

The Ethnic Participation Gap: Comparing Second Generation Russian Youth and Estonian Youth

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The political and civic participation of citizens is essential for “making democracy work”. The nationalizing approach to state-building adopted by Estonia in the early 1990s limited the political participation of its large Russian-speaking minorities. Democratic nation-building, the approach favoured by European institutions, requires that states provide minorities with opportunities to participate in socio-political structures and to maintain and develop their culture. While Estonia made significant reforms during the EU accession process, barriers to minority participation remain. Through a quantitative analysis of ‘The Integration of the European Second Generation’ (TIES) survey, this article compares the political and civic participation of second generation Russian youth with Estonian youth, and explores the factors that influence participation both within and across groups. Education level is strongly associated with the likelihood of participation for both groups; however, income is significant only for ethnic Estonians. Among Russian respondents, Estonian language skills are positively associated with civic participation, and Estonian citizenship with the likelihood of voting. Ethnicity remains a significant predictor of political and civic participation when controlling for socioeconomic and demographic variables. Estonians are more likely to vote in municipal elections and to participate in voluntary associations than Russians. Low levels of civic participation among both Estonian and Russian youth, as well as the existence of an ethnic participation gap, may undermine Estonian democracy.

Keywords: political participation; civil society; democracy; minority integration; Russian minority; Estonia

The scholarly literature defines democracy in numerous ways. Definitions range from minimalist versions that focus on free, fair and regular elections (Schumpeter, 1947; Huntington, 1991), to maximalist versions that add a variety of qualitative requirements. These include the protection of civil rights and liberties, minority rights, equal access to information and education, contestation among multiple candidates or

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parties, and a degree of government autonomy, to name just a few (See Bollen, 1993; Lijphart, 1999; Rueschemeyer *et al.*, 1996; Schmitter and Karl, 1991). There is very little agreement over necessary attributes, the thresholds for various rights (See Lijphart, 1999; Diamond, 2008: 22), or even procedural minimums, such as what constitutes adequate participation (Bollen, 1993: 1209–1210). However, what these definitions share is an emphasis on citizen participation as the fundamental feature of democracy.

Political engagement is essential for articulating demands to the state, for establishing the credibility of institutions (Letki, 2004: 665 citing Putnam, 2000: 338), and for reinforcing democratic attitudes (Tusalem, 2007). Declining political and civic participation in both Western and Eastern European democracies (Barnes, 2006; Howard, 2003; Kitschelt and Smyth, 2000; Kitschelt *et al.*, 1999; Putnam, 2002; Rueschmeyer, 1998) and the existence of a participation gap between natives and minorities in several European countries (van Londen *et al.*, 2007), raise questions about the quality and vitality of democracy in the region. In particular, post-communist Central and Eastern Europe countries (CEECs) have been slow to develop participatory cultures as a result of communist legacies (Howard, 2003). In addition, nationalizing policies adopted in the early 1990s effectively limited the political participation of minorities in these societies (Brubaker, 1996: 63–66).

Estonia is an interesting case for examining political and civic participation. While Estonia leads other post-communist countries with respect to voter turnout and social capital, it is typically characterized as having an underdeveloped civil society and a large ethnic participation gap (Evans and Lipsmeyer, 2001; Kallas, 2008a; Ministry of Culture, 2011; Pettai *et al.*, 2011; Ruutsoo *et al.*, 2012; Van Biezen *et al.*, 2011). The nationalizing approach to state-building adopted by Estonia in the early 1990s limited the political participation of its large Russian-speaking minorities.¹ Democratic nation-building, the approach favoured by European institutions, requires states to provide minorities with opportunities to participate in socio-political structures and to maintain and develop their culture (Galbreath, 2005: 45–46). While Estonia made significant reforms during the EU accession process (Kelley, 2004; Galbreath, 2005), direct and indirect barriers to minority participation remain (Agarin, 2010; Pettai and Kallas, 2009; Sasse, 2008; Schulze, 2010). In order to evaluate Estonia's democratic trajectory, it is necessary to assess levels of participation among

youth, as well as the persistence an ethnic participation gap between second generation Russian youth and Estonian youth.

Through a quantitative analysis of ‘The Integration of the European Second Generation’ (TIES) survey, this article compares the political and civic participation of second generation Russian youth with Estonian youth the same age (18–35), and explores the factors that influence participation both within and across ethnic groups. Two indicators of political and civic participation are used: voting in the 2005 municipal elections and participation in voluntary organizations. In this study, the second generation is defined as ethnic Russians who were born in Estonia with at least one parent born outside of Estonia. While the second generation has become an important focus of integration research in the US and Europe (e.g. Crul and Vermeulen, 2003; Gans, 1992; Portes and Zhou, 1993; Portes and Rumbaut, 1996, 2001), the TIES survey is the first to focus on second generation Russian youth in the post-Soviet space. The vast majority of ethnic Russians in Estonia are Soviet era migrants or their descendants, making them different from traditional immigrants in other countries.² Second generation Russians are an important group for evaluating democratic trajectories, not least because Russians are the largest ethnic minority in Estonia, and the second generation now comprises a large portion of non-titular residents (Tammaru and Kulu, 2003: 117). Compared with their parents, the life chances of second generation youth are more similar to their ethnic Estonian cohorts. Consequently, the ethnic participation gap may not be significant for this generation. In addition to being born in Estonia, second generation youth have stronger Estonian language skills (Schulze, 2008), and have been at least partially socialized after Estonia regained independence in 1991. The focus on ethnic Russians in this study is also exceptional. Most studies on participation treat all *Russian-speakers*, those who identify Russian as their mother-tongue, or *non-Estonians*, those with ethnicity other than Estonian, as single groups for analysis.³ However, broad categorizations are problematic given differences in linguistic capabilities and integration trajectories across minority ethnic groups (Kulu and Tammaru, 2004: 396).

The study finds that socioeconomic variables are important predictors of participation; however, their effects are not uniform across ethnic groups. Education level is most strongly associated with the likelihood of voting for both groups and with civic participation among Estonians; however, income is positively associated with voting and civic participation only for Estonians. Interestingly, Russians with

Estonian citizenship are more likely to vote in municipal elections, despite the fact that Estonian citizenship is not a requirement for voting at the local level. This demonstrates that restrictive citizenship policies do have a direct effect on minority participation even at the local level. In addition, Russians with excellent Estonian language skills are more likely to participate in voluntary associations. The study also finds that an ethnic participation gap persists between second generation Russian youth and Estonian youth. Estonians are more likely to vote and to participate in voluntary associations than Russians. Ethnicity remains a significant predictor of both political and civic participation when controlling for socioeconomic and demographic variables, suggesting that there are real differences between Estonians and Russians at the level of attitudes. While it is not possible to test the effects of attitudinal variables through the TIES survey, interpersonal trust, trust in institutions, and satisfaction with democracy are important avenues for future research. Low levels of participation and the persistence of an ethnic participation gap among youth may undermine the legitimacy of Estonian democracy in the long run.

The first section of this paper provides an overview of political and civic participation in Estonia in comparison with trends in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The second section discusses the ethnic participation gap in Estonian society in the context of Estonia's nationalizing approach to state-building and barriers to minority participation. Section three presents the data, methods and hypotheses to be tested as well as the operationalization of variables in the TIES dataset. The results of quantitative analysis are presented in section five, followed by a discussion of the findings. The conclusion summarizes the study and outlines avenues for future research.

1. Political and civic participation

Political and civic participation are both important for "making democracy work" (de Tocqueville, 1990; Putnam, 1993; Almond and Verba, 1989; Warren, 2001). They are the primary mechanisms by which citizens articulate their interests and hold institutions accountable. Political participation includes voting and party membership, as well as less conventional forms of participation such as protests, demonstrations or signing petitions. Democratic theorists often echo Alexis de Toqueville's findings in nineteenth century America, that democracy depends upon the strength of its associational life (de Tocqueville, 1990: 191–198). Civil society has been defined in

numerous ways (See Foley and Edwards, 1996: 38; Uhlin, 2006: 22–27). In this study, it is understood as the act of citizens voluntarily coming together in the public space (Foley and Edwards, 1996: 38).

