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# MULTICULTURALISM IN ESTONIA: VIEWS OF THE YOUTH

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# ABSTRACT

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After the collapse of the USSR, Estonia, as an independent state, had to deal with a large population of Russian-speaking minorities, who immigrated or were born there during the Soviet times. The Estonian government had to introduce numerous policies and complete its way from a nation-building state to a multicultural one.

The aim of this research was to find out whether the Estonian Integration Program may be related to the multiculturalism policy, on which it was based. In order to do this, theory of liberal multiculturalism by Will Kymlicka was introduced and compared with the current situation in Estonia. Furthermore, this thesis aimed to find out young people's attitude towards this term. Qualitative content analysis was applied to analyze 10 interviews with the Russian-speaking side and a 'mini-survey' of 10 representatives from the Estonian-speaking side. The Estonian mass media was also analyzed to give the additional information on the present setup in the state.

As one of the aims of multiculturalism is to preserve one's ethnic identity, it was crucial to find out whether Russian-speakers associate themselves with 'Russians'. Results have shown that the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia has various ethnic identities – strong Russian, insecure Estonian-Russian and Alternative identities. This fact may speak of assimilation process that takes place in Estonia, as the Estonian-speaking youth did not have adjacent identities. In addition, the results of the thesis have shown that Estonians have a less positive attitude towards multiculturalism, as their aim is to preserve their small nation's culture and language.

As a result, Estonia still has several aspects to consider and implement in order to be fully included into the number of multicultural states. However, progress in adapting multicultural policies has already been observed.

Keywords: multiculturalism, Russian-speaking population, Estonia, identity

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the research problem

After regaining independence in the beginning of the 1990's, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were the first ones among post-soviet republics to integrate into European society (Galbreath, 2003: 35). However, close ties with European organizations, democratization and economic benefits did not let them avoid great ethnical concern, the so-called 'Russian question' that arose in these countries, especially in Estonia and Latvia. Lithuania at some point has escaped this issue, as the population of Russophonics minorities was not that large at the end of the Soviet era (9.4% against 38.5% or 48% in Estonia and Latvia). Furthermore, from the very beginning Lithuania has instituted more liberal policies towards its minorities by submitting citizenship for all the residents of the state (Galbreath, 2003: 36). Estonia and Latvia at the same time had to deal with the consequences of mass migration of Russians after WWII.<sup>1</sup>

If we focus on the case of the Estonian Republic, we may state that it had rather long relations with national minorities. Baltic Germans, Swedish communities were among them from the thirteenth century (Piiirimae, 1997: 50). Upper class of German community was widely represented in the population of Estonia until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: historically they were described as 'conquerors and exploiters of the peasantry' (Kalmus, 2003: 672 in Petersoo, 2007: 122), and furthermore, their dominance was literally associated with 'hundreds years of slavery' (Made, 2003: 184-185 in Petersoo, 2007: 122). However, long-standing Russian minority also existed in Estonia from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Russian 'Old Believers' (*vanausulised*) settled mostly on the coast of Lake Peipus (Petersoo, 2007: 123). They were also known as *peipsivenelased*. According to the 1897 Census, Russian-speaking minority comprised of 4% of Estonian population (Jansen, 2004: 92,111 in Petersoo, 2007: 123). These long-standing settlers were described in a positive way, as they were not only able to preserve their ethnic identity, but also become bi-linguals with a distinct immersion into Russian culture and religion. They were also presented as

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<sup>1</sup> After WWII the population of titular nation in Estonian and Latvian Republics comprised of 88% and 77%. At the end of the Soviet era the numbers had changed to 69% and 59% (Smith, 2001:23).

good example for post-war Russian immigrants, when the latter expressed their concerns over changing their identity. (Petersoo, 2007: 123).

The second group of Russian-speakers has moved to Estonia after the World War II. The demographic situation was greatly changed as the percentage of ethnic Estonians fell from 94 to 64 per cent during the years 1945-1989 (Smith, 2002: xxiii in Petersoo, 2007: 124). The fear of being dissolved among Russian-speaking immigrants, who were, in addition, perceived as illegitimate invaders, has changed the attitude towards Russian-speakers in a negative way (Petersoo, 2007: 124). In 1992, Trivimi Velliste, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has claimed that it was improper to call Russian-speakers as a minority, when 'legally, this word referred only to those Russians, who lived in Estonia before 1940. The rest were described as 'colonists'' (Lieven, 1994: 307 in Petersoo, 2007: 124). Some kind of cultural boundaries were also the reasons why these two ethnic communities clashed. The first reason is in the language – Estonian belongs to the Finno-Ugric family, while Russian is Slavic one. Religion also differs – Estonian Lutheran Protestantism versus Russian Orthodox Church. Kolsto (1996: 624) also highlights the difference in the cultural chasm, which separated Estonians from Soviet Russians (Petersoo, 2007: 124-125).

In 1991 government restored state's policy of national citizenship that took its roots from the pre-war times. According to it, only those residents could obtain Estonian citizenship, whose relatives lived in a newborn Estonian Republic before the year 1938. In addition, the Estonian Republic ratified the Estonian language as the official, thus immediately cutting off rather large population stratum of Russian-speaking minorities.

In this situation, Russian-speaking minority in Estonia has turned out to be 'lost' after the collapse of the USSR, as the nation-building process in Estonian Republic took its place. Furthermore, the knowledge of official language was also a great concern for Russian-speaking community. However, pressure from various European organizations and Russia has weakened some of the policy's requirements. For example, Citizenship Law was accused of being too rude in 1992 (Norgaard et. al, 1999: 204). Thus, by the end of the 1990's government's policies have changed dramatically, turning their vector towards democratic values. Estonia has adopted integration strategies and established Integration Foundations that would have helped organizing all the necessary activities (Toots & Idnurm, 2011: 118).

The case of Russian-speaking minorities in post-soviet states has attracted researchers' attention from not only Estonia (Vetik 2000), but from different parts of the world (Kolstø 2002, Kymlicka 2002, Norgaard 1999). However, the adaptation process of Russophonic minorities was mostly examined on adult population. Recent studies (Pfoser 2015, Schulze 2012, Smith 2015, Nimmerfeldt 2008) have shifted attention towards Russian-speaking youth that was mostly born and raised in independent Estonia. Unlike their parents, who mostly associated themselves with Russian Federation or USSR, they had different identity formation. Learning of Estonian language is also not a great concern for them, as most of them learned it at schools or obtained higher education in Estonian. Younger generations, according to Korts (2009: 13) are similar with Estonians in their thought patterns in this case, as 'the openness to the West and consumer culture has changed their point of view on the state'.

Dialogue between two nations has been continuing for more than twenty five years: the theme is being actively discussed among elites and politicians in particular. Argues about division of two different cultures, language of instruction in schools and kindergartens as well as reforms of education in Russian- and Estonian-speaking educational establishments have also been hot topics for discussion. Majority group, as well as minority, are both interested in saving its cultures and languages, however debates Estonia in its integration program states that it is a multicultural country, which aim is to support everybody, whose cultural background differs from host society's. In my research I would like to study what multiculturalism is, how is it perceived in Estonia among young generations and may current situation in Estonia and its variation of multiculturalism be described as an example of this notion.

Studying the position of Russian-speakers in Estonia is relevant to the subject of International Relations because of the interstate relations between Estonia and Russia. The relations between these countries were strained due to different views on political background, integration programs, which were suggested by the Estonian government and political or social events, which took their place during these years. However, my thesis attempts to address this question from the point of view of identity and multiculturalism, and in particular, the views on identity and multiculturalism of both Estonian- and Russian-speaking youth.

## 1.2 Theoretical framework

In my thesis, I decided to study integration processes regarding Russian-speaking minority in Estonia with the help of the theoretical model of multiculturalism. I expect it to be relevant in this research for several reasons:

- 1) Multiculturalism and identity are closely related, as ethnic identities, as well as other social identities, form modern social reality. Historically, for some minorities, one's ethnic identity was a feature that should have been hidden or stigmatized during the years (Kymlicka, 2012: 100). However, post-war era, its democratic ideologies and freedoms have proclaimed multicultural policies for those, who were denied and ignored before. Tolerance and liberal values are also vital for European states and that is why multicultural policies are welcomed and are sought in European society.
- 2) Multiculturalism has been the basic model in Estonia's integration programs from the year 2000. Though Estonian government adapted the model of the multicultural state in its own way, it is still important to have understanding of what multiculturalism actually is.

In the literature review on multiculturalism, I have examined numerous concepts of the notion. However, the most defining one is Will Kymlicka's liberal theory of multiculturalism. The position of the Canadian scholar is one of the 'toughest' liberal models of multiculturalism. The foundation of his theory is the theory of liberalism and its thesis on equality of rights and opportunities for everyone. Kymlicka states (Kymlicka, 2007: 13) that critics dispute multiculturalism as it ignores so-called civic values, which develop the common field of belonging to a socio-cultural and social community. It is believed, that this model does not take into account special rights of individual groups. As a reaction to this, ideas of 'differentiated citizenship' emerged, which implied the existence of not only individual rights, but also group rights that differ from the general legal model. Kymlicka insists that vital interests, connected with culture and identity and fully compatible with liberal values of freedom and equality, justify the endowment of minorities with special rights. Liberal state should provide non-titular nations with such conditions that would help them preserve their basic cultural values, even if the partial integration takes place. These measures would only equalize social existence by reducing the vulnerability of a smaller group to a larger group and not to diverge from the attitudes and values of



liberalism (Kymlicka, 2007: 13).

However, I have also included literature review on multiculturalism from other researchers who are similar in their views on this policy. They mostly agree that the cultural independence will lead to one's identity preservation, which is crucial for modern liberal states.

Vetik (2000) in his research proposed that there were two different approaches that suggest their way in dealing with minorities. One of them, modernist, emphasizes that strong common core should be a basis for uniting people of different cultures in a state. Postmodernist approach at the same time suggests that different cultures should have opportunity to preserve their culture and roots. Naturally, different ethnocultural groups will try to defend their interests – minorities will mostly be against the first model, while majorities will be for saving their culture and language. Estonian model of multiculturalism at the same time suggests that people of different nations and cultures should preserve their cultural and ethnic identities, however uniting around Estonian language. Loyalty to the state and high proficiency in national language are seen as common ground for uniting people of various origins in the Integration program. Estonian case with Russian-speaking youth is interesting one, as for young people the term 'Estonian Russian' or 'Russian in Estonia' or 'Russian-speaking Estonian' is getting more popular on the contrast with their parents, who had strong 'Russian' or 'Soviet' identity (Pfoser, 2015). Scholars admit (Taylor 1994, Wolf 1994, Berry 2011) that multicultural policy is closely related with identity construction as it may keep one's idea of who he is and preserve one's cultural or ethnic identity. In this case, self-esteem and identity construction will not be lost. Still, tendency for spreading non-confident Russian identity for me is alarming factor that mostly speaks of assimilation processes. However, this identity is also characterized as 'multicultural identity' (Valk et. all 2011: 33)

### 1.3 Research gap

Previous research concerning Russian-speaking minorities was done by David J. Smith (2003), who investigated the case of Estonian nation-building process and the integration policies that Estonia has adapted during the decade of independency. In his work he

describes a process of transformation from ‘ethnic democracy’ to a new strategy of a ‘multicultural integration’ that was proposed by Kymlicka (2002). However, the new integration strategy that had been adapted several years before the article was published was too young to trace real changes in the society. Besides, the study was mostly analytical and, for example, did not aim to reveal people’s attitude towards the changes in integration politics.

Toots & Idnurm (2012) investigated perception of cosmopolitanism, nationalism and multiculturalism differs among young people of Estonia, Latvia and Russian Federation. Their research revealed that Estonian youth has more cosmopolitan views, than, for example, Latvian. In addition, their study was different from the one that was conducted in 1999, when Estonia has paved her way towards democracy. From those times, according to Toots & Idnurm, Russian-speaking youth has also become more tolerant and open-minded.

Even though in previous studies ethnic identity of Russian-speaking youth and their attitude towards political and social systems was analyzed and compared with the youth from the Russian Federation, I have not come across any studies that would contrast Estonian- and Russian speakers in their views regarding multiculturalism in Estonia. In this case, I would like to know whether their views on governmental politics regarding multiculturalism differ from each other. Furthermore, I would like to combine the notion of identity and multiculturalism and to see how they complement each other.

#### 1.4 Research questions & hypothesis

Having examined previous studies on Russian-speaking youth in Estonia, multiculturalism policy and Estonian integration programs that were adapted during the last twenty years, I have formed my research questions as such:

- 1) How do Russian- and Estonian-speaking young people view multiculturalism policy in Estonia?
- 2) Are there differences in their views? Does ethnic identity influence the perception of multiculturalism policy?
- 3) According to the notion of multiculturalism, as defined by Will Kymlicka, may the current situation in Estonia be described as such?

### Hypothesis:

According to the review of previous studies my hypothesis is the following: there will be a different view on multiculturalism between majority and minority population: Russian speakers will have a more positive attitude towards multiculturalism as their aim is to preserve Russian culture and language in Estonia. Estonians, on the contrary, will have less positive or even negative reaction concerning multiculturalism, as they will perceive multiculturalism as a threat to the Estonian language and culture.

### 1.5 Method & Data

My research material consists of several types of data: 10 interviews with the representatives of Russian-speaking youth and a 'mini-survey' with a sample of 15 contacted and 10 responded representatives from the Estonian side. The ages of young people vary from 17 to 28 years old. Half of the interviews was taken during the spring 2017, while another half was conducted during the autumn 2018.

Furthermore, Estonian mass media was also analyzed to give an additional information on current situation on minority issues in the state.

Qualitative content analysis was used as a tool for working with the analysis of the interviews. During the research, I also refer to previous studies while analyzing my own material. So I apply both primary and secondary material in my research. I used both descriptive and explanative methods to analyze and draw conclusions on my data.

### 1.6 Thesis structure

I decided to divide my research into five parts: theoretical framework, literature review and research background, data & method chapter, data analysis and conclusion. The theoretical part aims to discuss the concepts of multiculturalism and identity. The third chapter is concentrated on the 'historical' background of the integration policies and laws that were

adopted by the Estonian government for more than 25 years. The fourth chapter, data & method, more thoroughly describes the way the interviews were conducted and analysed. The fifth chapter is dedicated to the analysis of interviews and speaks both about identities of Russian-speaking youth and Estonians, and about their attitude towards multiculturalism. In the conclusion, I sum up the results of my research and answer the research questions.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: MULTICULTURALISM AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

### 2.1 Literature review on Multiculturalism

In the theoretical part of my thesis, I introduce previous studies on multiculturalism policy. This would be essential for comparing multiculturalism in the way it is adopted in Estonia with the main points it itself represents in international discourse. However, the most defining study is Will Kymlicka's liberal theory of multiculturalism. I will introduce his theory on ethnic minorities and their rights as a group to demand political rights and/or right to preserve their culture.

It is needless to say that integration is a very important theme in social sciences and the concept has various interpretations. During the times, the issue of integration has developed theoretical viewpoints that helped to study the effect of immigrant groups on host society. Such concepts as assimilation, adaptation, acculturation, inclusion and integration, as well as pluralism and multiculturalism became widely used by the scholars.

