringing to the surface and making visible Narva’s proletar-
ian international past—was coupled with numerous monuments to Lenin, including
the largest one that stood in the main city square, the sovietization of street and
building names, and the cultural events to celebrate the socialist international past
of the city. Even when presoviet buildings were restored, they tended to serve as sites
for internationalization. For example, Narva Town Hall—built during the 17th century
and restored in the early 1960s—was utilized as the palace of young pioneers
(Krivosheev, 1983, page 40). The transformation of the city’s everyday memoryscape
worked to sediment an international proletarian sociospatial imaginary in Narva.

The internationalization of Narva’s memorialized landscape was in turn used to
internationalize the population throughout the USSR. Krenholm Textile Manufactur-
ing, in particular—both as historic seedbed of the socialist labor movement in Narva
and Estonia, and as one of the leading textile manufacturing enterprises in the
USSR—was listed as the second most highly recommended tourist excursion in Narva,
followed by Narva hydropower and the Baltic power station, which had both become
emblems of communism’s successful ‘conquest of nature’ (Krivosheyev and Mikhailov,
1968). (11)

The reiterative and citational practices producing socialist internationalism as the
dominant scale effect in Narva rehierarchized alternative enactments of scale. Though
visible representations of the city’s Estonian and European past remained, the daily
citational practices that amplified Narva’s socialist international identity tended to
marginalize or silence those alternative sites of memory that could not become part
of the internationalizing city. The reiterative practices that socially constructed Estonia
as a scale effect in Narva were particularly dampened during this period. However,
the performativity of scale during the soviet era also created gaps and fissures that
partially destabilized proletarian internationalism as a scale effect in Narva. For example,

(11) On the conquest of nature theme in the USSR, see Weiner (1988).
the population that migrated to the city after WWII may have been seen as agents of sovietization; and to a degree they were. However, many of the young people who migrated to Narva—especially from the 1960s onwards—came not so much to build communism, as to improve the possibilities for their own lives and those of their children. Through the everyday discursive practices that constituted daily life, many of them underwent a localization in their own sense of place and identity. This ‘Narvanization’ was described in a wide variety of ways during interviews we conducted among the generation that migrated to Narva following the war, perhaps none more poignantly than the statement that “We came here to rebuild Narva and were made into Narvans in the process.”(12) Not surprisingly, following the breakup of the USSR, even though actors representing Estonia as a nation-state enacted a series of exclusionary policies and practices (eg citizenship and language laws, employment practices) in the hopes that ‘the Russians’ would leave (Hallik, 2002, pages 68 – 70), most of Narva’s residents remained. During interviews conducted between 2002 and 2005, Narvan-ness was the strongest and most widespread sense of place identity expressed, over and above any attachments residents may feel toward Russia, or St Petersburg, or to the places from which they or their parents or grandparents originated.

The postsoviet performativity of scale in Narva
Urmo's daily citational practices produce the scale effect of Estonia in Narva. Urmo grew up in a small town near Otepaa in the southern part of the country, an ethnically homogenous Estonia region. After graduating from Tartu University, he was asked if he would be interested in coming to Narva and working on the project to create Estonian Home. Because, as he says, "I like extremes!", he accepted the position and became director of the NGO whose mission is to bring Estonia to Narva.

When we first met Urmo, he was full of enthusiasm for the project, and it appeared to fully absorb him and his identity. He was not only in charge of the visitor center, where Narvans could come and find materials for Estonian-language courses and testing, citizenship applications and procedures, and other Estonian state laws, rules, and regulations that governed their daily lives. He was also responsible for the production of Estonian-language teaching materials for elementary schoolchildren as well as for adults, and for helping to write and produce most of the cultural and historical texts about pre-soviet Narva that were published by the college. Beyond this, he was director of the project to produce the Virtual Narva film (2003), which was created as a means of introducing non-Estonians in Narva to their city’s presoviet and pre-Russian past. Urmo was most personally involved by his and the center’s involvement with schoolchildren, and he was working towards the creation of a youth center for children aged 6 – 12. He also was responsible for the 2003 children’s drawing competition “My Home Estonia”, an intriguing exercise in producing Estonia through mental maps.

Urmo’s vision for the integration of Narva into Estonia differed from that of the Integration Foundation, which he saw as a more one-way Estonianization program to promote Estonian-language learning and the teaching of Estonian history to non-Estonians. To Urmo, the integration of Narva into Estonia had to involve not only bringing Estonia to Narva, but also introducing Narva to the rest of Estonia, so that Estonians would come to accept the place and its people as a part of the nation-state. He not only produced materials about Narva for the rest of the country, but also created a student exchange program that brought around 600 schoolchildren from other parts of the country to Narva in 2002.