The effect of civil society on democratic stability has been a source of debate in third and fourth wave democracies. Some scholars argue that civil society deepens freedom and civil liberties, entrenches the rule of law, controls corruption, and promotes government effectiveness and political stability (Tusalem, 2007: 363; Toepler and Salamon, 2003). A state with a strong civil society promotes a democratic political culture, with citizens who are tolerant of diversity, who seek compromise, and who are supportive of democratic institutions and procedures (Tusalem, 2007: 366). Other scholars caution that strong civil societies can exacerbate social tensions, delegitimize the state, create political instability, or promote undemocratic or anti-democratic values (Berman, 1997; Huntington, 1968; Linz and Stepan, 1996; O'Donnell, 1979; Valenzuela, 2004). In other words, civil society does not necessarily support liberal democracy.

There have been a number of studies on the relationship between civic associationalism and democracy in the wake of Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* (1993) (e.g. Paxton, 2002; Letki and Evans, 2005; Toepler and Salamon, 2003). Several focus on post-communist countries because associational life was severely restricted under communism. Civic associations may help democracy function effectively by increasing trust in society, solving collective action problems, generating interest and encouraging participation in politics, aggregating and articulating interests, producing new political leaders, and holding political institutions accountable (Putnam, 1993: 89–91; Uhlin, 2006: 39). Civic associations may assist in the design and implementation of policies (Uhlin, 2006: 39), and can often provide superior social services (Tusalem, 2007: 362 citing Warren, 2001). However, even when associations recognize the primacy of the state and the rule of law 'some associations are more virtuous than others' in promoting political engagement (Stolle, 2001: 234). This study focuses on membership in voluntary organizations as a measure of civic participation.

Compared to Western democracies, the post-communist CEECs have been slow to develop participatory cultures and vibrant civil societies despite high levels of support for democracy (Barnes, 2006). There has been a dramatic decline in voter turnout since the founding elections in the early 1990s (Pacek *et al.*, 2009: 474).

Citizen disenchantment resulting from dissatisfaction with the economy, low political efficacy, and corruption has kept voters away from the polls (*ibid.* citing Mason, 2003/04: 48–49; see also Kostidinova, 2003). Post-communist states are also characterized by underdeveloped and weak civil societies (Gill, 2002; Howard, 2003; Ulsaner, 2003) and low protest potential (Anderson and Mendes, 2005). Young people lack the interest and will to engage in social action and political participation.⁴

These trends are surprising given the mass-based nature of the movements that brought about the collapse of communism across the region, as well as high levels of support for democracy (Mishler and Rose, 1996). Communist legacies, including limited political choices, a lack of democratic experience among both citizens and political elites (Barnes, 2006: 78), and a general mistrust of formal organizations (Howard, 2003) all contribute to this democratic deficit. In addition, political elites have tended to rely on networks and charisma for election, rather than electoral programmes focused on involving citizens in the democratic process (Barnes, 2006: 79 citing Birch, 2000; Kitschelt and Smyth, 2000; and Kitschelt *et al.*, 1999).

Despite high levels of support for democracy,⁵ Estonia is typically characterized as having low levels of political and civic participation (Evans and Lipsmeyer, 2001; Kallas, 2008a; Ministry of Culture, 2011; Pettai *et al.*, 2011; Ruutsoo *et al.*, 2012; Van Biezen *et al.*, 2011). Interest and participation in politics have been declining (Lagerspetz and Vogt, 1998: 96; Vihalemm *et al.*, 1997: 203), however conventional political participation is actually higher in Estonia than in other post-communist countries and comparable to levels in some Western European countries. Voter turnout has fallen since the founding elections in 1990, where it reached 90% as a result of general alienation among voters and voter fatigue (Pettai *et al.*, 2011: 154). However, turnout in parliamentary elections has been fairly stable falling between 57.4% (1999) and 68.9% (1995), and there is evidence of a slight upward trend since the low point in 1999.⁶ While voter turnout in Estonia is lower than in most Western EU democracies, it is comparable to other post-communist CEECs such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Latvia, and is higher than in Poland, Romania, and Lithuania. In recent years, voter turnout is comparable to France, Portugal, and the UK.⁷ Estonia has been characterized as an “anti-party” system (Arter, 1996: 252) as a result of the population’s pessimism regarding political parties (Lagerspetz and Vogt, 1998: 57–58). However, in 2008, 4.87% of the Estonian population were members of a political party, which is higher than the average among

European democracies and higher than other post-communist states with the exceptions of Slovenia and Bulgaria (Van Biezen *et al.*, 2012: 28). The party system has also matured and become more predictable since the late 1990s (Lagerspetz and Vogt, 2013: 58; see also Nakai in this special issue). However, participation in alternative forms of political activity such as signing petitions, participating in demonstrations, strikes, and pickets is generally lower in Estonia than in mature democracies, or in other CEECs (Norris, 2002: 199).

Estonian society has consistently been characterized as having a poorly developed civil society (Pettai *et al.*, 2011: 159; See also Lagerspetz, 1999, 2001). The number of registered civic associations in Estonia has more than doubled between 2001 and 2010, to over 30,000 associations; however, only about 17,000 are voluntary associations (Ruutsoo *et al.*, 2012: 86). Of course, the proliferation of associations does not imply that they have large numbers of active members (*ibid.*: 87). According to the European Social Values Survey, 70% indicated membership in at least one voluntary association during the 1990s, compared with only 40% in 2008 (Pettai *et al.*, 2011: 159). This decline can be at least partially explained by the erosion of labour union membership.⁸ While participation is still low compared with other Western democracies, such as the Nordic countries, it is above average for post-communist CEE, and is comparable to levels in France, Great Britain, and Western Germany (*ibid.*). However, it is important to note that participation in all types of voluntary associations is lower in Estonia than in other post-communist CEECs with the exception of sports clubs and cultural associations (Ruutsoo *et al.*, 2012: 87 citing Howard, 2003).

2. Nation-building and minority participation

The participation of minorities is a central concern in Estonia and other CEECs as a result of nation-building trajectories in the early 1990s. Most post-communist CEECs adopted a *nationalizing model* that promotes the linguistic, cultural, political, economic, and demographic superiority of the ethnic majority group (Brubaker, 1996: 63–66). Through nationalizing policies, the state tries to alternatively assimilate minorities into that nation, or to prevent them from influencing the political, economic, or cultural life of the state. The nationalizing model undercuts democracy by disenfranchising minorities and deepening ethnic divides. While the nationalizing state has been dominant in post-communist CEE, states differ with respect to how

they are nationalizing and how nationalizing they are (*ibid.*: 106). Nationalizing policies create barriers to minority participation and may produce an ethnic participation gap.

In the early 1990s, Estonia adopted nationalizing policies that privileged ethnic Estonians in political, cultural, and economic spheres, ultimately disenfranchising the vast majority of Soviet era immigrants and their descendants (Brubaker, 1996; Smith, 1996). Through nationalizing policies, the state hoped to encourage either the assimilation of Russian-speakers or their outmigration. Resentment over Soviet era policies including the migration of ethnic Russians to the Baltic States, the deportation of ethnic Estonians,⁹ and Russification reinforced this approach. The combination of citizenship and language policies, in particular, created structural barriers to Russian political participation.

Automatic citizenship was granted only to those persons who held citizenship in 1940 and their descendants. Permanent residents who wanted to naturalize were subject to a residency requirement of three years, a loyalty oath, an Estonian language test, and a constitution test. The language requirement deterred many non-Estonians from acquiring citizenship because, at the time of independence, only a small percentage of Russians could speak Estonian proficiently (Park, 1994: 73–74).¹⁰ Citizenship policies created a large group of stateless persons, who are predominately ethnic Russians. In 1992, 32% of the population, 494,000 persons, became stateless. As of April 2012, 93,774 persons (6.9% of the population), remain stateless, while approximately 95,115 (7% of the population) have chosen Russian citizenship as an alternative to statelessness.¹¹ Non-citizens are excluded from membership in political parties and are not allowed to participate in national elections or to run for political office; however, permanent residents are allowed to vote in municipal elections.

The Estonian language became the main tool and symbol for resurrecting national identity, for rejecting both Soviet occupation and Russification, and for limiting the political influence of Russians and other Russian-speakers (Vihalemm, 1999: 71). The Language Law and amendments passed in 1995, 1998 and 1999: reaffirmed Estonian as the official language of the state; established language requirements for public servants and local administrators; set language requirements for candidates in local and national elections, as well as for members of parliament and local government; made it mandatory for private sector employees, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and self-employed entrepreneurs to use Estonian

at the proficiency level required by the government; and required public signs, signposts, announcements, notices, and advertisements to be in Estonian.