There are two extremes in integrating minorities or immigrants, according to Rodríguez-García (2010: 253): assimilationist and pluralistic or multicultural. The first one implies minorities to adopt fully to host society's rules and values, while pluralistic model means cultural diversity. Brubaker (2001: 41) argues that the 'assimilation' term has gained such a bad name and is associated with the worst excesses of Americanization campaigns. For Gans (1992: 48) nowadays 'one can be judged by using words such as assimilation and acculturation; one may also be considered as an old-fashioned or even antipluralistic'. However, early theoretical views on integration were *assimilationist* as it adaptation was seen as necessary and unavoidable (Park and Miller, 1921) and these authors were criticized for ethnocentric and nationalist ideas (Schunck, 2014: 10).

The second notion, opposite to assimilationist, according to Rodríguez-García (2010: 253), is mostly known as multiculturalism. Multiculturalism as a term appeared in European countries after 1945 as a reaction to political concerns of that time. The first one they had to deal with was regarding immigration issues and immigrants' settlements in Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s. The break-up of Communism in 1989 revealed problems with national minorities not only in the Baltic States, but on the rest of the post-communist territories, too. Besides that, a growing number of political refugees and asylum-seekers in

Western Europe was also a great concern (Rex, 2004: 8). ‘Terrorist attacks in the United States and the subsequent expansion of American influence at the same time arose dangers posed by unassimilated immigrant groups’ (ibid.). John Rex (2004) placed these political situations within a general theory of multiculturalism. For Rex, Europe had three basic ways of dealing with immigrant ethnic minorities after 1945 (Rex, 2004: 8). France chose an assimilationist policy in its politics. Another way was a *gastarbeiter* system in German-speaking countries, which gave no political citizenship to the immigrant workers. The third approach was multiculturalism typical to Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK. However, some countries adapted their own form of multiculturalism with greater or lesser emphasis on civic equality (Rodríguez-garcía, 2010: 254).

Over the last 25 years philosophers and social scientists actively discussed multiculturalism. For example, political philosophy tried to characterize a successful liberal society. ‘Such a society, it had been thought, would involve the guarantee of the rights of individuals’ (Miller and Walzer, 1995: 320 in Rex, 2004: 9).

Bhikhu Parekh (2000) in his research wonders if the culturally separate groups can exist together within a shared society. He decides that not only they can, but also should exist this way and such co-existing should be welcomed. He assumes that societies with single cultures are not competitive nowadays. It is important though that all cultures should be given equal respect and rights (Parekh, 2000: 379).

Some authors like Sheila Patterson (1963) considers integration to be a step to ‘absorption’, which is an end of assimilation process. These theories of assimilation were criticized by the multiculturalism advocates (Rex 1996, Soysal 1994, Parekh 2000). Parekh in his work (2000) states that minority groups have the right for their own lifestyle and non-recognition of their rights may lead to defiance of their interests. He (Parekh 2000: 197) also argues that the assimilationists consider society to be a systematic and consolidated cultural and moral framework, but in fact, this is not true. This structure or framework is not a unified whole. There are differences in class, region and religion that are constructed from different stands that sometimes may even conflict with each other. This understanding is ignored by assimilation policy and instead the interests of dominant group are privileged by giving a national culture a crooked value.

For Charles Taylor, multiculturalism builds its base on unity of identity and recognition

(Taylor, 1994: 25). Thus, democracy, as a construct that means mutual recognition in different forms, implies multiculturalism to acknowledge various cultures. Identity, at the same, time consists of recognition and its absence. It is the way person defines itself by artistic manifestation or communicating: either with others or with himself / herself (Ghender, 2016: 159).

Susan Wolf, who shared Taylor's ideas about identity, emphasizes that the absence of recognition is rejection of minorities' cultural identity. Furthermore, it is the denial of its importance and value. The consequences of such an attitude may lead minorities to feel low self-esteem as well as unvalued and unwelcomed group among the host society. This situation will mostly remind of a cultural assimilation (Wolf, 1994: 75). For Wolf, recognition does not depend on value of certain culture, but it is a rightful need for a cultural diversity (Wolf, 1994: 85).

## 2.2 Will Kymlicka's theory of multiculturalism

Will Kymlicka in his work 'Contemporary Political Philosophy' (2001) argues that modern liberal states often take part in nation-building process, which encourages common language, common sense of membership in social institutes that function in this language, and equal access to them (Kymlicka, 2001:440). He wonders how nation-building process influences these minorities and quotes Charles Taylor thoughts that nation-building puts majority's culture in a privileged position:

'If a modern society has an 'official' language, in the fullest sense of the term, that is a state-sponsored, -inculcated, and -defined language and culture, in which both economy and state function, then it is obviously an immense advantage to people if this language and culture are theirs. Speakers of other languages are at a distinct disadvantage. (Taylor 1997: 34 in Kymlicka, 2002: 22)

This means that minorities are facing a choice if all the social institutes are operating in another language: whether they 1) migrate, especially if there is a migration-friendly state nearby that is ready to accept them, 2) reconcile with the integration into majority's culture, trying to negotiate fairer terms of integration 3) struggle for their rights and self-government authority, necessary for support of their societal culture – economic, political and educational institutes, 4) reconcile with marginalization (Kymlicka, 2002: 22).

Kymlicka (2001) distinguishes several types of minority groups: national minorities,

immigrant minorities, isolationist ethno-confessional groups, metics (e.g. Turkish *Gastarbeiter*), African Americans. Situation with Russian-speaking minorities may be related both to the national minorities, as well as immigrant group. Kymlicka describes national minorities as nations that right now do not have their own state, or they had such state earlier. They also occurred to find themselves in a new country with another nation due to various reasons. Furthermore, Soviet identity may serve as an evidence that former state of residence, with which Russian-speakers associated themselves with, is a different country that may not even relate to modern Russian Federation right now, though it existed once (Pfoser, 2015). Immigrant minorities are mostly described as groups that voluntarily decide to change their residence in search of better living conditions.

On the one hand, Russian-speaking minorities indeed gushed out to Estonia after the WWII, as the population of Russian-speakers increased dramatically during post-war times: 12% to 39% by 1989 (Smith, 2015: 1). However, Russian-speakers do not have claims to their own nation-building process in Estonia or ask for autonomy – that is why ethnic / immigrant minority option is more suitable in their case.

Kymlicka points out that previously Western states tried to suppress minority population by assimilating them in the dominant culture. Over the past decades Western states tried to abandon assimilation politics in favor of ‘immigrant multiculturalism’, which did not let immigrants to push forward one’s societal culture fully, but nevertheless supported them in saving their customs and provide them with language rights (Smith, 2003: 6).

Kymlicka argues that historically immigrant groups reacted to nation-building less desperately than national minorities, who asked for autonomy, for example (Kymlicka, 2001: 447). On the contrast to the latter, their population is too small and territorially scattered to try reconstructing their own societal culture. Often, they accepted integrational strategies that were suggested to them. Indeed, most of them did not mind to learn the national language for obtaining citizenship or for daily communication. Thus, immigrants do not resist nation-building campaigns that would involve them into the dominant group. However, what Kymlicka claims is that in ‘immigrant’ states minorities try to negotiate better conditions of these integrational processes. They demand more tolerant and ‘multicultural’ approach of integration, which would help them to preserve different aspects of their ethnical heritage (ibid.).

It should also be mentioned that national minorities, according to Kymlicka, should be



granted all the rights for cultural and territorial autonomy, if they wish to have it (Kymlicka, 2002). This is relevant not only for indigenous peoples, but also for small nations that historically happened to be 'swallowed up' by another state. Kymlicka states that suppressing these kinds of minorities was and always is a big mistake, as their identity changes quickly. Sense of belonging to some culture or nation may disappear easily and that is exactly what Western countries tried to do to get rid of 'otherness' in their state. It was done by closing minority-language schools and prohibiting customs (Kymlicka, 2002: 26). Nevertheless, attempts to dissolve minorities in majority population were later recognized as counterproductive and unworkable, as it was more profitable to allow minorities to 'live their lives' rather than constantly be 'in war' with them (Kymlicka, 2002: 26-27).

Kymlicka points out that historically, until 1960s, immigrant countries followed the politics of assimilation. Immigrant minorities were expected to learn cultural norms of host society and practically be undistinguishable from the majority population in speech, manners, clothes, recreation, cuisine, identity etc. Too noticeable ethnicity was seen as 'non-patriotic' (Kymlicka, 2002: 34). However, assimilationist approach is more and more recognized as neither necessary, nor justified. Canadian scholar insists that immigrant minorities should demand or insist on more fair conditions of integration, as host society should accept the fact that integration may not be done in one day: that means that immigrants should have an opportunity to get help in their language in public spheres, for example. Furthermore, it is necessary that common institutes would provide the same level of respect, acceptance and considerate their ethnic identity. If liberal democracies will promote common institutions to operate in official language, then these measures should at least be fair (Kymlicka, 2002: 34).

Multiculturalism in this case, in contrast to assimilationist politics, allows individuals, as well as minority groups, freely identify themselves with one or another culture and preserve their ethnic identity. Liberal state, according to Kymlicka, should provide ethnocultural minorities with special rights and support basic cultural values of these groups (Kymlicka, 2007: 13-14).

Some critics, as Kymlicka states, worry that multiculturalism itself rejects the possibility of minorities to integrate and participate in majority population's social life (Kymlicka, 2002: 35-36). On this statement, Kymlicka responds that the statement is untrue, as an

immigrant society is not interested in marginalizing, but rather seeks for a better life, especially if it migrated from less stable or economically poor country. They know that the only way to achieve success is to get involved into new society and socialize there. However, they still seek changes in public spheres, such as schools, workplaces, welfare agencies etc. and to reform these institutions in order to get hold of greater recognition of their ethnocultural identities (ibid.).

Kymlicka (2002: 54-58) also urges to distinguish liberal nation-building that suggests immigrants to integrate and get involved into the host state, with nation-building that illiberal democracies try to promote. Some features may be less evident, some of them are more distinctive, but main ones that differ liberal democracies from illiberal ones are such:

1) Common national identity may be promoted in both cases, but still liberal democracies are less likely to impose penalties on those, who decided to stay outside the majority population.

2) Liberal states have less strict policies in public space and more expansive in private, where national identity may be revealed: e.g. official language must be used in parliamentary debates, but at the same time posters and brochures may be printed in different languages unlike illiberal states, where often agitating must be held in official language.

3) In liberal states, one can choose for itself, whether he / she wants to join the nation; in some illiberal democracies one can only be included if he / she has a specific surname, ethnically 'pure', religiously suitable etc.

4) This idea continues with the statement that liberal democracies welcome anyone, who wants to join the nation and more quickly become fully members of the state if he / she wants to learn the language, participate in public sphere and common institutions. One's origin is not that important in this case. By contrast, illiberal democracies often demand cultural integration, as well as accepting the same lifestyle, religion etc.

5) Liberal democracies do not see nation as a supreme value, though it is valuable – but rather as a context in which we share individual values, such as family, faith, pastimes. Illiberal democracies often see nation as an important value and, for example, may even define women as a 'bearer of nation'.

6) Unlike illiberal democracies, liberal ones are getting more cosmopolitan in their views:

this process involves more tolerant and caring attitude towards ethnic identities and their cultures; they may also borrow some practices and, in general, be more opened to other cultures. Illiberal democracies, on the contrary, often trace ‘purity’ of the nation and do not seek to enrich it with another trends. They try to hide their authentic culture and this process may sometimes lead to xenophobic and intolerant rhetoric.

These are some basic distinctions between nation-building states. As Kymlicka points out (2001), nation-building is an essential process in state’s construction. Nation-building, at the same time, should not prevent immigrants to get involved into host society’s ‘life’. Immigrants may not get full access to independent existing and governments cannot provide everybody with comfort living as one had in the country of origin. However, multicultural approach denies ignoring of ethnic minorities and tries to soften their residence with less stressful integration, endowing them with rights and opportunities to preserve their ethnic identity. Thus, ‘immigrant multiculturalism’ must be promoted in liberal states to preserve ethnocultural pluralism in the society and rights should be granted for minorities in order to control that no one is discriminated.

### 2.3 Kymlicka’s implementations of the theory in the Baltics

Kymlicka has also observed case of the Baltic States and tried to apply multiculturalism policy to Estonia and Latvia (2002). In his work, he admitted that Russian-speakers, who were freely and legally moving around one country, do not see themselves as immigrants, rather perceive themselves as ethnic minorities and have rights to think so. However, the Estonian-speaking side claimed them to be unwanted and illegal migrants and their point of view may also exist. Different perception of shared historical background thus helped them to find their own way of integration, combining immigrant model and some form of national cultural non-territorial autonomy. Attempts to lead out Russian-speakers by denying citizenship to the ethnic Russians did not succeed, as most of them decided to stay (Antane and Rsilevich, 1998 in Kymlicka, 2002: 78). Indulgence in obtaining citizenship was seen as a way to integrate a large scale of residents with ‘zero’ citizenship, though the number of Russian-speaking institutions continued to reduce. In Kymlicka’s opinion, this measure was obtained to inspire Russian-speakers that they were ‘immigrants’ still, and that is why their aim was to integrate if they would like to be included into public spheres of Estonian society (Kymlicka, 2002: 78). He also states that many Russians, as he calls

them in his work, accepted these policies as a measure that would help them and their children to integrate. Surveys also showed that many of them (Laitin, 1998: 202 in Kymlicka, 2002: 78) accept that ‘nationalizing’ program, including the requirement to learn the titular language.

Kymlicka points out that immigrant model of integration – together with cultural autonomy – might work if both sides rethink their attitudes (Kymlicka, 2002: 78-79). Majority group, in this case, should also include ‘immigrant’ minority to integrate and succeed in mainstream institutions (ibid.). In Kymlicka’s view, many Russians were afraid that perfect command of Estonian and loyalty to the state would not guarantee them participation in public institutes. In his opinion, these statements may be seen as demonstrations of distrust, and partly that is membership for many Balts is defined in terms of blood, so no cultural integration will provide their acceptance (Laitin, 1998: 126-7, 256 in Kymlicka, 2002: 79). However, latest (on that moment) integration strategy on immigrating minorities have stated that this process is two-sided, so Estonians should also allow minorities integrate.

### 3. REGAINING INDEPENDENCE: INTEGRATION POLICIES OF ESTONIAN REPUBLIC TOWARDS RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITIES

In the third part of my thesis, I would like to speak about the steps the Estonian government has made in order to integrate Russian-speaking minorities: from restoration of independence until nowadays. Furthermore, I will highlight the evaluation and attitude of European organizations towards these policies, as well as Russian Federation's position on this issue. I will also give a brief description of multiculturalism policy, which Estonia has adapted.

After regaining independence in 1990s, Baltic States were to accept nation building, but it was unclear at that time how these republics will manage their newly found sovereignty. Return and integration into European space was sought and was prevalent for Baltic Sea region, manifesting the state within the large geopolitical context. One of the methods Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have accepted in this case was engaging into nation-building process. (Jordan, 2014: 16). Rogers Brubaker identified this policy as a way to restore the primacy of titular nation. He also argued that 'this mode was dominant among all of the states that re-emerged from the collapse of the USSR and Yugoslavia' (Brubaker, 1996: 80-83 in Smith, 2015: 80).