(12) From interviews conducted in Narva during May – July 2002.
There was a central irony in Urmo's becoming the embodiment of Estonia as a scale effect in Narva: he himself was not very well integrated into the daily life of the city. Urmo admitted to us that the work was very hard, and that it was also very difficult to live in Narva. We rarely saw him out in public, unless it was at an Estonian cultural event sponsored by Estonian Home. The other organizations dealing with youth and social integration—whose representatives took a more pronounced local scalar stance—did not work with Urmo and Estonian Home. A member of the Narva Youth Center explained the reason: “They represent Estonia.”

The difficulties of performatively producing Estonia as a scale effect in Narva—of engaging in these daily citational practices as part of a thin social network in a setting where the vast majority of the public is producing a different scale effect—wore on Urmo. Over time, his stance shifted from overwhelming enthusiasm for bringing Estonia to Narva to blaming the locals for the limited integration that was occurring, to finally blaming the state and the approach of the Integration Program itself, which he concluded could not work in Narva. During our last visit to Narva in summer 2007, we learned that Urmo had left Narva and Estonian Home to take a position directing the Cultural Education Department of Tartu University’s Viljandi Culture Academy, which “sees its raison d'être in sustaining and developing the values of Estonian national culture” (http://www.kultuur.edu.ee/219478). Viljandi is near the more ethnically Estonian region where Urmo grew up; it appears that Urmo has lost his taste for ‘extremes’.

Reta [fictitious name] embodies ‘the local’ in Narva. She was born here, and her ‘we’ referent is to Narvans. “Your homeland is where you are born.” She keeps up with the news in the city, and is deeply concerned with events taking place at Krenholm Textile Manufacturing, where she has worked since 1981. But Reta is most interested and involved with her circle of family and friends. During the soviet period this circle included family members who lived across the border in Ivangoerd, but with Estonia’s independence and the materialization of the border, it is now too expensive for Reta to get a visa, and so the border has shrunk the local. In her opinion, soviet times were better—jobs, apartments, camps for kids were more plentiful. And she didn’t have to work as long or as hard, so she had more time to spend with friends and family, and to spend time at her dacha in Narva Joesuu. Now she has to work much harder, doing the same work that two would have done before. She’s afraid that physically she won’t be able to work until retirement age.

Reta’s father was ethnically Estonian, and her mother was Russian. She received an Estonian passport automatically. Her husband was also born in Narva, but has an alien passport—so does her daughter’s husband. Most of her coworkers at Krenholm also have red (Russian) or grey (alien) passports. The divisive effects of the border and citizenship are the most prominent ways in which Estonia materializes in her life. Reta’s upbringing was culturally and linguistically Russian, and she considers herself to be Russian. She refers to Estonians as ‘they’, doesn’t follow Estonian events and can’t even say who the president of Estonia is (though she laughs and says she knows who the Russian president is, and of course who the American president is!) She has a car, but travels for the most part locally, though she does make a trip to the capital once a year. But Reta doesn’t like Tallinn, it’s too big. Nevertheless, she thinks of herself as fully integrated, because she’s fully at home in Narva, fully a part of local Narvan life. In this way, integration to Reta is itself a set of iterative practices that produces the local as a scale effect.

Reta sees Europe as a powerful but negative other. She is most concerned that rich Europeans coming in and buying up property in resort areas like Narva Joesuu will drive prices up too high for Narvans, especially for pensioners. She fears that, as a consequence of EU accession, “blacks and arabs” will immigrate to Estonia and out compete locals for jobs and housing in Narva. Reta also sees EU membership as the entry of Czech and Polish workers coming to Narva working for 15 000 Estonian Krones/month, while Narvans
receive only 5000. For her Europe also means local friends and relatives moving away—several people she knew went to countries in the EU to work as unskilled labor in order to earn money to buy land, cars, etc. In Reta’s opinion, “only there is Europe needed.” The ultimate irony of Europe’s shadow extending to Narva—that Narvans have to leave home for Europe to earn enough money to be able to afford to live in Narva!

During the postsoviet period, the citational practices that produced socialist internationalism as a scale effect in Narva came abruptly to a halt, and have been replaced by a performativity that has worked to naturalize and sediment Estonia and Estonian-ness, and Europe and European-ness, in Narva. Estonia and Europe as preeminent scale effects in Narva have complemented rather than competed with one another, and the discursive practices that produce Europe in Narva have, if anything, enhanced Estonia’s dominant scalar position. Overall, the rescaling of Narva as Estonia, as Europe—and as not-socialist international, not-Russian—has both stretched Estonia and Europe out to Narva and pulled Narva into ‘the West’, and exteriorized Russia and Russian-ness from the postsoviet timespace of Narva. Here, the performativity of scale is enacted in ways that work to separate people from place, and, ironically, it is frequently the local residents themselves in and through their daily citational practices who create the conditions for their own displacement, as in a variety of ways they engage in the social construction of Estonia and Europe in Narva. However, this position as abject other or constitutive outside has also created gaps and fissures that have destabilized this new performativity of scale.