Education policies also reinforced the use of Estonian in the public sphere. Estonian is the main language of instruction in publically-funded higher education institutions. While there are no legal barriers preventing graduates of Russian language schools from studying in Estonian language higher education institutions, they are at a disadvantage, and are underrepresented in higher education (Lindemann and Saar, 2011: 65).¹² Education reform, which is part of Estonia's nationalizing approach, may encourage minority participation by improving Estonian language proficiency among non-Estonians and facilitating their upward social mobility, including access to higher education. Estonia inherited a parallel education system from the Soviet era, where Russian is offered as a language of instruction at all levels of education. The 1993 Education Law established Estonian as the official language in all state and municipal upper secondary schools and required schools to transition to teaching in Estonian by 2000. Amendments in 1997 and 2000 pushed back the start-date of the transition until 2007, to be completed in stages by the 2012/13 school year, and allowed for 40% of classes to be taught in a language other than Estonian. Ultimately, the protection and promotion of the Estonian language through a number of policies limited the political participation of Russian-speakers by creating barriers to naturalization, preventing many from pursuing political office or jobs in the state bureaucracy, limiting their access to information, and circumscribing avenues for influencing political debates.

Nationalizing approaches conflict with the democratic model of nation-building promoted by European institutions. *Democratic nation-building* requires the state to provide opportunities for members of all groups to participate in political processes (Galbreath, 2005: 45–46). Concerns over security in the region prompted European institutions to promote minority rights through various European conventions and recommendations,¹³ and through EU conditionality, which links the perceived benefits of membership in the organization to the fulfilment of democratic criteria (Smith, 2001: 35). Through coordinated efforts, the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CE) and the EU encouraged candidate countries to protect minority cultures, establish full equality between persons belonging to majority and minority groups, and integrate minorities into their social and political communities (Brosig, 2006: 27). EU conditionality is often

credited with having the greatest democratic effect on CEE and it did result in the removal of the most restrictive aspects of minority policies in several CEECs, including Estonia (See Kelley, 2004; Galbreath, 2005; Vachudova, 2005).¹⁴

European involvement and subsequent reforms did result in increasing minority access to the political system, namely through the easing of naturalization requirements and increased Estonian language training (Brosig, 2008). However, international organizations did not effectively promote the inclusion of minorities into political processes. The government has tended to interpret European recommendations as maximum as opposed to minimal requirements;¹⁵ several recommendations were not adopted,¹⁶ others were reversed or undercut by the passage of subsequent legislation,¹⁷ and no significant changes to citizenship or language policies have been made post-accession.¹⁸ The result is that a number of direct and indirect barriers to minority participation remain. Non-citizens are not allowed to participate at the national level and Estonian language proficiency is still a significant barrier to naturalization (Ministry of Culture, 2011). The regulation of language in both the public and private spheres makes effective participation contingent on language skills, and broad sectors of the elite continue to favour nationalizing policies (Schulze, 2010). The result is that the political integration of Russian-speakers is far from complete, particularly in the political sphere (Ministry of Culture, 2011; Vetik and Helemäe, 2011; Vetik, 2006).

Integration programmes and education reform, both of which were supported by European institutions, are primarily aimed at increasing the social mobility of non-Estonians through increased Estonian language proficiency. However, they have created a great deal of resentment among minorities. The focus on language in state integration programmes¹⁹ is understandable in the context of Soviet Russification policies, low levels of proficiency among minorities, and the small size of the Estonian nation. However, the state's aggressive approach and the absence of programmes aimed at either increasing the cultural competencies of the ethnic majority, or narrowing the economic and social separation between ethnic groups, have drawn considerable criticism from the Russian community (Schulze, 2012: 290–1; Brosig, 2008: 8–10). Concerns over the preparedness of teachers and the potential for sub-optimal learning outcomes have overshadowed the potential benefits of education reform (Lindemann and Saar, 2012: 86). The primary response of Russians to nationalizing policies has been disengagement as opposed to political mobilization.

Integration monitoring reveals that interest in politics and participation in political parties does not differ greatly between Estonians and non-Estonians. However, ethnic gaps persist with respect to representation, voting, nonconventional political activities, and civic participation. Several studies highlight the existence of political “glass ceilings” in Estonian society, as ethnic Estonians continue to dominate parliaments, governments, state ministries, and bureaucracies (Ministry of Culture, 2011, 16; Kallas, 2008a; Schulze, 2012). However, minorities are better represented at the local level in areas where they are concentrated, such as Tallinn and Ida-Virumaa county (Kallas, 2008a). Estonia has a larger ethnic voting gap in parliamentary elections than other post-communist countries (Evans and Lipsmeyer, 2001: 385). This is likely due to the substantial numbers of non-citizens within the Russian population. However, at the local level, voter turnout has been similar for non-Estonians and Estonians (Kallas, 2008a: 4), with the exception of the most recent municipal elections in 2009.²⁰ While Russians tend to vote for the Centre Party or not at all, ethnic Estonians spread their votes out over the entire political spectrum (Ministry of Culture, 2011: 16). With respect to less conventional forms of political participation, Estonians are more willing to launch protest actions against the government (Ruutsoo *et al.*, 2012: 96 citing Faktum, 2003: 13–14). Studies among youth suggest that the political participation gap is likely to persist, given that expected political participation is lower for Russian youth than for Estonian youth (Toots, 2003: 569–570).

We might expect Russians to be more oriented toward civil society activities due to the existing barriers to conventional forms of political participation (Toots 2003: 569). However, there is also an ethnic gap in civic participation, with Estonians participating more than Russians (Lagerspetz *et al.*, 2002: 77). Integration monitoring (2010) finds that 57% of non-Estonians do not participate in any voluntary associations, compared with 35% of Estonians. While 19% of ethnic Estonians indicate that they participate in several associations, only 7% of non-Estonians indicate the same. The percentage of Estonians and non-Estonians who participate in one activity is 46% and 36% respectively (Ruutsoo *et al.*, 2012: 90). Russian-speakers are less willing to invest in activities for increasing their civic capacity, and are less likely to initiate civic activities (*ibid.*: 88 citing Faktum, 2003: 13–14).

While existing studies often cite low levels of political and civic participation in Estonian society and an ethnic participation gap, they do not differentiate between

ethnicities within the *non-Estonian* or *Russian-speaking* populations, or between generations. In addition, the vast majority of these studies are primarily descriptive and do not adequately explore the factors that influence participation for each group. The remainder of this article addresses these holes in the literature.

3. Data, hypotheses and methods

The TIES survey was conducted among second generation Russian youth and Estonian youth in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve between January 2007 and March 2008.²¹ The survey asks respondents two questions about political and civic participation: whether they have participated in various voluntary associations in the last twelve months and whether they voted in the 2005 municipal elections. There is substantial debate over whether political, market, or religious organizations should be considered part of civil society (Foley and Edwards, 1996: 38). While civil society groups are often political, they must have some degree of autonomy from the state and are therefore often distinguished from formal political institutions such political parties or government bodies (Uhlin, 2006: 25). In this study, membership in political parties is treated as a form of political participation but not civic engagement. Non-citizens, a significant portion of the Russian population, are not allowed to participate in political parties, and therefore party membership is not a good measure of voluntary participation. Based on the distribution of responses, a dichotomous variable is used for logistic regression (no participation in any of the activities, participation in at least one activity) (Table 1). Because non-citizens are not allowed to participate in parliamentary elections, municipal elections are a more appropriate measure of political participation. A dichotomous variable is also used for voting (yes, no) (Table 2).