Benedict Anderson describes nation as 'imagined community', a construct of post-industrial age. He describes that the nation is imagined, as the members of one nation, even the smallest one, will never know each other, hear about them or meet, but in their minds, there will be image of their communion (Anderson, 2006: 6 in Jordan, 2011: 5). Nation-building can be understood as a political project and a social process leading towards stronger national integration in modernizing states (Kolsto, 1999) and at the same time Kolsto argues that citizens of ethnic states hold membership automatically, whereas citizens from non-titular groups are seen as members of second order (Kolsto, 2002:16).

At the same time, nation-building is always associated not only with the positive elements, but with the numerous conflicts that are referring to the different identities and interests in society. In the case of Estonia the Russian-speaking community and Estonian one pursue different goals: while the first ones try to avoid the assimilation losing their cultural identity among alien nation, emphasizing on the multicultural structure of the country, the second

ones suppose that the only way to integrate minorities is by imposing the national language in the all spheres of social and political life in Estonia (Kruusvall et al., 2009).

### 3.1 Nation-building in the Baltic Sea Region

The situation that may be now seen in the Baltic States cannot be viewed without a historical context in which Estonia, as its neighbors, too, were put during the history, especially the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After becoming independent states at end of the World War I, they soon had to suffer again from the Nazi Germany as well as later become a part of the USSR. This is a major point of disagreement between Estonians and Russian-speakers: Estonians see this act as occupation and annexation while the Russian Federation still insists on the fact that the inclusion of Baltic States was legally acceptable and actually many Western countries officially acknowledged these three countries as a part of the USSR.

The Soviet period (1944-1991) is characterized by ethnic Estonians as a period of severe repressions of the Estonian population during the World War II, industrialization, compulsory knowledge of Russian and the censorship of their own culture and everything that was 'ideologically suspicious'. The wish for Western welfare, storing the national language became fundamental ideas of the state, as Russians migrated to Estonia during the Soviet times had the opportunity to speak and use their language in everyday life throughout the state (Goble, 1995: 125).

The collapse of USSR has led to massive changes in not only political, but also economic and social life of these countries. The 25 million Russian-speaking population was left behind the borders of Russian Federation. During the Soviet times, the Russian-speaking population in Estonia increased dramatically: for example, in 1945 Estonian population was 94%, whereas by 1989 it comprised 61% due to the immigration of Russian speakers from different parts of the USSR (Smith, 2001: 23). This rapid growth of the minority population led to extremely low levels of Estonian language knowledge among Russian-speakers and a high degree of social separation (Pettai, Kallas, 2009: 106).

By the late 1980s Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania aspired for returning to independence. That's why a lot of people gathered in the streets of these countries to ask for it. From the

1989, a ‘number of measures were adopted to re-establish the primacy of the Estonian language in every sphere of society. These measures followed the ‘*assymetrical bilingualism*’ of the Soviet Union’ (Smith, 2015: 80). In the spring of 1991, voters in the Baltic States were asked to declare themselves for or against independence. In the case of Estonia 78% said ‘yes’ to independence (Taagepera, 1993).

### 3.2 First steps of nation-building: early citizenship policies

In this situation, many Russian-speaking residents now found themselves in a foreign land without a political system and language of its own (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996). Besides that, according to the Citizenship act of 1992, ‘Estonian citizenship was given automatically only to the citizens of the pre-soviet republic of Estonian and their descendants, while non-citizens should had gone through the naturalization process’ (Agarin, 2012: 449). Citizenship policies aimed to either assimilate or out-migrate Russian-speaking minorities (Schulze, 2014: 26). For Linz & Stepan (1996: 417) the citizenship policy was especially important, as refusal to give citizenship during these fundamental times of building a state has left almost 40% of stateless population behind the political life.

In 1992, the government accepted the law of naturalization, which meant that three years of residency and language proficiency along with several examinations including knowledge of language and Constitution would be the requirements for acquiring Estonian citizenship.

Naturalization was also not the easiest way to obtain citizenship, as language requirements frightened many of the Russian speakers from receiving citizenship as by the time of independence only very small amount of non-Estonians could speak new national language (Park, 1994: 73-74). As a result, about 32% of the population became stateless and 7% accepted Russian citizenship so not to become stateless at all (Schulze, 2014: 26).

According to the statistics, only 6% of Estonians claimed this citizenship policy to be anti-democratic and discriminating human rights, while approximately 71% of non-Estonians also thought the same way. 56% of Estonians argued that the policy is normal according to worldwide standards and only 17% of Russian-speaking respondents agreed (Eesti rahvussuhete seireuring, 2000).

‘In 1992, several Human Rights groups, including Helsinki Watch, criticized the Citizenship Law for creating a population divided into Estonian citizens and mostly non-Estonian ‘Russian citizens’. Western political scientists argued that the exclusion of ‘such a large part of the inhabitants from equal citizen rights, as is currently the case of Latvia and Estonia, obviously conflicts with a liberal perception of democracy’ (Norgaard et. al, 1996: 204 in Budryte, 2011: 22). ‘In addition, in January 1995, the Citizenship Law was made even stricter. The residency requirement for those who had entered Estonia after 1992 was changed from two to five years, the requirement to know the Constitution and Citizenship law spelled out, and the language requirement was tightened’. Protests from the President’s Round table on Minorities were ignored (Budryte, 2011: 21). The lack of language knowledge has led to non-participation in political life, as the citizenship was hard to obtain.

### 3.3 Language Policy & Education

It may be claimed that Estonia does not have a legal line between different ethnicities, but at the same time it does exist in the form of the language barrier. In the 1990s the Estonian language was proclaimed as the only official language that would unite the whole society. In the reality, tightening of language policy by the Estonian government led to difficulties among the Russian-speaking community.

In 1998, the government adopted Language Learning Strategy for Non-Estonians. The aim of this document was to state that other languages are also welcomed and should not be ignored. It was necessary to integrate the society and break off the separation tendencies that were being seen. This strategy was planned for the years 1998-2012 and according to this strategy, the Estonian government planned to finance language promotion in educational grounds. Nowadays, language position is mentioned in Constitutional law.

The situation with the knowledge of the Estonian language improves during the years. If in 1989 85% of non-Estonians had no command in official language, then in the year 2000 22% of Russian-speakers stated that they are able to communicate ‘well’ (Kruusvall, 2000: 135). Relatively new statistics in this field have shown that the language issue still improves. Especially it may be seen by comparing youth and older generations. For



example, 69% of non-Estonian young people aged 15-29 is able to speak Estonian well. Among 30-49 years old Russian-speakers 49% can speak official language, while among 65-74 years old residents only 30% have a good command of the language (Paljurahvuseline Eesti, 2015).

As to education reforms, after regaining Independence thoughts of rebuilding education in Estonia took place. It was planned to make the education in the Estonian language only by the year 2001 at the beginning, though later this plan was postponed to the years 2007-2008. However, soon after this idea was left behind as forcing Russian-speaking children to rapidly change their school instruction would have led to serious problems in the whole society due to poor educational results. Besides, the educational system was not ready for total reformation of education. Needed amount of staff with a required command of Estonian was also hard to find. This situation led to a thought that another way of dealing with minorities should be found. For example, a partial education as well as in Estonian and in Russian was suggested.

Nowadays, higher education is mainly in Estonian, though there are still some programs left in Russian language, (e.g. teacher of Russian language). As to secondary schools, humanitarian subjects in Russian schools are already taught in Estonian. Such schools with language immersion may help forcing language learning. Today the percentage of lessons, taught in Estonian and Russian, comprise of 60% against 40% (Soll, 2015: 54).

However, from the 1990's already some parents have sent their children to Estonian schools and kindergartens. Their aim was to secure their kids from being 'marginalized', as this step could guarantee successful integration into Estonian society.

In March 2019, parliamentary elections have showed the highest support for right-centered Reform Party, which promised in its election program to switch the language of teaching to Estonian-only.<sup>2</sup> It included transition to education in Estonian not only in schools, but also in kindergartens. The Estonian president supported this initiative<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://ria.ru/20190304/1551521927.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ria.ru/20190224/1551314345.html>

In Helsinki Decisions of July 1992, OSCE established a new position for a Commissioner on National Minorities. Explanatory Note on Minorities' Educational Rights was published in October 1996 and regulated the importance of children to receive at least primary education in their native language, as well as in kindergartens. Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations also suggested general principles of inter-state relations between majorities and minorities. It declared that the state should not limit rights of minorities and to guarantee equality before the law for everyone. Estonia has also adapted a law on Cultural Autonomy of National Minorities in October 1993, which allows several groups of minorities, such as: Swedish, German, Russian and Jewish, form their own cultural self-government, and to have the use of rights granted them by the Constitution in the field of culture. This document also points on the right of minorities to receive education in their own language.

### 3.4 Review of the integration process in Estonia

After the collapse of the USSR about twenty-five million of Russian-speakers happened to find themselves in newly-formed states without distinct citizenship, identity, and to change their position from privileged to the status of 'minority population' (Brubaker, 1995: 108). As Kymlicka has rightly observed, 'many local Russians still find it hard to adapt to the idea that they are an 'immigrant minority'' (Smith, 2015: 208). Especially for the older population it was hard to adapt to the new policies and the new situation in the state. Large amount of population still had strong Soviet identity (Nimmerfeldt, 2012; Pfoser, 2014; Kolsto, 1996) that was not that easy to change. Estonians at the same time perceive non-citizens that came to live during the occupation 'immigrants' as they do not admit the USSR annexation as legal one (Vetik, 2000:17).

Alongside the restrictive trends, there were some elements of positive minority policy as well:

- a) Estonia took the bold step of according all permanent residents the right to vote at the municipal level in 1992.
- b) Estonia restored its much praised inter-war policy of cultural autonomy for minorities. This constitutional provision was followed in 1993 by a Cultural

Autonomy act, which provided for the creation of minority voter rolls for the election of cultural autonomy boards.

- c) Minority language was allowed to use in those localities, where not least than 50% of residents were Russian-speaking.
- d) In January 1997 Estonia became one of the first countries in Central and Eastern Europe to ratify the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities.

At the same time, each of these concessions has its own drawbacks (Pettai & Kallas, 2009: 109). By the late 1990s had serious problems in integrating minorities, which may be seen in governmental statistics.

- a) According to the 2000 census, Estonia had a population of 1.370.052 people of whom only 80 per cent had a citizenship.
- b) Naturalization rates had fallen from a high of 22.773 in 1996 to 3.090 in 2001 (Kodakondsus- ja Migratsiooniamet 2006: 19 in Bijl & Verweij, 2012: 133)
- c) The labor market continued to be ethnically segmented and majority of non-Estonians believed that ethnic Estonians had an advantage over them in a range of societal spheres including getting jobs, promotions or greater pay (Pavelson 2000: 89-116)

'It was against this backdrop that the impulse began for the formation of a real minority integration policy' (Bijl & Verweij, 2012: 130). New documents were suggested to integrate the minorities, though minority representatives criticized them for having assimilative tendencies, rather than to be multicultural-friendly. In this tense situation, Russian-speakers were aimed to adapt to the changing ethnic policy. The breakup of USSR collapsed also the Soviet identity, which was the main identification frame for Russians and plunged them into the profound identity crisis (Kolsto, 1996: 609). Soviet identity was mostly based on civic and political unity with the state, rather than with concrete ethnic identity. It comprised of certain ideology, symbols and norms, as well as semantic place and communication (Nimmerfeldt, 2012: 261). In 1993 59% of Russian-speakers in Estonia have stated that they were still representatives of Soviet culture (Kirch and Kirch 1995: 53 in Nimmerfeldt, 2012: 261). Furthermore, it is still one of the possible options in constructing one's identity, together with the feeling of the Soviet nostalgia (Vihalemm and

Masso, 2007: 75 in Nimmerfeldt, 2012: 261). There are several reasons why Russian-speakers have experienced difficulties in identity formation: first one is that Russian-speakers, unlike Estonians, did not mainly identify themselves with some specific ethnicity, but rather had associated themselves with 'Soviets' (Vihalemm and Masso, 2007: 73 in Nimmerfeldt, 2012: 262). Secondly, Estonians have gone through the rise of national identity during the singing revolution and while regaining independence. At the same time, Russian-speakers were put under the pressure after nation-building process had begun. Furthermore, they also had to deal with negative attitudes from the majority population, also had been blamed for years of Soviet occupation. (Ehala, 2008 in Nimmerfeldt, 2012: 262). Kolsto (1996) has outlined several types of identities of Russian-speakers, or so-called 'new' Russian diaspora in Baltic States: 1) those, who associated themselves mostly with Russia and its culture, 2) those, who transformed their identity into new identity, basically Russian one, 3) they could assimilate and associate themselves mostly with dominant culture in their state of residence. However, the most probable scenario for forming Russian-speakers' identity would be the second variant (Kolsto, 1996 in Nimmerfeldt, 2012: 262). Younger generations aged 18-35 mostly do not have connections with Soviet era and that is why 'new' identity for them is not something specific. However, Soviet identity of their parents could also influence theirs (Nimmerfeldt, 2012: 263).

### 3.5 The role of European institutions in minority integration

Various norms sets of the European Union were made to control the situation in new European states towards national minorities. They were regularized in several conventions, e.g. "Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities" (UN, 1992), the European Charter for the Protection of Regional and Minority Languages (COE, 1992), the Helsinki Decisions (OSCE, 1992), the Copenhagen Criteria for EU Accession (EU, 1993), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (COE, 1994), and the "Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities" (OSCE, 1998) (Schulze, 2010: 364). Their aim is to admit the right of minorities to protect their culture and language with the preservation of their linguistic and cultural identities, at the same time feeling themselves equal with majority group (Brosig, 2006: 27). Estonia has adopted all of these

policies, however the European Charter remained unsigned, as for the Estonian government the questions concerning language policies are still arguable (Brown, 2006: 69)

In the situation where newly emerged post-Soviet states aimed to seek for the EU admission into the European space, these countries were obliged to fulfill the necessary demands.

Influence of the EU has played its role in managing the integration process in Estonia. In the late 1990s progress has been made in the situation with Russian-speaking minorities. In 1998 the Estonian government adopted a document named *the Integration strategy of non-Estonians into Estonian Society: the Principles of Estonia's national Integration Policy*. This document included changes in language and citizenship policies. Furthermore, it was the first document, which marked the issue of minority population in its agenda. Exams were now easier to pass, naturalization process for children born to stateless parents was also simplified and a new integration program with the Legal Chancellor was created (Schulze, 2010: 365). In 2000 new program emerged: *Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007*. The first one was a dash in idea of ethnic policy in the country: it considered education to lead an important role in breaking the barriers between two different ethnic groups. It also reduced the number of stateless persons and in the end it was more open-minded towards Russian-speaking population with a hope that Russians would be soon perceived as 'resource', not a 'problem' (Vetik, 2012: 29) At the same time this document has been criticized, too. 'For example, Hanne-Margaret Birckenbach stated that: 'the concept launched by the Estonian government prolongs the ethnic orientation of Estonian nation-building. It is based on ethnic priorities rather than on republican considerations. It aims at defending the ethnic dominance against international demands for equality' (Birckenbach, 1998: 10 in Vetik & Helemäe, 2011: 49). The policy of the year 2000 made a new step in policy making. It represented the integration as a two-side process in which both Estonians and Russians should be involved. It aimed to find the balance between unity of nation and saving cultures in Estonia. *State Integration strategy 2008-2013* has already weakened the stress on Estonian cultural dominance and admitted the existence of other cultures in the country (Cianetti, 2015: 140). The third document was based on the previous one, describing the integration as a peaceful coexistence. All the people living in the state should not be discriminated regardless of their ethnic origin and at the same time they should share the ideas written in the Estonian constitution and should take part in social, economic and cultural affairs. However, it was still criticized as the Estonian culture was

still on the top of the hierarchy, because of the significance of titular nation's culture and the high value of official language's knowledge (Cianetti, 2015: 199). *The Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia: 'Integrating Estonia 2020' (SISCE)* that was planned for the period from 2014 to the year 2020 is also not very much different from the two previous ones. What may be marked is that the strategy highlighting the necessity of developing multicultural society and guarantees the preservation of not only Estonian culture, people and language, but also the right for each other individual to preserve his or her ethnic identity (SISCE: 3). Individuals with a different cultural background at the same time participate actively in cohesive Estonian society and share common democratic values.