A brief survey of the reiterative and citational practices that have worked to naturalize and sediment Estonia, Europe, and ‘the West’ as scale effects in Narva indicates the power of ‘memory work’ in the performativity of scale. Actors working to Estonianize and Europeanize Narva first desovietized the city’s memoryscape. The first monuments to go were those of Lenin: the main statue was removed from the city square and relocated inside the walls of Narva Fortress—built during Denmark’s rule in the 13th century. This is the last Lenin statue remaining in Estonia, but its physical relocation and symbolic rescaling from a socialist international monument to a kitschy local tourist attraction metaphorically captured and subordinated to Europe has stripped the statue of its former powerful position (figure 2).

Desovietization eliminated not only several soviet-era monuments, but also street names, names of buildings and schools, flags, banners, and posters from the cultural landscape of the city. Memorials to the Red Army’s victory in WWII were not removed, but there has been a recent effort to renarrate their meaning from monuments celebrating the liberation of Narva and Estonia from fascism to monuments marking the onset of soviet occupation.

The desovietization of Narva occurred in two other ways. First, sites that were the centerpieces of proletarian internationalism have been discursively transformed or demoted in Narva’s memoryscape. For example, Krenholm Textile Manufacturing, which during soviet times had a museum and was one of the principal tourist sites in the city, has closed its museum and no longer gives tours. Indeed, as of 1996 it was purchased by a Swedish transnational company, and has itself been transformed from an icon of socialist internationalism to a bit player in global capitalism.

(13) Skilled workers came to Narva during the year of the interview in order to upgrade the machinery at Narva Electric—the shale oil burning power station that produces most of Estonia’s electricity.

(14) One city official represented the relocation of this Lenin statue to the castle grounds, as an alternative to its demolition, as a smart compromise between the need to desovietize Narva’s city center and the need to be attentive to the sentiments of local residents, for whom placing flowers at Lenin’s statue on certain dates remained an important social practice.
Other monuments to local proletarian international heroes such as Gerasimov remain a part of Narva’s memoryscape, but are largely ignored and have become a part of the derelict soviet international landscape. Second, new monuments commemorating the soviet bombardment and destruction of the city, the deportation staged at the Narva train station, and the loss of selective architectural landmarks all construct a counternarrative of the soviet era as Narva’s and Estonia’s ‘darkest hour’. Narva is literally blanketed with these monuments, to such an extent that one resident commented that the city now “looks like a graveyard”. (15)

Actors adopting a nation-state stance are engaged in a complex set of reiterative and citational practices that produce Estonia as a dominant scale effect in Narva. The materialization of the sovereign state is most apparent in the transformation of the border from a space of flows to a hardened barrier, which has been accompanied by an elaborate network of passport controls, customs rules and regulations, border guard stations and office buildings, gates, fences, and other paraphernalia to clog or halt altogether movement between Estonia and Russia. Narva Castle—situated opposite Ivangorod Fortress on the Russian side of the border—is featured as a cultural symbol of the ancient and long-standing animosity between Estonia and Russia, and between Estonian-ness and Russian-ness. Although Narva Castle was built by Denmark more than two centuries before Ivangorod Fortress,(16) Estonian texts portray Russia as the aggressor and Estonia in a defensive posture. For example, a recent Estonian Tourist Board brochure states that: “The fortress at Narva was long an important defense for the Estonian territories, and even now stares ominously across the river at the opposing Russian fortress of Ivangorod, a mere cannon shot away” (Estonian Tourist Board, 2004, page 9). Despite the fact that these two fortresses have been on the same side of the border for most of the last 500 years, Narva Castle ‘facing off’ against Ivangorod Fortress on opposite banks of the Narova River provides actors taking a nation-state

(15) From an interview conducted in Narva in July 2004.
(16) Narva Castle—largely destroyed during WWII, was rebuilt by the USSR, and its museum finally opened in December 1986 (Efendiev, 1990, page 23).
stance with an extremely effective naturalized image of the ancient animosity between Estonia and its Other (figure 3).

Narva Castle as the symbolic centerpiece of Estonia’s need to defend itself against Russia and Russian-ness is complemented in downtown Narva by the Aleksandri Lutheran Church. Aleksandri Church—the largest Lutheran church in Estonia—has attracted a good deal of attention, and is being renovated (now with EU support) and used to stage several Estonian cultural events annually—from nationally renowned choirs and pianists coming to give concerts to the Fellini play Prova d’Orchestra staged in the church and conducted in the Estonian language (Orkestriproov 2004). The performativity of Estonia as the scale that matters in and through such sites is discursively practiced in ways that naturalize and sediment Estonia and Estonian-ness, and at the same time denaturalize and displace Russia and Russian-ness in Narva.\(^{(17)}\)

The construction of Estonia as a scale effect in Narva also occurs in and through the education system, including Narva College, through organizations such as Estonian Home and Pro Narva, and through the staging of Estonian cultural events and festivals. The new textbooks used in Narva—written in Russian but published in Tallinn—project a distinctively Estonian vision of history and geography (Toomet, 1997; Tynisson and Pikhel, 2000). The use of these textbooks in the classrooms of Narva and other majority Russian regions is not intended to Estonianize students so much as to put them in their proper place vis-à-vis Estonia and Estonian-ness—as members of the constitutive outside. Publications on the city’s cultural monuments and history, as well as tourist guidebooks that have come out since independence, similarly work to naturalize and essentialize Estonia as a scale effect in Narva (Raik and Toode, 2004).