Binomial logistic regressions are run on both indicators. The first set of general models test whether ethnicity is significantly associated with the likelihood of participation when controlling for socioeconomic and demographic variables (Table 3). Ethnicity is included as a dummy variable. *We expect Estonian ethnicity to be positively associated with participation in voluntary organizations and voting.* Separate regression models are then run for both Estonians and Russians (Tables 4–6) in order to explore the influence of socioeconomic and demographic variables on participation for each group. These variables do not necessarily imply the same opportunities across groups and therefore cannot be assumed to have the same effects

within ethnic subpopulations (Leighley and Verdlitz, 1999: 1102). The Russian models include citizenship status and Estonian language skills, which are not relevant for ethnic Estonians. In all regressions, independent variables are entered in a single step.²²

Socioeconomic factors such as income, occupational status, and education level are strong predictors of participation in both advanced democracies and transition societies (Barnes *et al.*, 1979; Barnes and Simon, 1998; Dalton, 2002; Gallego, 2007–2008; Howard, 2003; Leighley and Verdlitz, 1999; Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba *et al.*, 1995; Ulsaner, 2003). Socioeconomic factors affect the acquisition of resources, which in turn lower the costs of participation (Gallego, 2007–2008: 12). Higher education not only makes political information more accessible and interpretable, but it is associated with occupations that develop politically relevant skills and contacts (Scott and Accock, 1979: 363). *We expect higher income and higher education levels to be positively associated with membership in voluntary associations and voting.*

Socioeconomic models often explain differences in participation between ethnic groups as a function of structural inequalities (e.g. Verba *et al.*, 1995). If this explanation holds true in the Estonian case, ethnicity will be non-significant when controlling for socioeconomic factors. Several studies highlight structural inequalities between ethnic Estonians and Russians. While the 1989 census shows that Russians were significantly more educated than Estonians, the situation has reversed (Lindemann and Saar, 2012: 65). According to the 2000 census, the educational level of Russians is now lower than that of Estonians, and the differences among youth in Tallinn are particularly evident (Lindemann and Saar, 2012: 65). On the whole, Russians tend to earn 10-15% less than Estonians, a gap that has been relatively stable over the past two decades (Vöörman and Helemäe, 2012: 125 citing Leping and Toomet, 2008). The wage gap persists even when controlling for education, gender, position, and sector of the economy (Lagerspetz and Vogt, 2013: 60). Unemployment rates are also higher among non-Estonians, and non-Estonians, particularly males, were the most hard-hit by the recent economic crisis (Ministry of Culture, 2011). Socioeconomic status is measured through monthly income and education level. Based on the distribution of responses, income is coded into a new variable representing three income levels: less than 5000 EEK (319.56 Euro), between 5000 (319.56 Euro) and 10,000 EEK (639.12 Euro), and more than 10,000 EEK (639.12

Euro). Education level is coded into the following categories: higher education, vocational after secondary, general secondary, vocational secondary, and basic or less.

Demographic variables are also important for explaining political and civic participation. Studies in advanced democracies find that men are more likely to participate than women and that older people are more likely to participate than young people because both groups are more likely to have the resources needed to engage in politics (Burns *et al.*, 2001; Dalton, 2002; Gallego, 2007–2008). Increased social responsibilities also make older persons more likely to participate, however studies in the post-communist countries find that young people tend to participate more in civic affairs (Ulsaner, 2003: 92; Howard, 2003). *We expect age and male gender to be positively associated with membership in voluntary associations and voting.* Gender (Male, Female) and age group (18–25, 26–35) are included as categorical variables. City of residence (Tallinn, Kohtla-Järve) is also included. The two cities differ with respect to their ethnic composition, which may influence participation for each group (See note 1). While we make no specific predictions regarding the influence of the city of residence on participation, previous studies have shown that Russians in Tallinn tend to be less politically active than elsewhere in the country (Hallik, 2005).

In the context of Estonia's nationalizing approach, there are two variables that may influence the political and civic participation of Russian respondents: citizenship status and Estonian language skills. While non-citizens are allowed to vote in local elections, citizenship status (Estonian, Russian, no citizenship) is included because it may influence participation at the local level. Citizenship is important for creating a sense of civic identity and for diminishing ethnic differences, which may encourage participation (Schnapper *et al.*, 2003: 16; Barrington, 1995; Kymlicka, 1995; Parekh, 2000). Studies of immigrant minorities in other European countries demonstrate that citizenship positively influences voting behaviour (van Londen *et al.*, 2007; Messina, 2006). In Estonia, studies show that Russian citizens and stateless persons are less likely to vote than Estonian citizens by birth or naturalized persons (Kallas, 2008a: 4). Other studies show that citizenship status is a significant predictor of associational participation among non-Estonians (Lauristin, 2008: 149); however, the most recent integration monitoring suggests that citizenship is no longer a significant predictor of participation in NGOs (Ministry of Culture, 2011: 17). *We expect Estonian citizenship to be positively associated with both membership in voluntary associations and voting among Russian respondents.*

Integration monitoring finds that non-Estonians with poor Estonian language skills tend to be involved only in their local community, or not at all (Ministry of Culture, 2011: 17). *We expect better Estonian language skills to be positively associated with both membership in voluntary associations and voting among Russian respondents.* Estonian language proficiency is operationalized through a composite score based on four different dimensions of proficiency: understanding, communicating, reading, and writing. The resulting index is recoded into a variable representing excellent, good, moderate, and poor language skills.²³

Estonian language skills may influence participation through secondary processes, such as interethnic contact or access to the media. Studies show that language skills facilitate interaction with Estonians (Schulze and Nimmerfeldt, 2011), and that interethnic contact, particularly friendship, has a positive influence on minority integration (Korts, 2009; Korts and Vihalemm, 2008; Nimmerfeldt *et al.*, 2011; Schulze, 2011). To our knowledge, the influence of friendship on participation has not been tested. The type of media consumed (Russian or Estonian), which is dependent upon language skills, might also influence political participation. Russia has been attempting to impede the integration of its compatriots in Estonia largely through the Russian language media. Russian-speakers continue to consume mostly Russian language media (Ministry of Culture, 2011; Vihalemm, 2007), which is problematic for integration (Kirch, 1997). In order to examine these secondary processes, a second model is run for Russian political and civic participation which includes the number of Estonian friends (some or more, few, none) and the proportion of Russian TV the respondent watches (only Russian, mostly Russian, a little or none). The media variable was not significant in either model and did not change the significance level of language skills. However, the lack of a significant effect may be due to the poor quality of that variable.²⁴ For these reasons, the media variable is not included in the models presented below. Friendship is not significant in the model for voting and is not included in the model below. However, friendship is significant in the model for civic participation and influences the significance level of language skills. Consequently, two models for Russian civic participation are presented in Table 5, one with and one without the friendship variable.

Many studies on political behaviour point to the importance of attitudinal variables for political and civic participation in both established Western democracies and in CEECs. These include generalized trust (Badescu, 2003; Inglehart, 1997;

Putnam, 1993, 2000; Ulsaner, 2003), trust in political institutions (Inglehart, 1997; Norris, 1999), political interest and efficacy (Leighley and Vedlitz, 1999; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Ulsaner, 2003), and satisfaction with democracy (Howard, 2003). While these variables are not measured in the TIES survey, they are important avenues for future research and are discussed below.

4. Political and civic participation among TIES respondents

There is a statistically significant political and civic participation gap between second generation Russian youth and Estonian youth, with higher levels of participation among Estonians (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Participation in Associational Groups (Percent)

Groups	Russians	Estonians
Sports Club or Team***	16.6	33.4
Student Union	2.7	4.5
Religious Organizations	3.1	4.3
Art, Music or Cultural Groups**	7.4	13.3
Trade Unions	2.3	2.9
Women's Group	.8	.4
Cultural Organization of Parent's Birth Country	.2	N/A
Social Issues**	.4	3.3
Third World Development	.2	.4
Conservation, Ecology, Environment, Animal Rights**	.8	3.9
Human Rights or Peace	.4	.4
Professional Associations**	1.6	4.7
Parents Organization at School	3.9	2.5
Employer's Organization	N/A	.8
Other	1.8	1.8
None***	72.5	51.8
N	512	488

Pearson Chi-Square *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$ and * $p < 0.05$

Levels of political and civic participation for second generation Russian youth are lower than national and non-Estonian averages. Civic participation among Estonian youth is also low. However, membership in political parties does not differ significantly and is lower for both Russian and Estonian youth, approximately 2% and 4% respectively. The political tendencies of Russian and Estonian respondents conform to previous studies. On the political scale, the majority of Russian respondents place themselves at the centre, the most popular party being the Centre Party. While Estonian respondents tend to be more right leaning on the political scale,

their votes are more spread out across the political spectrum. The most popular party among Estonian respondents is the Reform Party, however substantial numbers voted for the Centre Party, Pro Patria Union, Res Publica Party and the Social Democratic Party (Table 2).

Table 2. Participation in 2005 Municipal Elections (Percent)

	Russians	Estonians
Vote in 2005 Municipal Elections***		
Yes	38.9	57.4
No	58.0	40.8
Refused to Answer	3.1	1.8
N	512	488
Political Party Vote***		
Estonian Centre Party	62.8	12.4
Estonian Reform Party	7.0	40.5
People's Union of Estonia	2.5	1.8
Pro Patria Union	.5	13.5
Res Publica Party	2.0	7.3
Social Democratic Party	0	5.1
Estonian Union People's	.5	0
Party		
Estonian Christian People's	1.5	2.2
Party		
Estonian Independence Party	0	.4
Russian Party in Estonia	4	0
Refused to Answer	19.1	16.8
N	199	274

Pearson Chi-Square *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$ and * $p < 0.05$

Ethnicity is significantly associated with the likelihood of membership in associations and voting when controlling for socioeconomic and demographic variables. Estonians are two times more likely to participate in at least one associational activity and to vote in municipal elections than Russians (Table 3). The fact that differences in participation between groups are not reducible to structural inequalities or demographic variations suggests important differences between groups at the level of attitudes. While attitudinal variables are not measured in the TIES dataset, they present important avenues for future research.