However, several studies doubt that policies of EU for the minority rights in Eastern Europe have truly succeeded. As Schulze (2010) states in her article these requirements did not fill their maximum and have just accepted some minimum set of standards. The language examination was made easier but at the same time, it was not nullified for the elderly people. The government still rejects to give an automatic citizenship for children born to stateless parents (Schulze, 2010: 365). She claims that there is still no dialogue between two groups and this process is not a two-way one. Furthermore, there is no educating program for the titular nation concerning minority's culture, language and the diversity of cultures and tolerance (Schulze, 2010: 365).

Estonian ethnic policy, in fact, has shown both achievements and failures. The biggest one is that a large-scale violent conflict has been avoided (Kolsto, 2002). The main sources to check the effectiveness of the integration policy are sociological studies and surveys conducted (Laurustin & Vetik, 2000). The surveys reveal that there are pros and cons in integration dynamics. The positive sides are: knowledge of the Estonian language has increased, the contact between two ethnic groups has also increased, both groups recognize each other more etc. (Vetik, 2012:33). At the same time, negative trends reveal that the amount of non-citizens wishing to obtain Estonian citizenship decreased (that was the most surprising result), respondents had a weak trust towards the state and socio-economic inequality still takes place (ibid.).

The above mentioned fact may be described as the biggest contradiction of the Estonian modernization project: on the one hand, the government aims to restore the unity and homogeneity of the state, and these attempts may be called as 'nation-building' (Vetik,

1999: 15). On the other hand, a large amount of minority population is being under the pressure of losing their identity. Estonian historical background is complicated and that makes the whole picture even vaguer (Vetik, 1999: 15)

However, researchers as Will Kymlicka have already suggested the idea of political multiculturalism that would be suitable for today's Estonia. It would be a good solution, if minorities would be given rights to political and cultural independence, while at the same time promising their loyalty to the present country of residence or birthplace.

### 3.6 Russian Federation's influence on minorities' integration

Not only European institutions had to regulate integration processes that took place in Estonia after 1991. Estonia needed to take into account Eastern neighbor's demands concerning Russian-speaking minorities. Russia has declared itself as a 'protector' of Russophones in Estonia and convinced 'Estonian government to change its restrictive citizenship and language policies' (Melvin, 1998: 37 in Schulze, 2010: 366). Relations between Russia, Latvia and Estonia depended on 'how the rights of ethnic minorities were protected in those countries,' stated Alexander Yakovenko, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman in an interview. (Daily News Bulletin, Moscow, 17.06.2002). He added that:

'More than just a purely abstract analysis of compliance with international standards is required. Top priority should be given to whether [laws] meet the legal interests of hundreds of thousands of people, whether they help resolve the key problems facing ethnic minorities, when a lot of people do not have any citizenship, as well as the restriction of language, education and other rights.'(Daily News Bulletin, Moscow, 17.06.2002)

It is now hard to define, which side has influenced the decisions on policy making in Estonia the most – was it the European Union and its institutions or Russia. Their activism was strong and simultaneous. Furthermore, Russia has used different platforms, such as the UN, EU, OSCE and NATO to criticize Estonian policies (Schulze, 2010: 366).

Researchers evaluate the citizenship policy, which was adopted by Russia and which granted holders of 'zero citizenship' the right to obtain Russian citizenship, in different ways. For example, Vetik (2006 in Schulze, 2010: 367) has argued that this measure has

affected naturalization policies and efforts of the Estonian Republic to integrate minorities. Those, who were excluded from the right to obtain Estonian citizenship, chose to apply for Russian one and this option has separated them from the newly made state even more. These residents tend to be the most poorly integrated and have greater loyalty to Russia, than Estonia (Schulze, 2010: 365). However, the situation when one has to exist with alien citizenship also tends to be discriminative and fear of being overboard of public life seems to be understandable and clear.

Russia's activism indeed created ambiguous or even defensive reactions among Estonian establishment, and has glowed the tensions between Russia and Estonia even more (Schulze, 2010: 366-367). The first big incident has occurred in spring 2007, when the Bronze Soldier was removed from downtown Tallinn. This crisis had a negative effect on relations between two countries (ibid.). Furthermore, it has raised to the surface the problem of division of two nations, which will be reviewed more detailed in the fifth part of my thesis.

Russia's response to the incident in April 2007 followed fulminantly. Pro-Kremlin youth groups organized protests in Russia and one of them blocked Estonian embassy. Furthermore, series of massive cyber-attacks on banks and websites have also spoiled relations of two countries (ibid.). Estonia has accused Russia of stirring up interethnic conflicts in media, as well as organizing rioting in Tallinn. Generally, the conflict, which has begun as the one between Russian-speakers and native Estonians, has turned out to be bigger matter with intervention of Russian government and media. It did not prevent the removal of the statue; however it cannot be unobvious that Russian government had an impact on this issue (Schulze, 2010: 368).

### 3.7 Estonia as a multicultural society

As both Estonians and Russian-speakers represent very different cultures, with a different view on their historical background (Petersoo, 2007), it is essential that the views on integration models that would be suitable for both groups may vary.

There are modernist and postmodernist approaches that Vetik (2000) has discussed in his



work. It suggests that there are several models of dealing with national minorities. While one of them suggests creating one 'whole nation' that would share loyalty, culture and language, there is another one that insists that cultural pluralism is essential and should not be abandoned. Both discourses exist in Estonia and it is impossible to say which method is proper. For Estonians, who at last may proceed to nation-building after 50 years of occupation the first approach is viewed as suitable one. For Russian-speakers, it is perceived as injustice and nationalism towards a large amount of population. Both of these points of view are true and may have a right to exist.

As already mentioned in the previous parts, some integration policies of the end of the 1990s have led Estonian researchers to the thoughts that a kind of multicultural shift in the integration policies takes place and this may be noticed while studying integration strategies of the years 1998 and 2000. *Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2008* represented by the Estonian Government was based on John Rex's model of multiculturalism as it also speaks of the importance in public and private spheres. It may be summarized as such: cultural pluralism, strong common core and preserving of Estonian culture (Avikson, 2000: 52).

*Cultural pluralism* in this case is described as possibility of minority cultures to preserve their language and culture, acquiring education in mother tongue, and adapting to the Estonian society, not assimilating.

*Strong common core* in Estonian case is a sharing of behavioral and interaction models, values and attitudes.

*Development of Estonian culture and its preservation* means that though Estonia will remain Estonian-centered cultural space, it does not mean that minorities should abandon their cultures in order to get involved into Estonian society. They should have possibilities to develop their own cultures, too (Riiklik programm, 2000: 19-20 in Avikson, 2000: 52)

In addition, this document marks the necessity of finding the 'golden middle' in unity and difference. The unity is seen in knowledge of the official language and obtaining citizenship, while differences are seen in recognition of cultural pluralism. Furthermore, integration should not be considered as a one-sided process, which comes from one or another side only, but rather to be a shared intention. The key issues for the Estonian researches and

social scientist was to combine these parallel terms into one framework and in the *Integration Strategies 2014-2020* these challenges were broadened with such integration aims:

- 1) The openness of society should be increased, including Estonian-speaking population, that would support integration strategies and their attitude towards it would be friendly
- 2) Supporting permanent residents with culture and languages different from Estonian
- 3) Adaptation and integration of new arrivals as a growing target group should also be done supportively (Taavits, 2016: 10).

Though the aim to preserve Estonian culture and language is still important, I have noticed that during the years the attitude towards minority population still softens. It may be observed even by looking through the titles of these documents. If the first document still had such mark as ‘integration of non-Estonians’ in its name, then in the last document we may note that not even the title, but the whole document itself tries to avoid this ‘selective’ term.

After regaining independence, Estonia began nation-building process, which aim was to restore Estonian culture and language. The European organizations found this procedure to be offensive for minorities and this was the reason why the first integration strategy appeared in 1998. Further documents were more minority-friendly, as they spoke less about the value of Estonian culture, but also mentioned minority issues that were also important for the whole society. Estonian government implemented their Integration Strategy of the year 2000 based on multiculturalism theory of J. Rex, though rethinking it for the needs of Estonian society and its own features. The latest integration program still mentions the basic facts from the second strategy, aiming to save Estonian language and loyalty towards the state, at the same time preserving cultures of all the minority groups in the state.

## 4. DATA & METHOD

### 4.1 Data collection

The research results were accomplished with the semi-structured interviews with Russian-speaking youth and ‘mini-survey’ with the representatives of Estonian-speaking youth living in Estonia. Interviews and survey were conducted with the residents from Narva, Rapla and Tallinn. The questions were prepared beforehand, but still some additional questions were also asked when I wanted to broaden the interviewee’s answer.

Overall, 20 interviews were held with the young people aged 17 to 28 years. Russian-speaking representatives were from families with both parents speaking Russian. Two interviewees’ closest family members (mothers/fathers) were born in Russia, Ukraine or Belorussia and moved to Estonia during childhood or while young. Four interviewees’ parents had mixed families: one relative was born in Estonia, while another moved from Soviet Russia or other Soviet Russian-speaking republic. Another four interviewees’ closest relatives were both born in Estonia (though their grandparents still moved from Soviet Russia). Among this category, one interviewee even had Estonian roots, as grandmother was Estonian married to Russian immigrant. Until now, half of that family is still Estonian (aunts, sisters); though concretely interviewee’s closest relatives with each other speak Russian only.

Furthermore, all the respondents had a different educational background and language-usage experience. Five of them were studying in Estonian language while obtaining secondary and/or higher education. One of them even used Estonian from early childhood because of going to Estonian kindergarten. All of them are still using Estonian actively as their place of work and collective is mainly or totally Estonian. Another five respondents were studying in Russian language: two of them used English later, while obtaining higher education and nowadays they are not using Estonian language much, as their place of work demands using English; another two respondents don’t use Estonian much, as they still live in Narva, where the majority of population consists of 95% of Russian-speaking residents (Pfoser, 2014: 272), though their command of Estonian is good. Another resident from Narva, who has recently moved to live in Tallinn, uses Estonian on her workplace most of the time, but at the same time, I found it more suitable to refer her to this group, as her basic educational background was connected with the Russian language and its usage in

everyday life.

I used snowballing method to find participants for my research. Respondents were invited to take part in interviews via Facebook post. Seven of the interviewees were acquainted with me before (they were residents of Tallinn). In my post I have mentioned that I was searching for young people aged 17-35 from Narva and Tallinn, whose closest relatives were Russian-speakers. My Facebook post included brief description of my master degree's theme and the theme of the future discussion. As I had no Facebook-friends who lived in Narva, I asked my friends to suggest me respondents, who would be interested in giving an interview. I had been suggested four young people from Narva, whom I contacted directly. I described my intention to research young people's view on integration policies in Estonia and their view on multiculturalism. Three of them responded to me that they agreed to take part in my research. One of the respondents did not answer, as he have not noticed the message.

As to Estonian-speaking youth, I did not aim to know their roots and family background, considering that this was not important in this type of research. They interested me as a majority population and therefore I decided to concentrate my attention on the basic questions, concerning theory of multiculturalism and cohesion of two main nationalities. Furthermore, Estonians, being a majority population, mostly did not migrate or had immigrant parents.

Google Forms were used as a tool to know Estonian-speakers' view on the theme. I distributed the link on my questionnaire among Estonian-speakers that I am acquainted with and whose age suited my research. I also used Facebook to contact them by using direct messages. I have suggested fifteen young people of different sex and age to take part in my research. Ten of them completed the form.

#### 4.2 Interview scheme and conduction

Interviews were planned with the regard to study today's youth identity and their opinion on the way multiculturalism policy takes place in Estonia. There were two main methods of collecting necessary data: via Skype and via Google Forms.

I have composed interview questions according to the research questions and hypothesis that were mentioned earlier. My questions may be conditionally divided into two main blocks: the first block contained questions about ethnic identity, family roots and background. Another block was dedicated to the discussion of multiculturalism, including the integration policy in Estonia. The interviewees were asked about their perception of multiculturalism and their opinion both on this topic and integration policies in Estonia. Besides, they were offered to discuss the present situation in Estonia: whether they feel that modern Estonian society has problems with cohesion of Russian-speakers and Estonian-speakers. I also wanted to know, whether young people feel any threat to their culture and language.

Before the beginning of each interview, I asked respondents to be free in revealing their thoughts and ideas and not to be afraid of speaking. I also wanted to know their choice concerning anonymity when I conducted interviews via Skype. Practically all of them allowed me to write their name and age without surnames and one respondent decided to remain anonymous allowing mentioning interviewee's sex and age. However, I decided just to mention sex and age of every speaker. Google Forms did not collect personal information such as name or surname by default. All of the respondents who gave answers via Google Forms also stayed anonymous.

The data was recorded via Amolto Call Recorder program that helps to save Skype calls directly to the computer. The average length of the interview was approximately 45-50 minutes. The shortest one was 33 minutes long. All the interviews with Russian-speakers were conducted in the Russian language; though some interviewees suggested using English if it was more convenient for me. However, I decided that the usage of mother tongue would more accurately reveal the thoughts and ideas of respondents.

Google Forms were also relatively convenient method of gathering data: they allowed interviewees to write their answers in details and gave some time to think on the answers. In addition, I have left some space to their extra remarks and thoughts on the theme. Some of the respondents used this column to explain or broaden their answers with necessary comments. Among positive moments of working with Google Forms, I could highlight the convenience of this method: I did not have to transcribe my data anymore. Though Google Forms is faster and easier way to get data, it also had several disadvantages: once

respondent gave its answers, I could not trace him/her and ask to give a comment or precise their thoughts. The second factor may be considered as both an advantage and disadvantage: though respondents had time to think of their answers, they also may have tried to write them down more correctly, neatly choosing their words and expressions. At the same time, anonymity could ensure their freedom of speech. When I took oral interviewees, I had faced some situations, when respondents were literally taken by surprise with my questions, concerning, as an example, multiculturalism term. They could not think of the answer immediately and this situation made them worry, hesitate or feel uncomfortable. Even though I have told them about the multiculturalism policy and integration policies that Estonia adapted during the last decade, for some of them questions about multiculturalism were seen as intricate. However, I always tried to comfort them and convince that I was not in hurry and one could think on the answer as long as he/she needed.