\(^{(17)}\) Of course, there remain many sites where Narvan-ness and Russian-ness continue to be discursively practiced, and a number of sites such as the Narva Castle grounds where Narvan-ness, Russian-ness, Estonian-ness, and European-ness are all enacted—on occasion at one and the same time.
The organization ‘Estonian Home in Narva’ was created to integrate Narva into Estonia, both by bringing Estonia and Estonian-ness to Narva, and by improving the image of Narva in the rest of Estonia. According to an Estonian Home brochure, “If we look from Narva, such places as Tartu, Voru, Valga, Paide, leave alone Saaremaa, appear to be far away. And they seem even farther if we look from the opposite direction. There is a rhetorical question often asked: is Narva an Estonian town? One thing is for sure—Narva is a town in Estonia. Since Estonia seems to be too far away, there is no progress in studying the language among the local people... In a town where the ratio between Russians and Estonians is as it is in Narva, the Estonian language and culture have to come and introduce themselves” (Eesti Kodu Narvas, 2002).

This positioning of Narva and Narvans as the constitutive outside—interior to yet far away from Estonia and Estonian-ness at one and the same time—can be overcome only by having “the Estonian language and culture ... come and introduce themselves.” Estonian Home develops Estonian-language textbooks, helps to explain Estonian laws, provides forms to Narvans, and holds Estonian cultural activities—most designed to enact Estonia in Narva, but some also created to reintroduce Narva to the rest of Estonia.

These more proactive sites of Estonianization in Narva are coupled with the more passive, banal nationalist practices such as the flying of Estonian flags that blanket the city streets, the image of the Narva–Ivangorod border printed on the back of the 5 krone banknote, Narva Castle’s presence in Estonian tourist brochures, and the Estonian souvenirs incorporating scenes from Narva. Even if a majority of Narvans continues to feel exteriorized from the rest of the Estonian state and society, in an increasing number and variety of ways they themselves are engaged in the reiterative and citational practices in their everyday lives that produce Estonia as a scale effect in Narva.

However, gaps and fissures have appeared in the reiterative practices producing Estonia in Narva. As an example of this, instructors using the Russian-language textbooks published in Tallinn (mentioned above) complained not about the Estonianized version of history and geography presented in such texts, but, rather, that “the textbooks published in the Russian language in Tallinn are awful, full of mistakes”, giving a strong indication that students are also hearing about these ‘mistakes’ and learning alternative versions of history, geography, civics, etc. Events such as these occur as part of the daily citational practices remaking Narva as Estonia, but work not to produce Estonia as a scale effect in Narva so much as to reinforce the marginal status of Narva and Narvan-ness vis-a-vis Estonia and Estonian-ness. It is precisely these actors—those occupying the constitutive outside to the scalar discourse being enacted, yet who are expected to participate in the reiterative and citational practices that naturalize and sediment the scale effect of Estonia in Narva in their daily lives—that are most likely to produce the gaps and fissures which destabilize the new scalar discourses.

The performativity of Europe in Narva

Estonia’s entry into the EU and the ‘return to Europe’ discourse have both worked through a series of reiterative practices to produce Europe as a scale effect in Narva. In Leitner’s work on the construction of Europe as a scale of political governance, increasing power and authority at the European scale come at the expense of state-scale sovereignty (Leitner, 1997; 2004). Power in this regard is treated as a finite

(18) Interview conducted May 2003.
resource, and rescaling acts to redistribute power in a kind of zero sum game.\(^{(19)}\) This has not been the case in Narva, where Europe as a scale effect has enhanced rather than diminished the power and capacity of actors taking a nation-state stance to engage in the Estonianizing practices discussed above. In this section, we highlight the cultural politics of memory associated with the performativity of Europe as a scale effect in Narva, taking note of the ways in which Europeanizing discursive practices amplify the materialization of Estonia in the city. We conclude the section by discussing Narvan responses to Europeanization, and the gaps and fissures that have appeared during the production of Europe in Narva.

The most obvious site where Europeanization as a set of reiterative practices has worked not only to produce the scale effect of Europe in Narva, but also to reinforce Estonianization, is at the political border. EU accession rules have been used by actors presenting Estonia as a nation-state to make crossing the border with Russia more difficult. EU regulations have also been deployed to restrict the volume and type of goods that can come across the border from Ivangoord for sale in Narva.\(^{(20)}\) With the EU flag flying alongside the Estonian flag on the border, movement has slowed, the amount of transborder trade has decreased, security has tightened, and the issuance of free visas to borderland residents has been threatened.\(^{(21)}\) The governmental sectors that have benefited with new buildings and larger budgets are those having to do with border security. This all works to reinforce and legitimate the closed border policies of actors taking an Estonian nation-state stance in the borderlands, whose main interest since independence is to seal the Estonian–Russian border as tightly as possible (Berg and Piret, 2002).