Table 3. General Models

	Participation in Groups (At least 1 Group)				Voting 2005 (Yes)			
	<i>B (SE)</i>	95% Confidence Interval			95% Confidence Interval			
Lower		Odds Ratio	Upper	Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper		
Ethnicity (Estonian)								
Russian	-.69 (.17)***	.36	.50	.70	-.78 (.17)***	.33	.46	.64
Net Income/Month (Over 10,000 EEK)								
Less than 5000 EEK.	.35 (.28)	.83	1.42	2.46	-.47 (.30)	.35	.63	1.12
5000-10,000 EEK	-.24 (.23)	.50	.79	1.24	-.57 (.25)*	.35	.57	.93
Education (Basic or Less)								
Higher Education	.84 (.30)**	1.29	2.30	4.13	1.38 (.31)***	2.15	3.96	7.29
Vocational after Secondary	.44 (.32)	.83	1.55	2.89	.65 (.32)*	1.02	1.92	3.58
General Secondary	.25 (.27)	.75	1.29	2.20	1.12 (.28)***	1.77	3.06	5.30
Vocational Secondary	-.11 (.29)	.50	.90	1.60	.21 (.30)	.70	1.24	2.18
Sex (Female)								
Male	.32 (.20)	.94	1.38	2.03	-.21 (.20)	.55	.81	1.20
Age Group (26-35)								
18-25	.27 (.18)	.92	1.32	1.88	-.23 (.19)	.55	.80	1.14
City (Kohtla –Järve)								
Tallinn	.48 (.18)**	1.15	1.62	2.29	-.18 (.18)	.59	.84	1.19
Constant								
	-.91 (.38) *				.53 (.39)			
Chi-Square		52.50***				83.78***		
-2 Log likelihood		832.80				802.63		
Nagelkerke R Square		.10				.16		
N		657				644		

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01 and * p < 0.05

Socioeconomic variables are important for explaining participation; however, their effects differ across ethnic groups. This demonstrates the importance of testing variables within ethnic subpopulations. Higher education levels are positively associated with the likelihood of participation in both general models. Compared to those with basic education or less, respondents with higher education are two times more likely to participate in voluntary associations and are almost four times more likely to vote in municipal elections (Table 3). Those with vocational training after general secondary education are almost two times more likely to vote and those with general secondary education three times more likely to vote (Table 3). Education level is also a positively associated with the likelihood of Estonian participation. Estonians with higher education are three and a half times more likely to participate in voluntary associations and two and a half times more likely to vote (Table 4). Russians with higher education and with general secondary education are four times more likely to

vote (Table 6). However, education level has no significant effect on the likelihood of Russian participation in voluntary organizations (Table 5).

Table 4. Estonian Models

	Participation in Groups (At least 1 Group)				Voting 2005 (Yes)			
	<i>B (SE)</i>	95% Confidence Interval			<i>B (SE)</i>	95% Confidence Interval		
		Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper		Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Net Income/Month (Over 10,000 EEK)								
Less than 5000 EEK.	-.48 (.37)	.30	.62	1.27	-.47 (.39)	.29	.63	1.35
5000-10,000 EEK	-.81 (.29)**	.25	.45	.79	-.64 (.32)*	.28	.53	.99
Education (Basic or Less)								
Higher Education	1.29 (.40)**	1.65	3.62	7.94	.90 (.42)*	1.09	2.46	5.54
Vocational after Secondary	.74 (.43)	.90	2.10	4.90	.35 (.44)	.60	1.42	3.32
General Secondary	.46 (.37)	.76	1.59	3.30	.70 (.38)	.96	2.02	4.23
Vocational Secondary	-.22 (.42)	.35	.80	1.83	-.21 (.40)	.37	.81	1.78
Sex (Female)								
Male	.39 (.27)	.88	1.48	2.49	-.21 (.28)	.47	.81	1.40
Age Group (26-35)								
18-25	.08 (.25)	.66	1.08	1.77	-.56 (.26)*	.35	.57	.94
City (Kohtla –Järve)								
Tallinn	.69 (.24)**	1.26	2.00	3.16	.18 (.24)	.74	1.20	1.94
Constant	-.69 (.40)				.87 (.49)			
Chi-Square		36.24***				28.73**		
-2 Log likelihood		456.88				424.71		
Nagelkerke R Square		.13				.11		
N		356				351		

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01 and * p < 0.05

In the general models, income is significantly associated with voting, but not with participation in groups. Those with incomes over 10,000 EEK (639.12 Euro) per month are more likely to vote than those with incomes between 5000 EEK (319.56) and 10,000 EEK (639.12 Euro) (Table 3). While income is positively associated with voting and participation in groups for Estonians (Table 4), it has no significant effect in the Russian models (Tables 5 and 6). Among Estonians, those who earn over 10,000 EEK (639.12 Euro) per month are approximately two times more likely to vote and to participate in civic groups than those who earn between 5,000 (319.56 Euro) and 10,000 EEK (639.12 Euro) (Table 4). There are two possible explanations for the absence of a significant effect in the Russian models. Half of Russian respondents who participate in a group activity participate in sports teams or clubs, which are oriented primarily toward the Russian community. It may be that this type of activity is not influenced by socioeconomic variables. It is also possible that the

effect of income is underestimated in these models due to the large number of Russian respondents who refused to answer the income question.²⁵ While not statistically significant in the Russian models, the effect of income on voting points in the direction we would expect (Table 6). However, Russian respondents with lower income may actually be more likely to participate in voluntary organizations (Table 5).

Demographic variables are also significantly associated with the likelihood of participation, however with different effects across ethnic groups. In the general and Estonian models, respondents from Tallinn are more likely to participate in associations than respondents from Kohtla-Järve (Tables 3 and 4). Among Estonians, this may be a sign of social separation, as Kohtla-Järve is predominantly Russian. City of residence has no significant effect on group participation for Russians (Table 5). However, Russians from Kohtla-Järve are two and a half times more likely to vote than those from Tallinn (Table 6). This supports the findings of previous studies that Russians in Tallinn are less politically active (Hallik, 2005). Being in the ethnic majority in Kohtla-Järve may make respondents more confident that their vote will be carried, which could explain the difference across the two cities. City has no significant effect on Estonian voting. While age has no significant effect on the likelihood of participation in the general models, younger Russians are more likely to participate in groups (Table 5), and younger Estonians are less likely to vote in municipal elections (Table 4). Russian men are also two times more likely to participate in voluntary associations than women (Table 5).

Estonian citizenship is significantly associated with the likelihood of Russians voting (Table 6), despite the fact that Estonian citizenship is not a requirement for participation at the local level. Russian respondents with Estonian citizenship are over six times more likely to vote in municipal elections than those with no citizenship, and four times more likely to vote in municipal elections than those with Russian citizenship. This finding suggests that a sense of civic identity linked to official membership in the state is important for encouraging political participation at all levels. It also demonstrates that Estonia's nationalizing approach has had a significant effect on minority participation.