Furthermore, I used online versions of main Estonian newspapers to find additional information on the current events that are happening or have happened in the state. Political situation in Estonia has started to change from the end of the year 2018 - that is why it was interesting to follow how society shifts in terms of new circumstances. I used and analyzed statements of people and articles that were published in media. Usually I googled key words of my topic of interest. They could be used in both English, Russian and Estonian. I used only Estonian news portals that are famous and known as reliable ones. The main two were Postimees and ERR.

### 4.3 Data analysis

In my qualitative research, I decided to choose qualitative content analysis while working on results. Content analysis, according to (Cole 1988 in Elo & Kyngäs, 2007: 107) is a method of analyzing written, verbal and visual messages. It was at first used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to analyze political agenda, but today it is used not only for these purposes, but for example in journalism, sociology, psychology and business, furthermore, showing stable growth (Neundorf, 2002 in Elo & Kyngäs, 2007: 108).

There are several approaches while dealing with the process of analysis: deductive and inductive (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007: 109). Inductive content analysis is used when there is a

lack of knowledge or previous studies on the subject; it may also be fragmented. Deductive analysis, on the contrary, is preferred when the research is based on the previous studies and the aim of the study is theory testing (Kyngäs & Vanhanen, 1999 in Eto & Kyngas, 2007: 109). Preparation for the analysis also demands choosing, whether analyze only manifest or the latent content as well (ibid: 109): the latter involves noticing and analyze silence, laughter, posture and pauses, but in my situation it was not necessary, as eye-to-eye contact was avoided.

Deductive analysis considers one of two categorization matrixes structured in unconstrained. Choice depends on the aim of the study (ibid: 111): I chose the first one as I was interested only in those aspects, that fit the matrix of analysis. All the interviewees were coded, which means I had to transcribe the received data and organize it in some way. Codes were further transformed into categories that helped me to sort it by various themes. My codes connected with identity issues were taken from Soll's (2015) research on the ethnic identity of Russian-speaking youth. While analyzing multiple variants that were identified during the analysis of received data, I decided to choose Soll's et al. (2015) model of Russian-speakers' identities. They were divided as such: secure Russian identity, insecure Estonian-Russian identity and alternative identity. I was asking my respondents, what was their ethnic identity. When they gave their answers, I wanted to know, what it meant for them to be Russian / Estonian-Russian or a person with alternative identity. As content analysis proves to be a method for analyzing documents, it also allows researchers to test theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007: 108).

#### 4.4 Ethics

For more than twenty years the topic of Russophones in Baltic States had been actively discussed as by governments of the republics, so by European organizations and community. Though the development of relationships between majorities and minorities seems to progress, the themes of Soviet occupation for Estonians, as well as rationalization of USSR's politics or Soviet lifestyle by Russian side (Pfoser, 2015), are still among acute ones.

As I am also a part of Russian-speaking youth in Estonia, while conducting interviews in particular and during my research in generally, I needed to stay neutral and impartial while

discussing the topic.

Furthermore, as some questions were hard to answer right away, I tried to neither hurry, nor show the interviewee that the question was simple. On the contrary, I tried to help him / her sometimes with nodding, smiles and assent, so the interviewee would feel comfortable with its own thoughts and reasoning.

Before the interviews, I notified participants that there were no true or false answers in our conversation and they may have revealed their understanding of the present issue without any worries of being misunderstood or accused.

As to other aspects of ethics, data safety was also very important in my research. All the interviewees were asked if they wanted their thoughts to be revealed under the pseudonyms or if they wanted to stay completely anonymous. Practically all of them asked me to write down their first names only (without usage of fake names) and mention their age. However, one of the respondents decided to stay completely anonymous, that is why I decided, that there were no need to use real names or pseudonyms and later mention just sex and age. In addition, Google Forms did not provide me with names or any other concrete data except respondent's sex and age: that is why it was more logical to do it all the same.

In conclusion, I may also mark that there were no special cases or inconvenient situations from interviewer and respondents' side. Practically all of the speakers wanted to share their thoughts and ideas freely and there was no fear or worries about their anonymity or about the accuracy / correctness of their views. Furthermore, in my opinion, many of the respondents seemed to sound or speak rather enthusiastically, which showed that they were interested in the theme and maybe even wanted to speak out.



## 5. PORTRAIT OF YOUNG GENERATION IN ESTONIA: IDENTITY AND VIEWS ON MULTICULTURALISM

### 5.1 Russian-speaking youth's ethnic identity

In my research, one of the aims was to show how identity of youngsters relates to their views on multiculturalism: it was important to define, what identity actually was and which form it may take. While analyzing multiple variants that were identified during the analysis of received data, I decided to choose Soll's et. al (2015) model of Russian-speakers' identities. They were divided as such: secure Russian identity, insecure Estonian-Russian identity and alternative identity. I was asking my respondents, what was their ethnic identity. When they gave their answers, I wanted to know, what did it meant to them to be Russian / Estonian-Russian or a person with alternative identity.

#### 5.1.1. Russian identity

When interviewees were asked about their identity, the ones that claimed themselves to be Russians, indeed did not hesitate with their answer. For them it was absolutely clear that they were Russians. The most popular answer implied their cultural connection with their historical homeland. Indeed, ethnic identity is mostly based on language and culture (Küün, 2008: 185). Their feeling of belonging to the cultural grounds was expressed as such:

‘For me to be Russian means to speak Russian language, remember the history and customs, and in general, to remember my roots’. (F, 25, Tallinn)<sup>4</sup>

The Russian language, as a key fact for construction of confident Russian identity, was important for the respondents as it could allow them to be closely related to Russian culture and literature. One of the interviewees admitted that ‘some things are known, understood and clear just because of the knowledge of Russian’ (F, 27, Tallinn).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Dlya menya byt' russkoy zhachit govorit' na russkom, pomnit svoyu istoriyu i obychai, i voobshe pomnit svoi korni.’

<sup>5</sup> ‘Nekotorye veshi ya znayui ponimayu tolko potomu, chto znayu russkiy yazyk’

At the same time, not all of the respondents understood their identity as such. For them, knowledge of mother tongue was the main block for identity construction. Linguistic identity means correlation with specific language and it plays crucial role in development of ethnic identity. Linguistic communication is also important as through this mean people learn new facts, ideas and thoughts. Researchers claim that the ethnic identity of non-Estonians depends on their command of Estonian language and the regularity of communicating on official language (Rannut, 2005 in Küün, 2008: 186). However, my interviews showed that this is not always a case and people who frequently communicate with Estonians and speak Estonian language fluently may also strongly identify themselves with their mother tongue.

‘I went to Estonian kindergarten and school <...>. My parents once got terrified when I came back home from kindergarten and spoke Estonian only, sang Estonian songs etc. However, I definitely feel myself Russian, it’s no doubt about that. But for me being Russian, does not mean anything, I feel myself Russian only because of the language knowledge’. (F, 26, Tallinn)<sup>6</sup>

One of the most interesting answers concerning Russian identity was connected not only with a cultural relation to the state, but also with an ethnic pride of being a Russian.

‘For me being Russian means to be myself. I was born like that and I do not regret about that. There are things on Earth that only Russians can understand and I am very happy to be Russian’. (F, 25, Tallinn)<sup>7</sup>

However, ethnic pride did not evaluate later, when our talk was continued about relations between Estonians and Russians/Russian-speakers. It was not mentioned as superiority over some culture or act of nationalism, but rather as love for language and Russian mentality or mindset.

Cheskin (2015: 79) admits that situation in Baltic States may be described as a ‘memory

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Ya khodila v estonskiy detskiy sadik i shkolu <...>. Kak-to raz ya prishla iz detskogo sadika i moi roditeli uzhasnulis’ ot togo, chto ya govorju tolko po-estonski, poju estonskie pesni itd. Tem ne menea, ya vse ravno schitayu sebya russkoj, v etom net somnjenja. No dlya menya byt russkoy nichego ne znachit. Ya russkaya tolko potomu, chto znayu etot yazyk.’

<sup>7</sup> ‘Dlya menya byt russkoy znachit byt soboy. Ya takoy rodilas’ i ya ob etom ne zhaley. Na Zemle est’ stolko vsego, chto mogut ponjat’ tolko russkie, i ya rada byt’ russkoy.’

war’, which implies different interpretation of XX century’s history. Russian-speakers mostly deny the fact that Estonia was occupied by Soviet Union and tend to associate Soviet invasion with positive sides, such as the creation of industry, job security, free medicine and education. Cheskin also suggests that Russia still plays vital role in forming identity in Estonia and Latvia. Consumption of Russian media and adoption of political memory narratives make Russophones feel close cultural connections with Russian state.

However, I suppose that this view is mostly true for older generations. It is no secret that Russian Federation may still influence on Russian-speakers in the Baltics, but at the same young people are more mobile in their mindsets: they scoop their knowledge from Internet and in general have more access to independent resources and media, unlike their parents and grandparents, who are accustomed to believe TV broadcast. This may also be true for Estonian-speakers. Some of the representatives from majority population still remember the occupation years.

#### 5.1.2. Insecure Estonian-Russian identity

Valk et al. (2011: 37) mentioned Tajfel’s (1981) social identity theory which suggests that people who do not want to be associated with negatively valued group or that are discriminated, give up one’s ethnic identity. This may happen, when person’s original identification was not strong.

Approximately half of the respondents were not sure about their identity or found it hard to give a precise answer. The answers were also different and while some people correlated their mixed identity with good knowledge of both languages and plans to reside in Estonia in the future, others related themselves to the European lifestyle and different mentality from Russians in Russia. They mention some kind of ‘Europeanness’ that separates them. EU as a globalized structure also influences the identity formation of young people in Estonia.

‘I cannot totally relate myself to Russian, because part of my family is Estonian, I was born in Estonia and though we all were raised on the First Channel (Perviy

Kanal)<sup>8</sup> we have a different mindset with Russians, in my opinion. I can say that I am someone in between, as for example when I watch sport or musical competitions I always cheer for both Estonians and Russians. That's why I am someone in the middle'. (F, 25, Tallinn)<sup>9</sup>

Sense of belonging to a certain culture does not always play a vital role in formulating and ethnic identity. Some of the respondents noticed that the Russian part of the word 'Estonian-Russian' in this case means cultural relation to the Russia, but at the same time this cultural construct did not form a strong sense of belonging to Russian nationality. Furthermore, for someone it was mostly connected with European mentality, rather than Estonian.

'In my family it was always important to preserve Russian culture, <...>, but as I was also raised on American cartoons and TV channels and Western culture was also close to me. I think it more quickly spread in Estonia, than in Russia. I feel that I have some mixed mentality and many people in Estonia [Russian-speakers] do have it, too. I may say that this is a half Russian-half European mindset' (F, 24, Tallinn)<sup>10</sup>

Kirch (2004: 20) also mentioned a new type of identity that eventually will be on the first place and that is a Euro-Russian identity.

It is worth noticing that while some of the respondents have a strong Russian identity that refers to the mother tongue then others do not highlight this feature as a dominant one in

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<sup>8</sup> The First Channel is the most popular news and entertaining TV channel in Russia. In Baltic States, such as Estonia and Latvia it is also quite popular among Russian-speaking community, though in Lithuania it has already been blocked for information distortion about January events in Lithuania in the year 1991 (<https://www.calvertjournal.com/news/show/3526/lithuania-demands-two-russian-tv-channels-to-admit-biased-broadcasting>).

<sup>9</sup> 'Ya ne mogu sebya polnostyu otнести k russkoy, tak kak chast' moei semyi – estoncy, ya rodilas' v Estonii, i hotya my vse rosli na Pervom Kanale, u nas raznye, po-moemu, obrazy myshleniya s russkimi. Ya mogu skazat', chto ya kto-to poseredine. Ya, naprimer, kogda idut kakie-to muzykalnye ili sportivnye sostyazaniya, vseгда boleyu i za russkih, i za estoncev.'

<sup>10</sup> V moey semje vseгда bylo vazhno sokhranyat' russkuyu kulturu <...>, no ya takzhe rosла na amerikanskikh multikakh i kanalakh, poetomu zapadnaya kultura mne tozhe ochen' blizka. Ya dumayu ona bystree rasprostranilas' zdes', chem v Rossii. Ya dumayu, chto u menya smeshanniy mentalitet i u mnogih drugih ljudej v Estonii tozhe tak. Ya dumayu, chto eto kakoy-to polurusskij, poluevropejskiy mentalitet.'

identity construction. Still, linguistic background often plays vital role in forming identity, when only language completes the ‘Russian’ part of ethnic identity.

‘I am in such a geopolitical position, when both Russia and Estonia are very close to me. But <...> Estonia and the European lifestyle is closer to me. ‘Russian’ in me is only language, that is my mother tongue, but besides that, there is nothing more. (M, 28, Narva) <sup>11</sup>

The case of Narva is also an interesting one, as this region is historically formed as predominantly Russian-speaking region with a small motivation in learning Estonian language. In the year 1993, the law on Cultural Autonomy was accepted that allowed regions with high density of minority population to use their language in clerical work. In this situation, Narva was believed to be ‘marginalized’ region due to its close location to Russian Federation and relatively poor knowledge of official language. However, as my interviews and latest research shows, Russian-speaking youth in Narva is highly motivated to learn Estonian. Furthermore, practically all humanitarian subjects in school are taught in Estonian; this approach allows students to have language practice, which is important for language learning process.

The plans to connect future life with this country are also may be distinguished as a part of identity construct.

‘I identify myself with someone in the middle. I know Russian, I also know Estonian, but I am planning to stay here in the future, to study at the University in here’. (F, 17, Narva)<sup>12</sup>

Russian-speaking youth in Narva defines population of Ida-Virumaa<sup>13</sup> as opposite to the population that resides in Western parts of Estonia. Some of them while comparing Narva and Tallinn shared thoughts that the streets in Tallinn were more beautiful, clean, quiet and well groomed, lifestyle is also more exciting. When I asked their opinion on the reason

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<sup>11</sup> Ya v takoy geopoliticheskoy situacii, chto i Estoniya, i Rossiya odinakovo blizki dlya menya. No <...> Evropejskiy obraz zhizni dlya menya blizhe. Russkogo vo mne – tolko moi rodnoy yazyk, nichego bolshe.’

<sup>12</sup> ‘Ya identificiruyu sebya s kem-to pseredine. Ya znayu russkiy, ya takzhe znayu estonskiy, no ya planiruyu tut ostavatsya i uchitsya v universitete.’

<sup>13</sup> A county in Estonia which lies near the Russian border with Narva in its center

why such situation takes place in their region, they pointed to the fact that ‘Russian mentality’ prevails in Ida-Virumaa, which makes people lazy and noisy in lots of aspects.

‘I think Russians in Estonia, especially in Narva have this kind of settled way of life, all they want to do is to complain. Estonians, at least the ones I knew and worked with, are very hard-working, it can be said that they are obsessed with their work’. (M, 28, Narva)<sup>14</sup>

While comparing Estonian youth with Russian-speaking youth, the most popular answer was that Estonians are very reserved even in contrast with Estonian-Russians. Russian-speakers characterized themselves as open-minded, sincere and openhearted people. Estonians were at the same time described as ‘good people’ but too reserved and calm. It was also mentioned that it takes time to get to know Estonian person well, while Russian-speakers ‘may become real friends from the first day of acquaintance’. It was also mentioned that Estonians are very good as colleagues as they do not try to enter your personal life and they are not that interested in it, as Russians.