Beyond the direct effects of the EU’s assistance in tightening the border through more restrictive regulations and financial resources, the ‘coming of the EU’ and ‘return to Europe’ discourses have allowed actors presenting Estonia both to blame the EU for the border restrictions, and to shift more state resources to border security and away from other infrastructural and developmental projects in the borderlands. Narvan officials and activists are increasingly told that the state has no money for development projects, and that they must now apply to the EU for funding.\(^{(22)}\) Yet, competition for these funds is fierce, and the board that judges the merit of proposals is constituted

\(^{(19)}\) Although Swyngedouw’s ‘governance-beyond-the-state’ approach to the politics of scale (2000; 2005) also emphasizes power shifts away from the state and upward to the EU, downward and outward, his treatment of the Europeanization discourse is much more nuanced. Additionally, most current research on Europeanization treats power and capacity in ways that allow for just the kind of enhanced power of both the transnational and national scalar actors and their discursive practices. See Mansfield (2005) for a more general critique of the rescaling literature and its tendency to marginalize the power and capacity of ‘the national scale’.

\(^{(20)}\) This transborder trade has been one of the ways that the people of Ivangoord have supplemented their incomes, which have been devastated by the closing of the border and the loss of access to jobs in Narva. In 2004, with entry into the EU, the amount of goods that could be carried across the border was reduced from 10 kg to 1 kg, and many food items were also banned (Orshanskaya, 2003).

\(^{(21)}\) At the time of independence, local residents could cross the border without a visa. In preparation to join the EU, this system was transformed in 2000 into a restricted number of free visas for local residents. Beginning in 2002, political elites and news reports claimed that the free visa program for borderland residents would have to be cancelled, due to restrictions associated with the Schengen agreement (eg Totskaya, 2002). At the time of writing, the free visa program was still in place.

\(^{(22)}\) Prior to accession, the EU PHARE program was used as a way to offload developmental requests coming to state agencies.
in Tallinn, where Estonian state interests are protected and further enhanced.\(^{(23)}\) Actors taking a local Narvan stance repeatedly complained during interviews that this scale shift in funding developmental projects, coupled with the fact that proposals for such funds were being judged by Estonian nation-state actors in Tallinn, made it nearly impossible to bring socioeconomic development to Narva.\(^{(24)}\)

The political border also stands as an ideal symbolic marker of difference and division, because of both the physical and built landscapes present there. The European-looking and Russian-looking fortresses ‘facing off against one another’ across the border river greatly enhance the presentation of Narva as the ‘easternmost outpost of the West’, a marker of the ‘civilizational fault line’ separating not only Estonia from Russia, but also Europe from its Other, ‘the West’ from ‘the East’. Not surprisingly, Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* (1996) thesis is extremely popular in Estonia, since he placed the cultural boundary of European-ness on this border (Kuus, 2002; 2004, pages 199–200). This has helped Estonian nationalizing elites make the argument for hardening the political border between Estonia and Russia. For example, Estonian President Lennart Meri proclaimed that “It is precisely in the name of European values that Estonia needs a secure border .... Our border is the border of European values” (as quoted in Smith, 1998, page 102). The sociospatial imaginary of two fortresses in eternal conflict with each other—one representing Europe and the West, the other Russia and the East—allows actors presenting Estonia to utilize the transnational scale as a complement to their own nation-state scalar stance, further naturalizing the discource of multiscalar sociospatial rupture marked by the border. And, of course, if Russia and Russian-ness are Others not only to Estonia and Estonian-ness, but also to Europe and European-ness, this at the same time deepens and essentializes the exclusionary discursive practices that treat Narva’s resident population as a people out of timespace.

A wide range of other reiterative and citational practices works discursively to produce the scale effect of Europe in Narva, and at the same time to desovietize and de-Russianize the city. Narva’s period under Swedish rule from 1581 to 1704 has been elevated since Estonia’s independence as representing the true or authentic Narva, while Russian imperial and Soviet control of the city is narrated as inauthentic, a conquest, an occupation. The baroque architecture from the Swedish period was concentrated in the Old Town city center, and much of it was destroyed during WWII.\(^{(25)}\) The Town Hall—the most important landmark from this period—has increasingly been used to stage social and cultural events that celebrate ‘Old Narva’, a presoviet and pre-Russian place, as well as ‘Future Narva’, an Estonian–European border city (figure 4).

\(^{(23)}\) Initially, the EU proposed the creation of a number of regional review boards, but actors presenting Estonia effectively lobbied against this by arguing that, because Estonia is a small country, the structural funds could be more efficiently managed from Tallinn (interview conducted at the Euro Information Center, Narva, May 2006).

\(^{(24)}\) While several of the actors presenting a Narvan scalar stance were somewhat upbeat during interviews conducted during the summer of 2004 (ie at the time of EU accession), the same group of informants were decidedly more pessimistic regarding the prospects for Narva by summer 2005.