Table 5. Russian Participation in Groups (At least 1 Group)

	<i>B (SE)</i>	95% Confidence Interval			<i>B (SE)</i>	95% Confidence Interval		
		Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper		Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Net Income/Month (Over 10,000 EEK)								
Less than 5000 EEK.	.56 (.52)	.64	1.75	4.83	.57 (.54)	.61	1.76	5.09
5000-10,000 EEK	-.02 (.45)	.42	1.02	2.48	-.01 (.47)	.39	.99	2.49
Education (Basic or Less)								
Higher Education	.26 (.54)	.45	1.3	3.75	.30 (.57)	.44	1.34	4.09
Vocational after Secondary	.18 (.53)	.43	1.20	3.37	.28 (.56)	.45	1.33	3.94
General Secondary	-.18 (.45)	.50	1.20	2.90	.04 (.48)	.41	1.04	2.67
Vocational Secondary	-.09 (.45)	.45	1.10	2.66	.03 (.49)	.40	1.03	2.63
Citizenship (Estonian)								
No Citizenship	.17 (.35)	.60	1.18	2.34	-.01 (.37)	.48	.99	2.05
Russian Citizenship	.39 (.46)	.60	1.48	3.65	.32 (.48)	.56	1.37	3.53
Estonian Language Skills (Poor)								
Excellent	.94 (.44)*	1.07	2.56	6.09	.42 (.47)	.74	1.86	4.68
Good	.21 (.40)	.56	1.24	2.71	.06 (.43)	.46	1.06	2.44
Moderate	-.03 (.43)	.42	.97	2.24	-.18 (.45)	.35	.84	2.03
Estonian Friends (some or more)								
None					-1.38 (.35)***	.13	.25	.50
Few					-.73 (.50)*	.24	.48	.96
Sex (Female)								
Male	.75 (.33)*	1.10	2.11	4.05	.70 (.35)*	1.02	2.02	4.01
Age Group (26-35)								
18-25	.65 (.30)*	1.06	1.57	3.45	.59 (.32)	.97	1.81	3.37
City (Kohtla –Järve)								
Tallinn	.19 (.30)	.67	1.92	2.19	.11 (.32)	.60	1.11	2.07
Constant								
Chi-Square	-2.36 (.78)		19.03		-1.39 (.85)		35.93**	
-2 Log likelihood			330.43				306.54	
Nagelkerke R Square			.09				.17	
N			288				281	

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01 and * p < 0.05

Russian respondents with excellent Estonian language skills are two and half times more likely to participate in at least one group activity than those with poor language skills (Table 5). This is not surprising considering that the majority of Russian respondents indicated that the activities listed in Table 1 are not geared primarily toward Russians, with the exception of sports clubs and teams. Controlling for the number of Estonian friends reveals a significant positive relationship between interethnic friendship and participation in voluntary organizations (Table 5). Respondents with some Estonian friends are four times more likely to participate in voluntary organizations, and those with a few Estonian friends are two times more

likely to participate, than those with no Estonian friends (Table 5). Language skills become non-significant when controlling for friendship suggesting that friendship is an important intervening variable between language and civic participation. It is also worth noting that interethnic friendship has no effect in the Estonian models. The proportion of Russian TV watched has no significant effect on civic participation among Russians.²⁶

Table 6. Russian Participation in 2005 Elections (Yes)

	<i>B (SE)</i>	95% Confidence Interval		
		Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Net Income/Month (Over 10,000 EEK)				
Less than 5000 EEK.	-.39 (.53)	.24	.68	1.92
5000-10,000 EEK	-.34 (.47)	.29	.72	1.79
Education (Basic or Less)				
Higher Education	1.49 (.57)**	1.46	4.44	13.44
Vocational after Secondary	.85 (.57)	.77	2.35	7.20
General Secondary	1.44 (.50)**	1.58	4.22	11.30
Vocational Secondary	.90 (.50)	.93	2.47	6.57
Citizenship (Estonian)				
No Citizenship	-1.90 (.36)***	.07	.15	.31
Russian Citizenship	-1.42 (.49)**	.09	.24	.63
Estonian Language Skills (Poor)				
Excellent	.09 (.45)	.45	1.09	2.66
Good	.47 (.40)	.73	1.61	3.52
Moderate	.06 (.44)	.45	1.06	2.50
Sex (Female)				
Male	-.18 (.35)	.42	.84	1.66
Age Group (26-35)				
18-25	-.17 (.32)	.45	.84	1.56
City (Kohtla –Järve)				
Tallinn	-.93 (.32)**	.21	.39	.74
Constant				
Chi-Square			73.02***	
-2 Log likelihood			311.64	
Nagelkerke R Square			.31	
N			281	

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01 and * p < 0.05

Interestingly, Estonian language skills have no significant effect on the likelihood of Russians voting in municipal elections (Table 6). While language skills may not have a direct effect on voting, language skills could influence participation through access to the media and information or through the socialization and informational effects of having Estonian friends. However, the proportion of Russian TV watched has no

significant effect on political participation among Russians. Similarly, there is no significant relationship between interethnic friendship and voting. Consequently, while strong language programmes may encourage civic participation among Russians, it is unlikely to make them more politically active.

5. Discussion

While youth tend to be more oriented toward civic activities (Torney *et al.*, 1975; Torney-Purta *et al.*, 2001), this is not borne out in the case of Estonian and Russian youth. Civic participation levels are lower than voter turnout for both Estonian and Russian respondents. In addition, the number of respondents reporting no participation in any activity is much higher than the percentages reported for Estonians and non-Estonians in the most recent round of integration monitoring. Low levels of civic participation among both Estonian and Russian youth, as well as the existence of ethnic political and civic participation gaps, have negative implications for the vitality of Estonian democracy. Given that civil society is an important political training ground, low civic participation among Russian youth has negative implications for both ethnic mobilization and political representation. The Russian community needs leaders who can serve as role models (Schulze, 2012). We would expect Estonian youth to vote more in national elections than Russian youth, given that many Russians still do not have Estonian citizenship. However, a participation gap at the local level is troubling because this is the only direct avenue that non-citizens have for influencing politics in Estonia. Voter turnout among second generation Russian youth is lower than both national and non-Estonian averages. Barriers to minority participation will likely remain unless second generation Russian youth become more politically and civically active.

Given the positive relationship between socioeconomic variables and participation among both Estonians and Russians, the state has an incentive to make sure that youth have adequate opportunities to pursue higher education, to enter the labour market, and to advance. While the participation gap cannot be reduced to the structural inequalities between groups, addressing ethnic differences in education and income are important. If not addressed, structurally-based inequalities can result in ethnic hostility and conflict (Hechter, 2000; Esser, 2004). While labour market inequalities have been fairly stable over the last decade, Russian-speakers were the hardest hit during the recent economic crisis. In order to address labour market

inequalities, the government should provide job retraining in both Russian and Estonian languages, and provide more advanced specialized training for non-Estonians with good Estonian language proficiency (Ministry of Culture, 2011). This specialized training will help Russian-speakers pursue higher status jobs that may help to shatter the economic and political “glass ceilings” that exist in Estonian society.

Education reform has been the predominant strategy for closing the education gap; however it is a controversial issue in Estonian society. While some surveys report that Russians are positive about the long-term impact of the transition in terms of educational and labour market opportunities, integration monitoring reveals that Russians are more pessimistic about education reform than Estonians (Lindemann and Saar, 2012: 86). There are concerns over the psychological stress that it places on students, the preparedness of teachers, and suboptimal learning outcomes (*ibid.*: 87 citing Ministry of Education and Research, 2009). In December 2011, fifteen Russian schools in Narva and Tallinn requested to continue teaching in Russian. These requests were denied by the government, sparking protests. While the second generation Russians included in the TIES study have not been affected by the secondary education reform, 70% of respondents indicate that they are personally disturbed by it. If education reform is going to be effective in addressing structural inequalities and encouraging the integration of minorities, the government needs to address the concerns of the Russian-speaking community and to include them in discussions and planning (Schulze, 2012).

Estonia’s citizenship policy not only creates legal barriers to political participation at the national level, but influences political participation at the local level as well. While other studies demonstrate that a sense of “civicness” among Russian-speakers (Lauristin, 2008) and second generation Russians (Schulze and Nimmerfeldt, 2011) is not rigidly connected to citizenship status, this study suggests that citizenship is consequential for political participation. The state has attempted to speed naturalization by simplifying naturalization exams, reducing fees, reimbursing language classes for those successfully passing the exam, and allowing children born of stateless parents to receive citizenship through an application procedure. However, naturalization rates have been steadily declining since 2005.²⁷ While naturalization has typically been viewed as a challenge primarily for older persons with poor Estonian language skills, the most recent round of integration monitoring finds an

increasing number of young second generation non-Estonians, who are not choosing Estonian citizenship (Ministry of Culture, 2011: 16). While there may be some practical reasons for this decision (See Lauristin, 2008), it may also be a form of protest against policies (Ministry of Culture, 2011: 16). There has been very little understanding or support for Estonia's approach to citizenship among non-Estonians (Rose, 1997), an attitude reflected among TIES respondents. Eighty-seven percent of Russian respondents indicate that they are personally disturbed by Estonia's citizenship policy.