This paragraph may be concluded with the idea, that more and more young people in Estonia are obtaining this mixed type of identity. This fact was already mentioned by a large amount of researchers (Kirch, 2004; Fiškina, 2000). They argued that the new type of Russians emerges that is not already similar not only to Russians in Russia, but for example, Russians in America, too. As Kirch notices: young people are becoming multicultural, and if they will preserve their language, culture and ethnic identity, they will still no longer be identical to the Russian youth in Russian Federation (2004: 18). These changes in identity formation may be seen both as positive and negative: from the one hand, it is association with a globalized world, Europe, in particular. At the same time it may be described as assimilation process and a fear of being related to ‘negative others’.

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Ya dumayu, chto russkie v Estonii, osobenno v Narve, u nih takoy osedliiy obraz zhizni: vsyo, chto oni hotyat delat’ – eto zhalovatsya. Estoney, po krainey mere te, kogo ya znayu i s kotorymi rabotal, - ochen’ trudolyubivye. Mozhno dazhe skazat’, chto oni pomeshany na svoey rabote’.

### 5.1.3. Alternative identity

Though language construct is often the main one in identity formation, it is not always a case. Sometimes motherland which was left many years ago may also be a ‘brick’ in ethnic identity construction. One of the respondents was born in Belorussia and left its homeland in early childhood. Though interviewee’s mother tongue is Russian and it admits that in Belorussia practically everyone uses Russian in daily life that is what it explained:

‘It’s a good question! I definitely do not relate myself to Estonians... I am from Belorussia, so yes, I mostly refer myself to this country. I practically forgot Belorussian language, but it is ok, few people speak Belorussian in there. I have Russian roots, but I was raised in Belorussia, so I suppose my ethnic identity is Belorussian’. (F, 25, Tallinn)<sup>15</sup>

In conclusion it may be said that for both ‘Russians’ and ‘Estonian-Russians’ the main feature of their ethnic identity was language in both cases. It was often the only aspect by which ‘Russian’ concept was formulated. However, interviews showed that language is not always the main part of identity construction and alternative identities may ‘wake up’ as a memory of homeland, for example.

### 5.2 Estonian ethnic identity

When Estonian-speaking youth gave its answers concerning ethnic identity, I was surprised with how different they were from Russian-speaking side. I have admitted that for most of them, ethnic identity was closely related to the civic one. Vihalemm (2018: 486) argued that both Estonians and Russians with strong belonging to the Western socio-cultural space have this strong civic solidarity, which means that people value their citizenship, co-existence as citizens or civic rights. However, during my interviewees with Russian-speaking population, no one, surprisingly, mentioned these factors. When I asked Estonians about their ethnic identity and what it meant for them to be Estonian, they formulated their

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<sup>15</sup>‘Eto khoroshiy vopros! Ya tochno ne prichislyayu sebya k estoncam... Ya iz Belorussii, tak chto da, ya skoree vsego prichislyayu sebya k etoy strane. Ya prakticheski zabyla belorusskij yazyk, no v etom net nichego takogo, malo kto tam govorit na belorusskom. U menya est’ russkie korni, no ya rosly v Belorussii, tak chto ya polagayu, chto moya etnicheskaya identichnost – belorusska.’

answers as such:

‘It means to live in Estonia, where according to the constitution I have civil rights’ (F, 23, Tallinn)<sup>16</sup>.

In addition, nationality, together with citizenship was also mentioned as an ethnic identity concept. It may be interesting to compare Estonians with Russians or Estonian-Russians in this case, because nationality was practically not mentioned by the latter. They may have called it as ‘roots’ or ‘cultural heritage’ but the word ‘nationality’ was mentioned only once, concerning ethnic identity concept. Estonians, on the contrary, did not hesitate to use this word to describe their belonging to Estonian nation.

My research did not aim to represent civic identity of both ethnical groups, though some thoughts concerning citizenship rights were mentioned between both sides. If Estonians connected their ethnicity with citizenship and civil rights, Russian-speaking youth was mostly denying their interest in civic activities, such as elections. One of the respondents who had zero-citizenship claimed that it would participate in elections if she had an Estonian citizenship (F, 26, Tallinn)<sup>17</sup>, though zero-citizenship allows participation at least on the local level. Some of the interviewees stated that they were not interested in the elections and they had never taken part in it. One of the Russophones stated that she did not know what the aim of the elections was and she participated in them only because her sister made her do it. Generally, she did not see any point in doing this, as in her words: ‘everything remained the same’, whichever party came to power in Estonia. Furthermore, she was not interested in their election program at all. Besides, she was skeptical about the work of parliament – in her words, politics often have a lot of promises before the elections, but they never keep them (F, 24, Tallinn)<sup>18</sup>.

I must not draw a conclusion on these facts, especially in the situation, when Estonians’ view on governmental elections is not clear, but it seems to me that Estonians are more

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16 Tähendab elada Eestis, kus mul on põhiseadusest tulenevad kodanikuõigused

17 Ya by hodila na vybory, esli by u menya bylo estonskoe grazhdanstvo, no tak kak ya ego ne imeyu, ya v nih ne uchastvuyu.

18 Mne kazhetsya, chto vybory nichego ne menyaut: byla odna partiya u vlasti – teper drugaya, v politicheskom smysle nichego ne menyaetsya <...> Ya hozhu na vybory, potomu chto sestra zastvljaet (laughs). Ya ne osobo znakoma s programmami partiy, a predvybornye obeshaniya nikto ne vypolnayet.



aware of their rights and responsibilities, than Russian-speakers are.

‘For me being Estonian means that I was born in Estonia, my mother tongue is Estonian, I know Estonian history and culture, adhere to the laws, celebrate holidays (birthday, Christmas, New Year’s eve etc.) as other Estonians’. <sup>19</sup> (F, 19, Tallinn)

Some of Estonian-speakers also mentioned language and cultural heritage as the basis for ethnic identity construction. However, if we could create a notional tag cloud, the most popular keywords for Estonian-speaking youth that would describe their identity would be connected with such words as ‘nation’, ‘state’, ‘homeland’, ‘civil rights’.

It seems that identity construction is indeed a very complicated concept as the question ‘who you are?’ is personal one. It combines many of self-consciousness’ aspects that influence the decision. Anyway, some basic trends may be traced in studying ethnic identity of certain nations or populations.

### 5.3. Russian-speaking youth’s view on multiculturalism and Estonian government’s steps towards integration.

Practically for every respondent multiculturalism was seen as such state structure in which many different cultures co-exist together peacefully. Every culture has its own habits and cultural practices, costumes, food and other forms of diversity, but one of the cultures does not disturb another culture, they respect each other and do not try to compete which culture is the best one and which is the most important one.

One of the respondents marked that multiculturalism is a very good method in dealing with various cultures and that society should be opened for everyone. Concerns that too cautious attitude towards one’s culture may lead to nationalistic ideas also came out. Multiculturalism was seen as something progressive and Canada was mentioned as the best way of treating minorities and various cultures.

‘For me, Canada is the best variant of treating minority cultures. Their motto is

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<sup>19</sup> Minu jaoks see tähendab seda, et ma olen sündinud Eestis, ma räägin eesti keelt, tean Eesti ajaloost, kultuurist, pean kinni seadustest, tähistan tähtpäevi (sünnipäev, jõulud, vana-aasta jne) nagu teised eestlased.

not to close their own country for everyone, but to open it for everyone. They say that diversity is good and ‘we are glad to welcome different cultures’. I think that this is multiculturalism. (F, 25, Tallinn)<sup>20</sup>

For some of the respondents multiculturalism was seen as a threat or an encroachment on other cultures’. In fact, in most of the cases Western society was imagined with an enormous variety of cultures, religions, races and nationalities. I have not given any specific explanations on this term as I wanted to study what multiculturalism actually is for young people.

It is good when cultures are respected and are given freedom, but at the same time I think there should be no total freedom for everyone. For example, I don’t like the hijabs; I may think that there is a bomb under the clothing, why should I allow such thing in my country?’ (F, 25, Tallinn)<sup>21</sup>

Though multiculturalism was mostly seen as a positive tendency and appropriate for social stability, opinions divided when I asked whether such policy is suitable for Estonian Republic. Some of the interviewees saw this step as good one, as it could help Estonians and Russian-speakers to co-exist together in a peaceful way, in terms that, as everyone still lives in Estonian state, national language has to be learned, though not so much attention should be directed to this issue and the loyalty to the state should also be preserved. The ones that insisted on failure of the multiculturalism policy to take roots in Estonia were saying that Estonia is too small and its culture should be elevated. The idea of two official languages in one state was welcomed by the first group, while in the second one respondents were not sure that this step is right, though this idea sounded tempting. Two official languages were seen as a threat for Estonians to preserve their culture and traditions, as for Russians-speakers there would be no motivation at all to learn the Estonian language. In general, all of the respondents admitted that in more or less degree Estonian culture should be saved. Furthermore, it was mentioned that two official languages could separate

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<sup>20</sup> Dlya menya Kanada – eto luchshiy primer togo, kak obraschyutsya s menshinstvami. Ih deviz – ne zakryt stranu dlya vseh, a otkryt dlya vseh. Oni govoryat o tom, chto raznoobrazie – eto horosho i chto ‘my rady privetstvovat raznye kultury’. Ya dumayu, chto eto i est’ multikulturalizm.

<sup>21</sup> Ya dumayu, chto eto zdorovo, kogda kultury uvazhayutsya i im predostavlyayutsya svobody, no v to zhe vremya ya ne dumayu, chto svoboda dolzhna predostavljatsya vsem. Naprimer, mne ne nrvayatsya hidzhaby, ya dumayu, chto pod nimi mozhet byt’ bomba: pochemu ya dolzhna razreshat takie veshi v svoey strane?

the society even more.

‘I am not a racist or someone like that, but I wouldn’t like Estonia to be as Sweden, for example. I was there and I did not like the amount of immigrants. I did not feel safe. Estonia is so small, I think all the people will mix and there will be no Estonians in the future. (F, 26, Tallinn)<sup>22</sup>

It was necessary for me to understand the attitude towards integration steps of Estonian government as its integrational program was built on the basis of multiculturalism, adapted for Estonia’s needs. As it was mentioned earlier in the third chapter of my thesis, Estonia has accepted the policy of multiculturalism marked with the necessity of speaking one national language and with the loyalty to the state. That is why I proceeded asking respondents about their attitude towards the language policy.

All of the respondents understood integration as a policy that helps minorities to get involved into Estonian society. It was necessary for uniting different cultures and nationalities into one society. For them, governmental steps in integrating consist of linguistic changes during the secondary education and a requirement for official language’s high command in general. All of these measures were mostly rated as ‘helpful’ and ‘useful’, though some reservations still appeared.

‘Of course these measures are good, but at the same time I think it would be better if education would not be totally transformed into Estonian, but rather included more hours of Estonian language at school, maybe even some excursions or events, organized together with Estonian schools. These steps would lead to the ‘live’ experience and would be more helpful in learning Estonian, without any harm to understanding material that is learnt in another language.’ (F, 25, Tallinn)

It was already said that for Russian-speaking youth in Estonia it is not a problem to learn Estonian and to speak it well. They are motivated enough for these steps even if they do not plan to stay in Estonia forever. They all admit that Estonian culture should be valued and Estonians are seen as culture bearers that do not wish their culture to disappear. I suppose that young generations are more flexible unlike their parents that in the majority had this strong Soviet identity. This identity assumed the existence of lots of cultures and

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<sup>22</sup> Ya ne rassistka ili tipa togo, no ya by ne hotela, chtoby Estonia stala kak Shvecija, naprimer. Ya tam byla i mne ne ponravilosj kolichestvo immigrantov. Ya ne chuvstvovala sebya v bezopasnosti. Estonia takaya malenkaya, ya dumayu, chto vse lyudi smeshayutsya i ne budet nikakih estoncev v budushem.

nationalities that lived under the one united Soviet State, but at the same time Soviet Republics' population, whose mother tongue was not Russian, should have learned Russian too. The approach was different, as the Soviet Union represented fifteen different republics with very diverse cultures that shared one country. I think that this concept made them feel disappointed when nation-building took place after the collapse of the USSR, they often compared the Soviet times to modern reality and some scholars described this phenomenon in their works (Fein, 2015).

However, one group of respondents feel that there may be some broadening of the minority rights for cultural freedom allowed, while the second group states that everything is fine with integration steps and there is no problem with cultural preservation. For them, if Russian-speakers aim to give their children ideas of Russian culture, then they will do it without any obstacles. The fact that historically happened to Russians who turned out to get into totally new state, is seen as a given and nothing can be done in this case. They suppose that Russian-speakers should adapt to the situation and try to integrate into Estonian society. This would help two nations to live peacefully.

‘I would like the pace of integration to speed up and I would like society to be more close-knit. I see how people, even immigrants try to learn Estonian language and I think that is normal for person who lives in a foreign land. The more courses, programs will be made for learning Estonian, the better it would be for the society as a whole. On the other hand, I admire the examples of those countries, in which there are two official languages. This situation does not isolate nations. However, I would like to hear less argues about integration issue: if for someone learning Estonian is too hard, one may try to find a more comfortable place to live.’ (F, 27, Tallinn)<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> ‘Ya by hotela, chtoby tempy integracii uskorilis’ i chtoby obshestvo bylo bolee splochnym. I vizhu kak ljudi, dazhe immigranty, pytajutsya učit’ estonskiy yazyk i ya dumayu, chto eto absoljutno normaljno dlja cheloveka, kotoriy zhivet v drugoj strane. Chem bolshe kursov, program budet sozdano dlya izucheniya estonskogo, tem luchshe eto budet dlya obshestva v tselom. S drugoy storony, mne nravitsya opyt teh stran, gde dva officialnyh yazyka. Eta situaciya ne razdelyaet nacji. Tem ne menee, ya by hotela slyshat menshe sporov ob integracii: esli komu-to tak slozhno vyuchit estonskiy, možhno poprobovat naity bolee komfortnoe mesto dlya zhizni’.

#### 5.4. Perception of multiculturalism and integration policies from Estonian-speakers' view.

Estonian-speakers practically unanimously described multiculturalism as a situation, where two or more different cultures co-exist in one state peacefully and reckon with this.

‘Multiculturalism is, in my opinion, means to live in one area with people from different cultural backgrounds and taking it into account’. (F, 23, Rapla)<sup>24</sup>

One of the interviewees described multiculturalism through some kind of mixed identity:

‘For me, multiculturalism is when parents are, for example, Americans but they live in Estonia and their child was born in Estonia and he speaks both languages, celebrates both holidays and anniversaries etc.’ (F, Rakvere, 17)<sup>25</sup>

Overwhelming majority of respondents appreciated multiculturalism and described it as ‘positive’ tendency, while two of ten young people have stated that this policy has negative connotations. For them, as for certain Russian-speakers, multiculturalism was seen as a threat to Estonian culture and language.