\(^{(25)}\) Many interviewees from Narva and Ivangorod (as well as the earlier official soviet stance) argue that, even though much of Old Town was destroyed during the soviet aerial bombardment, the Nazi army caused some of it, and is to blame for all of it. Actors taking an Estonian nation-state stance place the blame for all of the destruction on the Soviet Union. Compare, for example, Popov (2004) to Raik and Toode (2004, page 9). Popov is the director of Ivangorod Fortress and Museum, and lives in Narva. Raik was director of Narva College and Toode is the former director of Pro Narva and currently the director of the Narva Castle Museum.
Pro Narva, an NGO created in 2002 primarily to build support for the restoration of Old Town Narva, makes explicit the way that the scalar discourse of Narva as the embodiment of Europe is used:

“Everyone knows that Narva is situated on the eastern border of Estonia. But how many of you know that in fact there exist two Narvas? One is modern Narva, a town built from the silicate bricks and concrete in Soviet times; the second one is Old Narva, with the heart in baroque style, which was destroyed by the [sic] WW II and later, by the winner of that War” (Pro Narva, 2003a).

“After the war only 3 buildings belonging to the Swedish period were renovated. In the historic centre of Narva, where many typical houses were built in Soviet times, there stands a pearl of baroque architecture, Narva Town Hall built in Swedish times .... Today the historical heart of Narva makes a pitiful sight. The collapsing building of Town Hall is standing lonely amidst typical houses, which do not fit the historical centre of the town .... The town of Narva is ill—it has no heart where people could walk, do their shopping, entertain them .... Let’s do everything we can to rebuild the historical centre of Narva and make it a place where life would be exciting and where people would love to spend their time” (Pro Narva, 2003b).

As can be seen in the above quote, Narva is discursively rescaled as the embodiment of Europe, whose current ‘sickness’ is traced to the destruction and subsequent sovietization of its European ‘heart’. Only the restoration of the historic center (ie desovietization and ‘re-Europeanization’) will help to make the city healthy again. Through this discourse, Narva is scaled as Europe, and the soviet buildings—along with the soviet-era migrants within them—are exteriorized from the authentic past and future of Narva.

The Europeanization of Narva has also occurred virtually, through a pre-WWII photographic exhibit of the city, and more recently through a series of ‘before’ and ‘after’ postcards depicting the same scenes of Narva prior to the war and at present. A more impressive effort in this regard is the 2003 film Virtual Narva, a computer-generated walking tour of the Old Town district created from the photographs

Figure 4. Celebrating ‘Days of Narva Town’ at the Old Town Hall.
noted above. This virtual scaling of Narva as Europe not only serves as a nostalgic look back at what once was, but also establishes a future agenda for what could (and should) be yet again. Virtual Narva—in naturalizing and sedimenting the European urban landscape as the one ‘that matters’, has been taken up by a number of actors and institutions seeking to produce ‘that Narva’.

In addition to renovating Narva Old Town Hall and increasingly staging cultural events there, in Fall 2004 Narva College announced plans to relocate to Old Town. The site being prepared for the college is a vacant lot alongside Town Hall, which before WWII was occupied by the stock exchange building, another prime example of the architecture from the period of Swedish rule. The move and reconstruction—financed largely by EU structural funds—will promote the goal to re-Europeanize Old Town as well, since the project will use a facade that replicates that of the old stock exchange building.

The reiterative practices through which Europeanization discourses work to scale Narva as Europe have especially focused on Sweden’s role as a counterpoint to Russian rule. In addition to highlighting the baroque architectural landmarks built during the period of Swedish rule that were lost during WWII, the purchase of Krenholm Textile Manufacturing by a Swedish firm as well as the opening of a Swedish Consulate in Narva have elevated Narva’s Swedish-ness as the principal set of discursive practices through which Europe materializes. The city’s memoryscape has been particularly important in this regard. Attention is focused on the events of 1700, when Sweden’s King Karl XII entered Narva and, with a much smaller army, held back Russia’s Peter I, who had laid siege to the city. The Narva Museum exhibit entitled ‘Narva, Swedish Town 1581 – 1704’ features the events of 1700 and Karl XII prominently, and the Swedish Lion monument—a replacement of a monument originally created in 1936—was rebuilt to celebrate the 300th anniversary of that victory in 2000. The reason for highlighting 1700 in the reconfiguration of the commemorative landscape should be obvious, given what has been said above: it provides those actors taking Estonian nation-state and European transnational stances with a moment in time that secured Narva in Europe and ‘the West’ by defeating Russian aggressors—a representational trope of Narva as a place at the frontlines of Estonian-ness and European-ness, holding back Russia and ‘the East’. This Narva as Europe discourse thus greatly strengthens the dividing line separating not only West from East, but also Estonia and Estonian-ness from Russia and Russian-ness (figure 5).