As recommended by the most recent round of integration monitoring, increasing the quantity and quality of civic education in Russian language schools is important for encouraging naturalization and a more participatory society (Ministry of Culture, 2011: 16). Civic knowledge among young people in Estonia is significantly lower than the international average (Torney-Purta, 2002: 133). The positive effect of civic education programmes on participation has been documented extensively in other societies (See Finkel, 2002; Torney-Purta, 2002; Torney *et al.*, 1975; Torney-Purta *et al.*, 2001). Since 2002, Estonia has placed a greater emphasis on non-governmental institutions and social actors in civic education, which may encourage greater civic engagement among young people (Toots, 2003: 566). However, careful attention must be paid to how civic education programmes are implemented in Estonian-language and minority-language schools, given that they tend to produce vastly different views of nationhood, interethnic relations and citizenship (Golubeva, 2010: 317).

Estonia's approach to minority integration has revolved primarily around Estonian language learning. Estonian language skills do increase the likelihood of civic participation among Russians; however, they have no effect on the likelihood of voting at the local level. Consequently, this study provides only modest support for the focus on language, at least as a means for encouraging political integration. While friendship is likely an intervening variable between language skills and civic participation, the relationship between friendship and civic participation needs further exploration. While friendship may encourage participation, the relationship may also be the result of self-selection: that those who are likely to go out and make Estonian friends are also more likely to participate in voluntary organizations.

While the quantitative analysis suggests avenues for encouraging participation, it does not fully explain the ethnic participation gap. Having controlled

for socioeconomic and demographic variables, attitudinal variables are the most likely explanation for differences in participation across ethnic groups. Several studies suggest that trust in institutions, generalized trust, and satisfaction with democracy explain not only low levels of political and civic participation in Estonia, but also differences in participation across ethnic groups. While it is not possible to measure these variables in the TIES dataset, they represent important avenues for future research.

Several studies note that trust in institutions is low in Estonian society (Lagerspetz and Vogt, 1998: 58; 2004: 70; Rose, 1997: 30).²⁸ This is often attributed to the hard realities of political and economic change in the early 1990s, political scandals, and inexperience with party politics (Lagerspetz and Vogt, 1998: 59). Trust in political institutions is also lower than the international average among young persons in Estonia (Torney-Purta, 2002: 133). Other studies find that trust in institutions differs across ethnic groups. In post-communist countries, Russian minority populations are consistently less confident in new institutions, less satisfied with the national government, and less supportive of democracy than the ethnic majority populations (Dowley and Silver, 2003: 105). In Estonia, several studies cite growing dissatisfaction with democracy and lower levels of trust in political institutions among Russian-speaking minorities (Kivirähk and Lauristin, 2013b: 96; Lagerspetz, 2004; Lagerspetz and Vogt, 2013: 65; Vihalemm and Kalmus, 2009: 95 citing Saar, 2007) and non-citizens in particular (Lagerspetz and Vogt, 2004: 71). Studies among youth also find that Russians tend to have lower levels of trust in government institutions than Estonian youth (Toots, 2003: 569). Some studies suggest that lower levels of institutional trust have resulted in lower levels of political and civic participation among Russian-speakers (Ruutsoo *et al.*, 2012: 104 citing Trumm and Kessearu, 2008: 62). Rather than inspiring mobilization, disengagement has been the primary response to dissatisfaction, a finding consistent with studies in other post-communist countries (Howard, 2003: 176).

The Bronze Soldier Crisis of April 26–28, 2007, during which riots broke out over the government's decision to relocate a Soviet era war memorial from downtown Tallinn, exacerbated distrust of government institutions among Russian-speakers (Korts, 2009; Schulze, 2012). The Bronze Soldier Crisis also influenced the stated objectives of Russophone associations. In 2005, the leaders of youth associations viewed their main goal as supporting the cultural identity of Russophone youth

(Ruutsoo *et al.*, 2012: 89 citing Kallas, 2008b). However, after the Crisis, leaders avoided labelling their objectives as being ethnic in orientation (*ibid.*, 89 citing Villimäe *et al.*, 2010: 26).

While the state has made efforts to increase dialogue with the minority community particularly during the drafting of the last integration programme, and in the wake of the Bronze Soldier Crisis, minority leaders do not feel that the government takes minority opinions or interests into account (Schulze, 2012), indicating feelings of political inefficacy. The Presidential Roundtable on National Minorities was established in 1993 to serve as a consultative body between minorities in the state. However, lacking sufficient funds and links to the legislature, it has been largely ineffective (Agarin, 2010: 235). One goal of the most recent integration programme is to develop civil initiative among non-Estonians (Ministry of Culture, 2011: 17); however, the state has generally been unresponsive to minority NGOs whose agenda is not in line with national policies (Agarin, 2010: 287). Feelings of political inefficacy are likely due to the limited avenues that Russians have for influencing policy, as well as the reaction of the government to organizations representing minority interests.

Several studies argue that generalized trust is important for explaining political and civic participation (Badescu, 2003; Inglehart, 1997; Norris, 2002; Putnam, 1993 and 2000; Stolle, 1998), even if the direction of causality is a source of debate (Ulsaner, 2003: 83). Lower levels of political and civic participation in post-communist states may be the result of lower levels of generalized trust (Inglehart, 1997; Ulsaner, 2003). While Letki (2004) finds that that interpersonal trust is not important for explaining political involvement in CEE, voting was not included as a measure of political involvement and the study pertains only to 1993–1994. This variable may be worth exploring in the Estonian case. According to the European Social Values Survey (2008), slightly over 30% of Estonian respondents indicated that most people can be trusted (Pettai *et al.*, 2011: 161). While declining rates of interpersonal trust tend to coincide with economic downturns (Inglehart, 1997), a recent study reports that the level of generalized trust has risen in Estonian society, with 48% of respondents claiming to trust others. This is higher than the Western European average.²⁹ The European Social Survey (2010) puts this number closer to 40%, however trust in Estonian society is still higher than in other post-communist CEECs and higher than the European average (Kivirähk and Lauristin, 2013a: 76).

Consequently, trust may not explain the comparatively lower levels of civic participation in Estonian society. However, it may be useful for explaining differences in participation between Estonian and Russian youth. The studies cited above do not disaggregate trust along ethnic lines.

Conclusion

Democratic nation-building requires that states grant minorities opportunities to participate in politics and to integrate into the socio-political community. The vitality and quality of democracy depend on individuals making use of those opportunities. Estonia's approach to nation-building in the first half of the 1990s effectively limited the political participation of the vast majority of Soviet era immigrants and their descendants. While Estonia reformed its most exclusionary policies and developed a minority integration programme in response to European pressure, not all European recommendations were implemented, nationalizing preferences among majority elites are still prevalent, and barriers to minority participation remain. Several studies cite low levels of political and civic participation in Estonia, a trend that is prevalent across much of CEE, as well as an ethnic participation gap. This study confirms low levels of political and civic participation among youth, as well as the persistence of an ethnic participation gap between second generation Russian youth and Estonian youth. Estonian youth are more likely to participate in civic associations and municipal elections than second generation Russian youth. Russians are not making use of the main political avenues available to them and are therefore not integrating politically. The passivity of second generation Russians implies that they will remain underrepresented in state structures and that further reforms to minority policies are unlikely.

This study represents a first cut at exploring the factors that explain political and civic participation among second generation Russian and Estonian youth. Socioeconomic variables, which have been proven to be powerful predictors of participation in a variety of other cases, are also relevant in Estonia. Higher education levels are positively associated with the likelihood of voting for both groups and with participation in voluntary associations among Estonians. For Estonians, income is positively associated with the likelihood of voting and group participation. However, income is not significant in the Russian models. For Russians, Estonian citizenship is positively associated with the likelihood of voting, and Estonian language skills with

the likelihood of civic participation. Demographic factors, such as gender, age, and city of residence, also have different effects and significance across ethnic groups. These variations demonstrate the importance of testing variables within ethnic sub-populations. Policies aimed at increasing participation among Estonian and Russian youth need to take these variations into account.

The ethnic participation gap is not fully explained by structural inequalities or demographic variations, suggesting important differences at the level of attitudes. While some studies have suggested that Russians do not possess attitudes conducive to the creation of a strong civil society (Vihalemm and Kalmus, 2009), qualitative research, including focus groups, would be useful for identifying attitudinal variables. This article has suggested that trust in political institutions, generalized trust and satisfaction with democracy are important avenues for future research.