‘I don’t see anything good in multicultural states - national identity disappears.’ (F, Tallinn, 23)<sup>26</sup>

However, according to opinions of the Estonian young people, concerns about loss of national and cultural identity were identified among all the respondents. As it was mentioned above, mostly all of them suggested that the multiculturalism is no harm for the Estonian Republic and that multiculturalism indeed exists as a policy. At the same time, they highlighted main worries about the future of the Estonian language, national and cultural identity:

‘Many people get out of here and English, which has become one of the main languages in the world and which majority speaks, is becoming popular among Estonians too, for example while communicating with friends’.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> ‘Mitmekultuurilisus minu jaoks tähendab elada ühel pinnal mitme erineva kultuurilise taustaga inimesega ning arvestada seda’.

<sup>25</sup> Minu arvates on mitmekultuurilisus see, kui vanemad on nt ameeriklased, aga nad elavad Eestis ja laps on ise sündinud Eestis ja räägib mõlemat keelt, tähistab mõlemi riigi tähtpäevi/pühasid jne.

<sup>26</sup> Ei näe midagi positiivset multikultuursetes riikides, kaob ära rahvuslik omapära

<sup>27</sup> Paljud lähevad siit ära ja ka mingil määral inglise keel, mis on saanud maailmas üheks põhikeeleks, mida

The Estonian young people divided their attitudes towards multiculturalism in two different matters: the first one was mostly connected with the issue of Russian-speaking population, and the second one was associated with the migrants' flow after the Syrian crisis.

If speaking about the latter, according to the EU's plans from the year 2015, Estonia had to shelter about 300 migrants from Turkey, Iraq and Syria (ERR, 27.12.2018).<sup>28</sup> As reported in the survey, which was conducted by Aivar Voog in 2016, the opinion of Estonia's residents about refugees' migration has changed and improved significantly during the years 2015-2016. The percentage of Estonian-speakers in the survey comprised of 76% against 24% of Russian-speakers. If in 2015 43% of people have stated that they were in favor of accepting those in need, then in 2016 this amount has increased to the level of 56%. Still, 30% of residents were extremely critical about giving shelter to migrants. However, in 2015, this number was about 40%. At the same time, nothing has changed during these years if we take to account the attitude towards refugees: 90% still argued that the newcomers should work and pay taxes. Furthermore, they should accept Estonian cultural norms, have knowledge of national language and respect local legislation. In addition, respondents stated that only those, who are victims of war and persecution, should be allowed to enter, while those who are in search of an easy life should not be accepted. According to Voog, 26% of respondents think that refugees should not get any financial help from the government at all (this percentage has also decreased from 34% in 2015) (Voog, 2016: 16). In Voog's survey we may also follow that the social background of the respondents also influences the results: age, education and nationality highlighted some of the key facts about attitude towards the issue. He adds that people with higher education tend to be more tolerant and feel less threat from the migrants. What is more important is that non-Estonians were more positive about giving shelter to refugees, but at the same time they were more likely to feel unsecure, comparing to Estonian-speakers (Voog, 2016: 19). Young people from 15 to 34, according to Voog's survey, are also more tolerant and positive about sheltering those in need. In contrast to the older generations, they marked that 'people with different cultural background enrich Estonian life'. They also agreed that

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enamik räägib, see hakkab aina rohkem ka eestlaste suhu jääma ka sõpradega suheldes, näiteks.

<sup>28</sup> Eesti Rahvusringhääling <https://news.err.ee/887732/no-eu-migrant-plan-refugees-arrive-in-estonia-in-2018>

‘we need to help other countries with refugees, if we want other countries to help us’ (Voog, 2016: 12).

In my opinion, Estonian-speaking young people tended to divide the issue of Russophones and migrants from different parts of the world. Most of the examples were brought with the cases of newcomers from Asia and Near East. According to their responses, migrants should adjust to the Estonian lifestyle, national language and culture and not to ‘play by their rules’. Voog’s survey (2016: 15) has also shown that young people, as well as adults and older generations support this statement practically unanimously. Besides, integrational problems were also applied more to today’s migrants.

As long as nobody tries to forcefully fool you around with one’s religion or culture – everything is ok. I think that national language is national language and despite that you are Estonian, Russian, Korean etc., you need to know national language if you live here or try your best to speak it (F, 22, Tallinn).<sup>29</sup>

Though Russian-speakers may be seen as ‘natives’ in Estonia, according to the given responds, all of the interviewees admitted that Russophones and Estonians are not still close-knit. However, some of them marked that the situation improves.

‘Rather no [not close-knit], because often Estonians and Russians are not seen as equal’.<sup>30</sup> (F, 17, Rakvere)

‘To some extent... younger generations are partially merged: more, than older ones’.<sup>31</sup> (F, 23, Tallinn)

The answers were mostly negative, which means that Estonian-speaking youth sees Russophones and native Estonians as two different societies that live together in one land. Opinions were similar, when I asked interviewees about their attitude towards national integration program and their suggestions on it. Young people noticed that problems do exist:

I think that there are [problems with integration of minorities]. In schools dark-skinned people or people from other cultures are rather quickly excluded (F, 17,

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<sup>29</sup> Mina arvan, et riigikeel on riigikeel ning olenemata kas sa oled eestlane, venelane, korealane jne pead sa riigis elades oskama riigikeelt või andma endast parima, et seda osata.

<sup>30</sup> Ma arvan, et pigem mitte, sest tihti ei võeta eestlasi ja venelasi võrdsetena

<sup>31</sup> Mingil määral jah, kaks rahvust on osaliselt kokku sulandunud, rohkem noorem generatsioon kui vanem.

Rakvere).<sup>32</sup>

They still insisted that the knowledge of the Estonian language is very important and as it was mentioned earlier, there is an abyss between two different cultures that exist in Estonia. The reason was seen in distinct cultural backgrounds, mother tongue and delimiting of two nationalities. However, some of the respondents were positive on their view on integration as it is and suggested that the language issue could improve the situation.

‘Integrating nation must take into account the specificities of the new state and be prepared to learn the culture and language’. (F, 23, Rapla)<sup>33</sup>

### 5.5. The problem of division

Indeed, the division of two nationalities has been rather popular theme for years. The first big incident that happened in 2007 has shown that there still was a split between Estonian- and Russian-speakers even after 16 years after restoration of independence have passed.

For Russian-speakers in Estonia, World War II has always been a symbol of victorious struggle of the Soviet Russia against Nazi Germany’s invaders: sufferings that brought this struggle have touched almost every family. As it was mentioned earlier in the introduction, Estonians and Russians have always had different view on historical events, which took place in XX century. For most of Russian-speakers, as David Smith (2008: 421) mentions in his article, the arrival of Soviet troops into the Baltics was not seen as an occupation, but rather as a part of liberation from Nazism. However, Estonians have seen this act as violence and illegal invasion.

The Bronze Soldier, as a monument of freedom for one side and a symbol of occupation from the other, did not attract attention and was mostly ignored by the public, having changed its name from ‘Monument to Liberators of Tallinn’ to the ‘Fallen of World War II’, despite the fact that all the other symbols of Soviet-era were quickly removed after the restoration of independence (Smith, 2008: 422). However, when in late April 2007 the Bronze Soldier was replaced from the center of the town to the remote Military Cemetery,

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<sup>32</sup> Ma arvan, et on, sest koolides tõrjutakse suhteliselt kiiresti välja tumedanahalised või teistsugusest kultuurist inimesed.

<sup>33</sup> Integreeruv rahvas peab arvestama uue riigi eripäraga ning olema ise valmis õppima kultuuri ning keelt



the reaction, which followed this incident, has shown that the society in Estonia was still polarized and still had old scars, which did not disappear by themselves after 1992. Massive demonstrations and nights of violence which happened as a reaction to the replacement of the Bronze Soldier from Russian-speakers' side have demonstrated that there are still challenges of 'multicultural integration' (Smith, 2008: 426).

In January 2019, another loud case has reminded that the Estonian society was once again jolted by the unsuccessful advertisement in the capital's center. The inscription of an ad divided a tram stop into two different parts and marked one side to be 'only for Russians' and the second one 'only for Estonians'. Furthermore, it was suggested to the viewer to think carefully and chose 'the right side'. The controversial ad has made a lot of noise not only among citizens, but also among the governmental circles. Responsible for the advertisement appeared to be a liberal Estonian political party, which was founded in November, 2018 (Delfi, 3.11.2018).<sup>34</sup> The chairwoman of 'Estonia 200' party commented the advertisement as such: 'We promised you that we would talk honestly about things, and talk about the real issues that Estonian society is facing. Yesterday we highlighted a very important and sore issue that has gone unresolved for 28 years. Division is a very serious problem facing Estonian society' (ERR, 08.01.2019).<sup>35</sup> Kristina Kallas, the chairman of 'Estonia 200', has also stated that the society was divided because children went to different schools, Estonians and Russians watched different TV channels, worked at separate places, lived at separate city districts and that people even rang to each other on the New Year's Eve at two different times.<sup>36</sup> She saw the solution in improvement of educational system, which meant that the language of education should be changed to Estonian. The advertisement was replaced in 24 hours after it was installed.

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.delfi.ee/news/paevauudised/eesti/blogi-ja-fotod-eesti-200-moodustas-partei-erakonna-esimeheks-valiti-kristina-kallas?id=84215823>

<sup>35</sup> <https://news.err.ee/895959/kristina-kallas-our-ads-drew-attention-to-existing-issue>

<sup>36</sup> Russian-speakers often celebrate the New Year not only according to Estonia's timezone, but also according to Moscow's.

## 5.6. National or native language: which one suits the most?

As it was mentioned earlier in the third chapter of the thesis, language issue was always important for Estonia: it was seen as a solution for uniting people of different cultures, mostly Russian-speakers and Estonians, and help former to integrate into the Estonian society. However, Russian-speaking community mostly did not support the idea of total transition of education from Russian to Estonian language. It was argued that Estonian-based education may lead to problems with self-identification among younger generations and their assimilation in the future (Baltnews, 25.02.2019).<sup>37</sup> Some believe that minorities should have an equal opportunity to study in their language, as it would mean identical opportunities for everyone. At the same time, paradigm of nationalism suggests that emphasis should be made on national language and on the development of sense of loyalty (Soll, 2015: 18). However, the number of families, who preferred Estonian-medium schools and kindergartens to Russian-medium, have increased from 17% in 2005 to 23% in 2013 (Statistics Estonia 2015 in Soll, 2015: 18). The number of pupils in schools with Russian has also decreased due to new option – language immersion classes.

*Postimees* (17.07.2013)<sup>38</sup> has published several opinions of parents, who decided to place their children in kindergartens with Estonian language. They were mostly positive, as their experience with switching background to bilingual was rather effective:

'My second child is already attending Estonian kindergarten, and the first one has successfully got to an Estonian school. I can't say that everything like this would have happened if there were Russian kindergartens and schools nearby, but I don't want to regret about it. <...>In order to speak mother tongue, you need to read a lot of literature, which is helpful for any language, or to live in Russia. Estonian should be known here, despite your attitude towards Estonians.' (Sergey)

'Our child went to Estonian kindergarten at the age of four. Everything was fine with native language. Two months later our child began to use Estonian in his speech, however making mistakes and using nominative case. After six months, he already speaks mostly correctly, understand everything <...>. He has no accent <...>. We are very satisfied. In a group with several Russian children, they play with each other only in their free time <...>. (Anonymous parent).

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<sup>37</sup> [https://m.baltnews.ee/tallinn\\_news/20190225/1017442370/centrist-o-slovah-kalyulaid.html](https://m.baltnews.ee/tallinn_news/20190225/1017442370/centrist-o-slovah-kalyulaid.html)

<sup>38</sup> <https://rus.postimees.ee/1302922/chitatel-ne-boytes-otdavayte-svoego-rebenka-v-estonskiy-detskiy-sad>

The Reform Party, which has got majority of seats after Parliamentary elections in March 2019 (though did not succeeded in forming government), announced that one of the main goals of their election program still remained the same – to make schools and kindergartens in Estonia joint for children from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Language of instruction is therefore should have been Estonian only (Postimees, 28.08.2018).<sup>39</sup> *Riigikogu* has also discussed this issue and most of the parliamentaries agreed that Estonia is moving towards united educational system for both Russian- and Estonian-speakers, but it would take time to implement these radical changes. Member of the Parliament from Pro Patria political party, Viktoria Ladõnskaja-Kubits, has stated that: 'Russians in Estonia must be given a feeling of confidence that even in Estonian school the child will not lose its identity, and will not become alienated from its mother and father and its ancestral roots'(ERR, 14.09.2018)<sup>40</sup>.

Though the theme is being actively discussed throughout the years, it is still not clear if these measures are suitable enough for Estonian society. For example, Maie Soll in her dissertation (2015) discusses the problem of language transition in schools and its impact on the ethnic identity construct. For her, ethnic self-identification is mostly based on native language or home language and language proficiency is the main marker of belonging to one of the ethnic groups (Soll, 2015: 48). The ethnic identity, however, was not directly connected with language of instruction in schools: among students with different educational backgrounds there were those, who had weak, strong and mixed Russian-Estonian identity. However, students feel that they are more emotionally connected to the national group with which they study. She concluded that in general, Estonian education system was flexible enough to support the identity of Russian-speakers, as it was still possible to get basic education in mother tongue. The program which contained 60% of subjects in Estonian and 40% of subjects in Russian language was seen as the best solution for both getting a good knowledge of national language and for preservation of one's ethnic identity. Besides, every school could chose a suitable model for their institution to acquire education in Estonian (Soll, 2015: 54). She admits that every school, according to education legislation, should raise and develop cultural identity of its pupils, but at the same time not

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<sup>39</sup> <https://news.postimees.ee/6142950/parties-careful-when-talking-about-school-reform>

<sup>40</sup> <https://news.err.ee/861292/riigikogu-discusses-transition-to-estonian-language-teaching-at-all-levels>

every school in Estonia is considering this aim as essential (Soll, 2015: 48).

However, Recommendations of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) underline that 'the right of persons belonging to national minorities to maintain their identity can only be fully realized if they acquire a proper knowledge of their mother tongue during the educational process. <...> States should approach minority education rights in a proactive manner. Where required, special measures should be adopted by States to actively implement minority language education rights to the maximum of their available resources, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical.' (HCNM, 1996: 5). It also suggests that 'at least minimum at pre-school and kindergarten levels should be taught in child's language and curriculum in primary school ideally should be taught in the minority language (ibid: 6)'. At the same time, 'national language should be taught on a regular basis, preferably by the bilingual teachers, who have a good understanding of children's background (cultural and linguistic)' (Ivanovic, 2014)<sup>41</sup>. Substantial part of subjects in secondary school should also be taught in minorities' language.

### 5.7. Towards new multicultural society: what is the mood?

In November and December 2018 Tallinn was struck by several anti-migration protests that were held in the city's centre in front of Estonian Parliament and on the Square of Freedom. Protesters held a meeting against UN Global Compact for Migration. These UN negotiations began in 2016 after massive arrival of refugees in Europe. The regulation itself means co-operation between countries in terms of migration flows: it suggests states to gather data on international migration and still allows them to control their immigration policies according to the local laws.