The reiterative and citational practices that produce Estonia and Europe as scale effects in Narva exteriorize earlier materializations of Russia and Russian-ness, the USSR, and soviet internationalism from Narva. This has placed the resident population outside the socially reconstructed timespace of the postsoviet city, yet nonetheless has left many of them in a position of participating in the reiterative and citational practices that Estonianize and Europeanize Narva. This position as the constitutive outside was discussed above in the context of Estonianization, and is also apparent in a variety of everyday practices that produce Europe in Narva—as, for example, with curators and museum guides who help to create and then narrate a Europeanized

(26) We viewed Virtual Narva for the first time inside Old Town Hall, where the cultural festival ‘Days of Narva Town’ was staged in June 2003. This three-layered imagining of Narva as Europe—as Narva was entering the EU—was perhaps the densest set of Europeanizing discursive practices we encountered during our four years of research in the city.

(27) The original monument stood at the site of the main battlefield in Hermamae (Germansberg), a village west of Narva, and was destroyed in 1944 (Bulatnikov, 1999, pages 42–43; Raik and Toode, 2004, pages 28–31). The new monument was built alongside Narva Castle on the Narova riverbank overlooking both fortresses.
presentation of Narva’s past, a narrative which at moments becomes pointedly antisoviet and anti-Russian. Tour guides and Narvan workers in the tourism and development office, architects and construction workers tearing down soviet Narva and rebuilding Europe in Narva, school instructors narrating Europeanized versions of history, geography, and civics, office workers at the EU information office, and shopworkers marketing and selling ‘Europe’, as well as textile workers at Krenholm are all engaged in daily practices that produce the scale effect of Europe in Narva in ways that exteriorize themselves from the postsoviet city.

Through these daily practices, several ‘gaps and fissures’ in the performativity of scale in Narva have appeared. For example, tour guides and the public at large telling of Sweden’s many ‘gifts’ to Narva while noting the absence of monuments to Peter the Great make clear the local opposition to the anti-Russian narrative present in the story of Karl XII and the events of 1700. Everyday cultural practices have also worked to reappropriate and thus to rescale Europeanized sites and events in Narva. The Swedish Lion—a site of Europe on the tourist bus route during the day—has become a public place where young Narvans congregate at night, and has also become the place where couples leave flowers on their wedding day, replacing the Lenin monument that previously played this role. One could speak of the Narvanization of the Swedish Lion in these regards.

Narvan social activists have also worked to reinteriorize the resident population in the postsoviet city. Beyond the localized place-identity discourse that ‘we came to rebuild Narva and were remade into Narvans in the process’, activists have protested against the practices that desovietize the memoryscape of the city. This contestation is not so much a negation of the authenticity discourse of Narva as Europe, as it is a counterpoint made that the soviet and Russian-era urban landscapes and those who

Figure 5. Swedish Lion monument.
came to build them are also authentically a part of Narva’s past and should not be
dismissed or excluded from consideration.

However, the principal fissure that threatened to destabilize the discursive rescaling
of Narva as Estonia–Europe came from within the representation of Estonia as
Europe itself. Actors presenting Estonia and Estonian-ness as Europe and ‘the West’
did so in order to widen the sociocultural and political boundaries separating Estonia
from Russia and Russian-ness, and so to secure the Estonian nation in its ancestral
homeland (Kuus, 2002, pages 97–100). During the run-up to the referendum for EU
accession, the pro-EU ad campaign emphasized the vulnerability of independent
Estonia if it did not join the EU, and in so doing transformed Estonia itself into a
one-dimensional borderline. As President Lennart Meri put it in 1999: “On one side
Europe, on the other Russia ... We are on the border, and therefore only a small push
is needed to make us fall into one side or rise into the other” (as quoted in Kuus, 2002,
page 97, emphasis added). Yet, in discursively rescaling Estonia as Europe, actors
representing the nation-state scale were also forced to adopt EU standards regarding
minority rights, and thus to accept the integration of ‘non-Estonian’ others within.
Estonia’s Integration Program, as one of the critical admission tickets for entry
into the EU, was created with the goals of “ensuring rapid modernisation of society
in the context of accession to the European Union ... while preserving both stability
and a commitment to the protection and continued development of Estonian culture”
(Integration Program, 2000, page 4). In this way, the need to integrate its constitutive
outside may be seen as an effect of Russophobia on the part of Estonia’s nationalizing
elite, as one of the preeminent fissures produced by the reiterative and citational
practices creating the scale effect of Europe in Estonia.

However, as with the case of the Europeanization discourse more generally, actors
taking an Estonian nation-state stance have been able to control integration in order to
enhance Estonianization. In this way, the practices that constitute integration have
reinforced the naturalization and sedimentation of Estonia as the homeland of
Estonians. For example, although the people of Narva primarily refer to themselves
as Narvans, not as Russians or Russian-speakers, the Integration Program discursively
constructs all non-Estonians as one cohesive Other within.(28) The Integration Program
is mainly structured to promote the learning of Estonian language, history, and culture
among ‘the non-Estonians’, rather than to facilitate a two-way exchange of cultural
values, histories, and practices.(29) It is directed toward sets of reiterative and citational
practices that naturalize and essentialize Estonian-ness as the performative norm in
Estonia.