Given the emphasis the scholarly literature places upon the importance of political and civic participation for “making democracy work”, we may cautiously conclude that the absence of a strong participatory culture and the existence of an ethnic participation gap between second generation Russian youth and Estonian youth may undermine Estonian democracy in the long run. However, this conclusion requires three caveats which present opportunities for future research. First, the TIES survey does not provide information on forms of nonconventional participation. Future research should examine the existence of a participation gap among youth with respect to these activities. Second, the survey does not provide information about the nature of civic organizations or the extent of participant involvement, both of which are necessary for drawing conclusions about low levels of membership. Not all organizations are “virtuous” and civic engagement may reinforce rather than bridge ethnic divides with negative implications for democratic stability (Dowley and Silver, 2003; Hardin, 1995). Finally, low levels of political and civic participation must be evaluated in light of popular conceptions of democracy. Recent studies suggest that Estonians do not view conventional participation as the most fundamental feature of democracy (Andersen *et al.*, 2012; Torney-Purta, 2002: 136), and that Russians place less importance on voting than Estonians (Ruutsoo *et al.*, 2012: 105 citing Lauristin, 2008: 162; Toots, 2003: 569–570). Consequently, low levels of political and civic participation may not undermine democratic stability or legitimacy. Future studies should evaluate the political and civic participation of youth in light of their own conceptions and expectations about democracy.

Notes

1. Estonians currently comprise approximately 69% of the population, Russians 25%, Ukrainians 2%, Belorussians 1%, and others 3%. Fifty-five per cent of the capital's (Tallinn) population is Estonian; 36.2% is Russian. Estonians comprise 19.5% of the population in the north-eastern region of Ida-Virumaa, Russians 71.6%. "Russian-speakers" refers to those whose mother-tongue is Russian; approximately 29.6% of the population. Statistikaamet (Statistics Estonia). Population and Housing Census 2011. http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/I_Databas/Population_census/PHC2011/01Demographic_and_ethno_cultural_characteristics/04Ethnic_nationality_Languages_Dialects/04Ethnic_nationality_Languages_Dialects.asp. Retrieved: May 14, 2012.
2. According to the 1934 census, ethnic Russians comprised approximately 8% of the population, concentrated in the border regions of Narva, Peipsi, and Pesteri (Vetik and Helemäe, 2011: 2). With the collapse of the Soviet Union, borders moved over people leaving a large number of ethnic Russians outside of Russia.
3. This is partly justified by their common history of settlement, their mother-tongue, which is for the most part Russian, their status as a minority group in the post-Soviet period, and the common barriers to participation in Estonian society (See Agarin, 2010: 9).
4. This is a general finding of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Study. See *The International Journal of Educational Research* 39 (2003).
5. Support for democracy is comparable to levels in other Western democracies such as France and Britain. See Lagerspetz and Vogt, 1998: 61 citing Berglund and Aarebrot, 1997: 172.
6. International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance. www.idea.int/vt/. Retrieved: March 12, 2014.
7. International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance. www.idea.int/vt/. Retrieved: March 12, 2014.
8. Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.
9. In the 1930s, 88.1% of the population was Estonian. In 1989, 61.5% of the population was ethnic Estonian; 30.3% Russian.
10. According to a survey in 1992, only 9.2% of Russians knew Estonian fluently, and 33% had no knowledge.
11. Population Register, Ministry of the Interior. <http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/society/citizenship.html>. Retrieved: May 10, 2012.
12. Most of these institutions offer a one-year advanced Estonian language course to students who have a state-commissioned place in higher education, but who are not proficient enough to complete their studies. Russian-language graduates also have the opportunity to continue their studies at private Russian-language higher education institutions; however, they have to pay tuition fees.
13. These include documents issued by the Council of Europe (CE), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN): the 'Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities' (UN, 1992), the 'European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages' (CE, 1992), the 'Helsinki Decisions' (OSCE, 1992), the 'Copenhagen Criteria for EU Accession' (EU, 1993), the 'Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities' (CE, 1994), the 'Hague Recommendations regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities' (OSCE, 1996); the 'Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities' (OSCE, 1998); the 'Lund Recommendations on the Effective participation of National Minorities in Public Life' (OSCE, 1999); the 'Warsaw Guidelines to Assist National Minority Participation in the Electoral Process' (OSCE, 2001); the 'Guidelines on the Use of Minority Languages in

- the Broadcast Media' (OSCE, 2003); and the 'Recommendation on Policing in Multi-ethnic Societies' (OSCE, 2006).
14. Reforms included: allowing retired Soviet military to acquire residency and to naturalize through marriage to an Estonian citizen by birth; removing language requirements for candidates running for national and local election; simplifying naturalization for children born of stateless parents; making language exams easier in order to reduce the large number of stateless persons; investing the Legal Chancellor with the powers of an Ombudsman; and establishing a national integration programme.
 15. For discussion of this tendency across CEECs see Kymlicka (2008). For example, European institutions have recommended that the use of minority languages be permitted where minorities live in significant numbers. While European institutions and most other states have set this bar at 20%, Estonia has set the bar comparatively high at 50% (Hoffman, 2008: 189–90).
 16. For example, naturalization exams were simplified but not abolished for the elderly and citizenship was not made automatic for children born of stateless parents
 17. While language requirements for candidates were removed, Estonian was made the working language of both parliament and municipalities; the Office for Population and Ethnic Affairs in Estonia was dismissed in 2009 and integration budgets were slashed.
 18. For a critical view of the influence of EU conditionality on minority rights in Estonia see Hughes and Sasse, 2003; Pettai and Kallas, 2009; Sasse, 2008.
 19. See State Programme. 'Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007'. http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/state_programme111.pdf. Retrieved: May 14, 2012; 'Estonian Integration Strategy (2008-1013)'. http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/Loimumiskava_2008_2013_ENG.pdf. Retrieved: May 14, 2012.
 20. Voter turnout was lower than average in Ida-Virumaa county where Russians constitute a majority of the population. See data from Estonian National Election Committee. <http://www.vvk.ee/past-elections/>. Retrieved: March 27, 2014.
 21. For a description of the TIES project see Crul and Heering, 2008: 1–3. The sample frame was based on the list of addresses drawn from the Register of Population based on four criteria: age (18-35); birthplace (Estonia); ethnic self-identification (Estonian or Russian); and in the case of Russians, at least one parent born outside of Estonia. Face-to-face interviews at the respondents' homes in their mother tongue were conducted by the survey bureau OÜ Faktum and Ariko between January 2007 and March 2008. One thousand interviews (488 with Estonian youth; 512 with Russian youth) were conducted in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve. These cities were chosen because they represent areas where Russian-speakers are concentrated and have sufficient numbers of both ethnic groups for sampling purposes.
 22. Collinearity diagnostics based on tolerance, VIF, and eigenvalues do not indicate collinearity. In the general models, ethnicity is not highly correlated with any of the other variables in the model, the strongest correlation being between ethnicity and income (.19). The strongest correlations in the general models are between income and sex (-.39). In the Estonian and Russian models, the strongest correlations are between income and sex, (-.39) and (-.41) respectively.
 23. The index was recoded: 4–5 = excellent, 6–9 = good; 10–13 = moderate; 14–16 = poor. In the context of the TIES survey, respondents were not given the option of "not at all" as a response category.
 24. The survey only asks about TV programmes: Estonian-language or Russian-language. There is no distinction between news and other types of programmes, or between Russian-language media in Estonia and media coming from Russia.
 25. Out of 512 Russian respondents, 152 refused to answer and an additional 59 indicated that they did not know their monthly income. Substituting occupational group (managers and professionals, clerks and service workers, skilled and unskilled workers, full time students, not working) results in models with a poorer fit. The substitution of

occupational group for income does not alter the significance levels of the other variables in the model.

26. Regressions including the media variable are available from the author upon request.
27. In 2013, only 1257 persons were naturalized. The comparatively large numbers naturalized in 2004 (6523) and 2005 (7072) are explained by Estonian's accession to the EU. <http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/society/citizenship.html>. Retrieved: April 30, 2014.
28. A recent study contradicts this finding showing that trust in institutions (Presidency, government, parliament, courts, political parties, armed forces, police, banks and the financial system, foreign investors, NGOs, trade unions, and religious institutions) is higher in Estonia than the Western European average. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. 'Country Assessments: Estonia'. *Life in Transition. After the Crisis*. 73 (2010). <http://www.ebrd.com/pages/research/publications/special/transitionII.shtml>. Retrieved: March 10, 2014.
29. 'Country Assessments: Estonia'. *Life in Transition. After the Crisis*. 73 (2010). <http://www.ebrd.com/pages/research/publications/special/transitionII.shtml>. Retrieved: March 10, 2014.

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