However, support of declaration was seen by Estonians as a threat to their independence, culture and language. EKRE (*Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond*)<sup>42</sup>, transcribed as Conservative People's Party of Estonia, which before these events was not popular among

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<sup>41</sup> <https://philologiavt.org/articles/10.21061/ph.v6i1.49/>

<sup>42</sup> Further it will be mentioned as CPPE

voters (18% votes in 2019 against 8% in 2015)<sup>43</sup>, suggested citizens of Estonia to take part in demonstrations against passing laws behind the backs of Estonian nation, as other parties were trying to open Estonia for a massive flow of 'crowds from Third World Countries' without referendum.<sup>44</sup> Mart Helme, the leader of the Party, invited nation to take part in protests, first of all, against the regulation, which would 'pose a long-term threat to our survival as a sovereign state and nation.'(ibid.) The Party has also made up petition<sup>45</sup> against UN Marrakesh Migration Pact which had been signed by 17 707 people.

Smart and Healthy Estonia movement also held protest against UN Global Pact for Migration on Freedom Square in Tallinn. Despite poor weather conditions, protest was visited by hundreds of people who did not support government's foreign policy on migration. ERR has interviewed some of the protesters about their attitude towards refugees and migration problems:

'One cannot choose their skin color, but they can choose the attitude to do something in one's home country to make it a better place to live, not come and take the benefits that someone else has established.' (ERR, 10.12.2018)<sup>46</sup>

Smart and Healthy Estonia has also launched a petition<sup>47</sup> which demanded President's Kersti Kaljulaid dismissal. Petition states that Kersti Kaljulaid has actively supported and pushed through the Marrakesh Pact which is contrary to the values and laws of Estonian Constitution. Eventually, Kersti Kaljulaid did not attend Marrakesh meeting in December 2018. However, Estonia's Ambassador to the UN supported the agreement on December, 19<sup>th</sup> (ERR, 19.12.2018)<sup>48</sup>.

Parliamentary Elections, which took place in March 2019, have also made a lot of noise: foreign policy, migration issues and educational system of Estonia were on agenda of all

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<sup>43</sup> According to official voting website: <https://rk2019.valimised.ee/et/election-result/election-result.html>

<sup>44</sup> Conservative People's Party of Estonia official website: <https://www.ekre.ee/ekre-kutsus-toompeale-reeturliku-immigratsioonipoliitika-vastu-meelt-avaldama/>

<sup>45</sup> <http://petitsioon.ee/ei-marrakechi-migratsioonileppele>

<sup>46</sup> <https://news.err.ee/883573/gallery-anti-migration-compact-protest-held-in-tallinn>

<sup>47</sup> <https://petitsioon.ee/astutagasikk>

<sup>48</sup> <https://news.err.ee/886076/estonian-ambassador-to-support-migration-compact-at-un-general-assembly>

political parties. As it was mentioned earlier, Conservative Party support increased dramatically due to populist right-winged discourse. Elections have showed that Conservative Party was literally the third-largest party in Estonia, winning 18% of votes (Reform Party has got 29% and Centre Party has got 23% of votes)<sup>49</sup>.

Kristi Raik, director of Estonian Foreign Policy Institute at the International Centre for Defence and Security, has stated that CPPE's nationalism was radically intolerant and populist: this Party did not share EU and its liberal values, defended conservative families' importance and feared of migration, which was seen as a threat to identity and culture (Estonian World, 26.02.2019)<sup>50</sup>.

On the way of Conservative's party popularity, Estonia was again disturbed by the act of nationalism and xenophobia: in March 2019, Shmuel Kot, rabbi of the Estonian Jewish Congregation was verbally offended by the anti-Semitic sayings of an unknown passerby. According to the Facebook post of Kot's friend, who published a post about this incident, the man was shouting out Nazi salute, while rabbi with his two children was on his way to synagogue. Furthermore, he asked rabbi to get into the oven (Postimees, 18.03.2019).<sup>51</sup> Fortunately, police arrested the offender soon.

This case was actively discussed in media and among politicians. Urmas Paet, member of the European Parliament, has stated that this is 'very serious and marked incident. Estonia has so far been an open and humane society, where there is no place for anti-Semitism and alien offense,' (Pealinn, 17.03.2019).<sup>52</sup> Kaido Saarniit, the Police and Border Guard told that:

'Every person has the right to feel safe in the Republic of Estonia. In addition to

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<sup>49</sup>Parliamentary Elections' official website: <https://rk2019.valimised.ee/et/election-result/election-result.html>

<sup>50</sup> Estonian World: <http://estonianworld.com/opinion/kristi-raik-the-rise-of-estonias-radical-right/>

<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, Facebook post is already deleted by the author. However, excerpts of this post may be found in media:

<https://news.postimees.ee/6547867/man-yells-antisemitic-slurs-at-rabbi>

<https://www.delfi.ee/news/paevauudised/krimi/tallinnas-runnnati-cesti-pearabi-ning-huuti-talle-juudid-ahju?id=85622593>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.pealinn.ee/tagid/koik/paet-juudivastane-intsident-tallinnas-on-habivaarne-n238599>

physical attacks, the police is taking verbal attacks as well as the incitement of hatred seriously (ERR, 17.03.2019).<sup>53</sup>

However, the Jewish community of Estonia was concerned about the possible coming to power of the CPPE party. In their words, many of their ideas are unfriendly towards minorities and divide people into 'ours' and 'theirs' (Postimees, 17.03.2019).<sup>54</sup> Though rabbi himself announced that it was the first time when he had been abused, and in his words media had exaggerated the whole situation (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 17.03.2019)<sup>55</sup>, many people are concerned about the growth of radical party's popularity.

As a reaction to the recent events, meetings and movements in social media have occurred. One of the latest protests were inspired by Estonian students who study in Netherlands. They gathered in front of Estonian Embassy in Hague in order to express dissatisfaction with Conservative Party's political views (Postimees, 17.03.2019).<sup>56</sup> According to Postimees, young people feel that the privilege of living in Netherlands obliges them to protest, because there you can come to the street and proclaim wholeheartedly that every human being is valuable, that everyone has the right to be his own and that everyone has the right to be free from systemic persecution, suppression and the risk of violence. On the 31st of March another big protest was held in Tallinn and Tartu against coalition between Conservative, Center and Pro Patria. In the sponsors' words: 'the current coalition talks between the Center Party, the Pro Patria, and CPPE are undermining the fundamental rights of the people of Estonia.' (Delfi, 31.03.2019)<sup>57</sup>

„*Kõigi Eesti*“, which is famous in social media by the name 'My Estonia too', was established. It has gained positive reputation as a measure to support people of Estonia, who are of different nationality, race, sexual orientation etc. On its official Facebook page

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<sup>53</sup> <https://news.err.ee/920951/police-looking-into-verbal-attack-on-head-of-estonian-jewish-congregation>

<sup>54</sup> <https://rus.postimees.ee/6547191/evreyskaya-obshchina-uchastie-ekre-v-koalitsionnyh-peregovorah-probuzhdaet-samye-temnye-sily-obshchestva>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.jta.org/quick-reads>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.postimees.ee/6547263/fotod-estni-noored-protestisid-haagis-ekre-vastu>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.delfi.ee/news/paevauudised/eesti/otseblogi-ja-fotod-tallinnas-ja-tartus-toimusid-ekreike-vastased-meeleavaldused-pealinnas-tuli-uritusele-sadu-inimesi-teiste-seas-ka-ekre-toetajaid?id=85768371>

it has positioned itself as such:

“We can’t just sit by and watch in silence as our country gets derailed. Today’s political situation is putting values at risk that are important to Estonia”. <...> Right now, it doesn’t matter who voted for whom. Right now, what matters is that we all come together and say that making way for anger and putting values and principles at risk is not okay.“<sup>58</sup>

However, the movement was soon opposed by the supporters of another view on this issue. The name of the opposite group was named „*Eestlaste Eesti*“<sup>59</sup>, which means „Estonians’ Estonia”. Furthermore, this group was registered by CPPE Party and it states that Both groups suggest Facebook users to apply the frame for their main photo – the symbol of first one is a white heart and the symbol of the second one is a heart filled with the Estonian tricolor of blue, black and white. Although the least initiative is not as popular (7.000 followers) as *Kõigi Eesti* (27.000 followers), they still may show us that the division exists not only among two biggest nations in Estonia, but even among Estonians themselves – among those, who believe that Estonia should be closed for peoples of different countries, especially for Muslim and African states (according to the CPPE’s political agenda) and those, who expect Estonia to be friendly place to stay for everyone.

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<sup>58</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/pg/koigieesti/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/koigieesti/about/?ref=page_internal)

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/EestlasteEesti/>



## 6. CONCLUSION

Having conducted my interviews and summing up youth's thoughts about multiculturalism, I came to the conclusion, that the main point of multiculturalism was seen in co-living of different cultures together on one land. No culture suppresses or discriminates other, as long as habits and customs of minority group do not diverge with the host society's.

For most of my respondents multiculturalism was seen as something positive, however the clause on suppression of smaller nations, even if they were majority population, still existed. Among Estonians there were several cases of strong negative attitude towards multiculturalism, when among Russian-speakers no one has stated clearly that this policy causes negative feelings. Furthermore, for most of them it was perceived as a good notion.

If we once again turn to the works of Western social scientists and compare their ideas with the ones that dominate today in Estonia, then we may find out that actually Estonia may not be seen as a concrete example of 'classical' multicultural state. The largest minority, which comprises of 30% population, is threatened with loss for education in its mother tongue and, according to the campaign promises of Estonian politics, the idea for transforming education to Estonian-only sounds tempting for the government, though international and local laws in minorities' protection suggest that at least children should study in their mother tongue until the completion of secondary level. The idea of educational transformation prevails among Estonian elites, so it is just a matter of time and state's financial abilities to organize this transition.

Kymlicka in his theory on multiculturalism suggests that this measure is not as promising as it may be seen from the first glance, as interests of ethnic minorities should be supported by the state. Especially, when this ethnic groups may not directly be related to 'immigrants', who intentionally moved to another country in search of better life. Russian-speaking population, according to his models of national minorities, is someone in between national minorities and immigrant minorities and this fact grants them different conditions and rights for preservation of their culture and ethnicity. As both groups should, in his opinion, negotiate the conditions of integration, it would be fair to ask for allowance to at least have a chance to save schools in Russian language.

Furthermore, some of his descriptions of illiberal democracy are still relevant for Estonian case, as attempts to preserve 'purity' of the nation after refugees crisis in Europe, re-

emerged. However, most of the 'illiberal' tendencies of Estonian integration politics are left behind. According to Kymlicka's ideas, the ideology of 'one language, one nation, one state' is assimilationist and ineffective. In general, according to Kymlicka's theory, Estonia may be seen as a country that implements 'immigrant multiculturalism' policy to ethnic minorities, as it supports preservation of Russian-speakers' culture. They have chosen to integrate and are not against of learning the official language and they do want to be involved into majority groups life. However, as to Kymlicka, better conditions of 'immigrant multiculturalism' may be discussed and negotiated, as again, Russian-speakers' position in the context of immigrating models is not that obvious. Furthermore, it is a two-sided process that should be discussed with both sides. Estonian integration programme from the year 2000 also links to this fact.

As it was earlier said in the analytical part of my thesis, politicians speak about division of two nations and find it unacceptable. However, these differences are normal according to multiculturalism policy, as long as all citizens feel loyalty to the state. For many Russophones who live in Estonia today – it is a homeland and many of them do not wish to change their country of living. According to multiculturalism policy, they still may have right to get education in their mother tongue and at the same time be loyal to the state and speak national language. Attempts to dissolve minorities in Estonian culture would be illiberal toward them.

Another obstacle that dissociate Estonia with multicultural states is that approximately 75 000 people still have alien's passports. Though this amount has dramatically changed during 12 years (from 125 000 in 2006), this measure has not completely outdated itself. It is thought to be discriminative and it distances huge amount of people in Estonia from being loyal to the state even more.

Nevertheless, according to media, majority of population in Estonia still supports multiculturalism and tries to get rid of radical and populist ideas, which promote exceptionality, homo- and xenophobia and are getting popular nowadays. However, the amount of people who do not support idea of multicultural Estonia at all is still high – about 20% of Estonian population.

Estonia has stated that it had its own version of multiculturalism, which was based on loyalty to the state, high command of Estonian language and development of Estonian culture, without abandoning one's own culture and roots. At the same time, transferring all

levels of education into Estonian only, as it was mentioned earlier, would lead to problems with self-identification, which basically means assimilation. This method of rallying seems unclear and doubtful. On the one hand, its allowance to save one's cultural heritage, but on the other hand, it is attempt to make Estonians and Russians/Russian-speakers 'become alike'.

In theoretical part, I have also referenced to the statement that one can change or try to adapt its ethnic identity in order to join the majority population and not to feel marginalized. I suppose that the fact that more and more young people are describing themselves as 'Estonian Russians' or 'Russian-speaking Estonians' is not in favor of multiculturalism in Estonia. It may be claimed that such statements are connected with globalization and influence of European Union, its organizations and privileges that these institutes provide, however I mostly felt sense of guilt and reserve while speaking with young people, whose mother tongue was Russian. Most of them justified the laws and integration policies which the Estonian government implement, because they felt Estonian culture was too small for preserving minorities' cultures. Mostly this was relevant for those, who had insecure Estonian-Russian identity, but for youngsters with strong Russian identity this was sometimes also true.

Furthermore, during the research, I found out that Estonians and Russians put different meanings into the concept of identity. If the first ones connect them mostly with civic and constitutional rights and then only with culture and language (for some of the respondents the latter was not even important), then for Russophones ethnic identity was always connected with language and culture only. Most of them do not have wish or sometimes even right to vote, but this fact did not worry most of them. In my opinion, this fact may also show that young people do not feel included into the Estonian society and subconsciously do not feel that they may decide or speak out their thoughts on governmental issues.

My hypothesis was based on the assumption that majority population will perceive multiculturalism more negatively than minority population. It was true, but selection of respondents was too small for evident confirmation. However, during my interviews I have noticed that Estonians are more critical to multiculturalism and demand insurance from this policy that Estonian culture and language would not dissolve in a melting pot of minorities' cultures. Nevertheless, most of the young people were not against it. Russian-speakers were

pondering over multiculturalism as a good policy, but rather as about a dream that will never come true. Furthermore, in their opinion it would be fair if there were no multiculturalism in Estonia, as Estonians are small nation that wishes to preserve its' own culture and Russian one will not disappear as Russia is a huge country which may take care of its heritage itself.

To conclude, I would like to say that the theme is important and will still be relevant for years and interest in it will only be growing as the Estonian society develops. Further research may concentrate on civic and political issues of Russian-speakers and Estonians - more thoroughly investigate their similarities and differences in their attitude towards civic activity. Furthermore, it would be interesting to know, how majority population perceives Russian-speakers: if they are 'ours' or the ones that form 'others' in multicultural space.

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## APPENDIX

### Interview questions

1. Tell me about your family and roots. Where are your parents from? In which city do you live?
2. What is your age?
3. Are you a citizen of Estonia?
4. What is your ethnic identity?
5. What does it mean for you to be Russian /Russian-speaking Estonian / Estonian / of alternative identity?
6. What is multiculturalism?
7. It is rather positive policy or not?
8. What is your attitude towards it?
9. How do you think: Estonia is a multicultural state or not? What is your attitude towards this?
10. Do you think that Russian culture may be endangered in Estonia?
11. What about Estonian?
12. What do you know about integration?
13. What do you think of integrational steps of Estonian government? Are there any problems?
14. How do you think, which measures would be good in dealing with minorities?
15. How do you think, Estonians and Russians are united or not?