This is clear to social activists and the public at large in Narva, who overwhelmingly
reject the underlying premise of the Integration Program, which presents Russians as
alien others. They tend to be critical and suspicious of the Integration Program itself,
even though many take advantage of specific elements in the program such as the
summer language camps, which they see as beneficial for themselves or their children.
And, while integration was seen as a highly desirable objective in most of the interviews
we conducted in Narva, the term ‘integration’ itself was frequently redefined by actors
taking a local scalar stance in ways that allow Narvans to ‘re-employ’ themselves into
the postsoviet timespace of Narva. In the words of a local politician, “an integrated

(28) Interview with Mati Luik, director of the Integration Foundation, which is tasked with running
the Integration Program, June 2002 (see also Lauristin and Vetik, 2000).

(29) The younger generation in Narva who are learning the Estonian language are not undergoing
Estonianization, as Laitin (1998) concluded, but for the most part are learning enough Estonian to
pass the Estonian citizenship test. While identity is always ‘in formation’, Narvan-ness rather than
Estonian-ness is what has been amplified in the postsoviet period.
person is one who lives in the country, pays taxes and obeys all its laws. It is impossible
to demand more than this. The absolute majority of Narva's population, in my opinion,
is already integrated into Estonia, and so additional integration is not necessary.”(30)

According to a Narvan social activist,(31)

“integration—it means mutual respect for one another, and is the last step from loyalty
to tolerance to integration .... The Integration Program of Estonia 2000 – 2007,
it's good, but absolutely dead .... Because there are no practical mechanisms
to bring about integration .... And if a person was born here, grew up, has been
here three generations, he should not be blamed, that his mama, papa arrived
in the 1940s, soon after the war, arrived according to the directives of the country.
He is an alien here, and what kind of integration is it possible to speak of here?
And it is very painful to stand this question in Ida-Virumaa,(32) situated as it is by
itself. Because Ida-Virumaa is like a stepson, [belonging] neither to Russia nor to
Estonia; they cast it out.”

Conclusions

The performativity of scale in Narva has led over a relatively brief period of time to the
social construction of four distinctive scale effects: ‘international’ soviet/proletarian,
‘the nation-state' of Estonia, ‘transnational’ Europe, and ‘local’ Narva. Each of these
scale effects has been naturalized and sedimented through everyday citational practices
in Narva, and each set of discursive practices in turn intersects with the others,
constructing, contesting, and reconfiguring the scalar hierarchies produced.

Using performativity to explore scale talk and scale politics also helps to expose the
daily citational practices that produce separable scale effects on space and society.
Indeed, the social construction, naturalization, and sedimentation of scalar congruities
and incongruities between space on the one hand, and society, on the other, are scale's
most productive effect. This is clear in the reiterative practices through which social
and spatial scales discursively become in postsoviet Narva: performatively rescaling
Narva as Estonia and Europe through citational practices that are both desovietizing
and anti-Russian dislocates the resident population from the timespace of the city.
Narvan-ness itself may be seen as a set of discursive practices contesting this dis-
location, and also as an oppositional enactment to the role they play in their own
displacement. In the postsoviet period, Narvans participate in the daily citational prac-
tices that produce the scale effects of Estonia and Europe in Narva, but also challenge
these scalar discourses and socially construct their own local Narva in the process.

Beyond this, as is especially apparent when scale is viewed performatively, the
citational practices that produce Europe and Estonia as scale effects in Narva are
not necessarily hierarchically competing scalar discourses. That is, the empowerment
of Europe and ‘Europeanization’ are not resulting in the ‘hollowing out’ or disempow-
ering of the discursive practices of Estonia and Estonianization. Instead, Estonia as a
scale effect in Narva is enhanced through the citational practices that materialize
Europe in this border city. Using performativity to assess scalar discourses helps to
uncover not only the practices that naturalize and sediment singular scales, but also
more nuanced understandings of the multiscalar articulations of power.

Finally, the present paper demonstrates the importance of retaining scale as a
critical focus of research attention in human geography. Scale as a way of seeing the
world is a powerful representational trope that naturalizes and sediments particular

(30) Interview conducted June 2003.
(31) Interview conducted March 2004.
(32) Ida-Virumaa is the region of northeastern Estonia in which Narva is situated.
sociospatial relationships as the taken-for-granted ‘way things are or ought to be’, while undermining the ‘authenticity’ or legitimacy claims of alternative sets of socio-spatial discursive practices. The performativity of scale represents a highly promising poststructural alternative to the structural and structurational approaches that have dominated the field to date, and resolves some of the more significant shortcomings of the ‘politics of scale’ literature identified by Marston et al (2005), while retaining scale as a critical subject of sociospatial inquiry in human geography. The performativity of scale in turn should be seen as a productive first step toward providing us with a political genealogy of scale ontologies which we currently lack.

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