

**Legal Information Centre for Human Rights**



## **Estonia: Interethnic relations and the issue of discrimination in Tallinn**

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Estonia: Interethnic relations and the issue of discrimination in Tallinn  
K.Hallik, V.Poleshchuk, A.Saar, A.Semjonov

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Legal Information Centre for Human Rights  
Nunne str. 2  
10133 Tallinn  
Estonia  
Tel (372) 64 64 27 0  
Fax (372) 64 64 272  
E-mail: [Centre@lichr.ee](mailto:Centre@lichr.ee)  
Internet: [Http://lichr.ee](http://lichr.ee)

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## FOREWORD

*A. Semjonov*

This collection presented to the readers, is an analysis of the results of survey of two main groups of residents of Tallinn: the Estonian and the Russian (speaking) communities. This is already the second study of that type, accomplished on the basis of the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights. The previous survey was carried out in 2001 in the framework of Tallinn City Programme on Integration, prepared by Department of Social Security and Integration. Unfortunately, the said Department was very soon to be wound up for political reasons, and the city integration programme was never implemented into life. Nevertheless, the Centre prepared a publication of main results of research done by it, published in 2002 under the title *Integration in Tallinn 2001*. It is necessary to point out that the publication was not a monograph in the strictly academic sense. The analysis of the data of the survey was performed by three researchers, acting independently of one another: Alexander Plotkin, Aleksei Semjonov and Klara Hallik, everyone of whom determined the topic of respective article on his/her own, as well as the selection of indicators for analysis. Thus the responsibility for the conclusions and interpretation of the results fully belonged to the authors. Naturally, in a number of cases the same data were used by various authors and were interpreted differently in keeping with the general attitude and orientation of every researcher. Consequently, the collection represented a distinctive “dialogue” of the authors.

The said analysis in the form of a dialogue, created on the strength of circumstance and the specific pre-history of the project, however was found to be successful and interesting. The opportunity for non-trivial and individual presentation of source data, their interpretation and respective conclusions, as we see it, has complementary heuristic implication. Therefore, when preparing the research 2005 we planned specifically such form of a publication. This time the analysis of materials was performed by two Estonian-speaking authors (Andrus Saar and Klara Hallik) and two Russian-speaking authors (Vadim Poleshchuk and Aleksei Semjonov), each independently selecting the topic for his/her article and the set of variables for analysis in conformity with one’s own scientific and social priorities. In the process of preparation of the publication it turned out that the works of Semjonov and Poleshchuk coincided to a significant degree as regards the selected topics of analysis and the conclusions, with the balance complementing one another. Hence we decided to merge those articles into one.

In this project, like in 2001 we carried out an investigation of both main groups of population of Tallinn - Estonians and non-Estonians (“Russians”). This enabled us to pinpoint the similarity and differences of the views, expectations and attitudes, their dynamics for the past four years, and also to determine the most significant problem areas of strategic planning of integration processes and how to cope with discrimination (segregation).

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## Indicators fixed:

- The attitudes and relations in the sphere of power and politics. Contacts with the institutions of power, attitude to those contacts (the degree of satisfaction), trust to institutions of power, social and political organisations.
- Interethnic contacts: frequency, intensiveness, degree of satisfaction, dynamics and expectations from the point of view of various groups; linguistic situation.
- Inequality and discrimination: personal experience, perception of the situation, awareness of the causes and effects.
- Anticipated and preferred models of conduct of the groups in the situation of multicultural society: coincidence – divergence of attitudes.
- Attitudes to interethnic openness – ethnic closeness.
- General value-attitude orientations for the model of development of society: the attitude on the axis "ethnocracy – civil society".
- Peculiarities of identity of Russians in the situation of the Estonian nation-state.
- Attitude to the planned reform of the Russian language upper secondary school education (transfer to instruction in Estonian of 60% subjects).

## Implementation of the project

The research was carried out on the basis of the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights. For that purpose, there was set up a working group both from personnel of the Centre and from researchers invited to contribute on contractual basis. Personnel of the Centre provided technical service of the survey.

The main instrument of the survey was questionnaire. It contained 56 indicators – questions. Among them were 43 meaningful indicators and 13 social-demographic features. Altogether the questionnaire included 195 variables (the variable means an informative feature, as against an indicator in which there may be any number of variables).

The survey was carried out in September 2005, by a standard representative sample for Tallinn by the company SAAR POLL. Altogether there were surveyed 700 people (350 questionnaires in both Estonian and Russian). Of them 325 respondents were Estonians and 375 non-Estonians.

## Concise information on authors

Klara Hallik, senior researcher, Institute of International and Social Studies (Tallinn)

Vadim Poleshchuk, analyst, Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (Tallinn)

Andrus Saar, director, sociological company SAAR POLL (Tallinn)

Aleksei Semjonov, director, Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (Tallinn)

## Note

Please note that the terms "an Estonian", "a non-Estonian" or "a Russian" refer to a person's ethnic origin, not citizenship.

## **SOVIET LEGACY AS THE FACTOR IMPACTING ON ATTITUDES RESPECTING ETHNIC RELATIONS**

*Andrus Saar*

Past experiences mould the factual attitudes of people. Part of those attitudes are easier to change, part of them need for that quite a long period, due to conditions of environment. The universal practice has shown that in ethnic issues, the attitudes are overly persistent and quite hard to alter. It is apparently fair to presume that attitudes in ethnic issues are substantially more rigid, less likely to undergo changes than e.g. the attitudes in economic issues. Attitudes in economic issues, as well as attitudes in general, may occasionally be painful to change. Nevertheless, the changes take place under the direct impact of external environment, which coerces people to take the realities of life into account. Failure to do so, will perceptibly affect the economic position of the attitude-bearer himself. But much smaller is the outside pressure to change attitudes with regard to other ethnic groups.

In this analysis we pose the hypothesis that regardless of extremely rapid changes in Estonian society, ethnic issues are a playground of certain attitudes, which were moulded in Estonia in the period of the Soviet Union, which have been strongly represented until now and affect now the peoples' stance also in the other issues regarding the ethnic relations that are not related to the past.

We hold that the basic assessments and attitudes regarding the position of Estonians and Russians (non-Estonians) in the Soviet period in Estonia are so-called cross-generation i.e. they affect almost similarly the ideas of both people of advanced age and those younger. The younger people, having lived under conditions of the Soviet power just for a short time, sustain the prevailing attitudes to ethnic issues as unfailingly as the older people, having lived in Soviet Estonia for a lengthier period. Those attitudes should evidently be stronger in Estonians than in non-Estonians. The root cause of that, is the different interpretation of transformation of the sovereign Estonia into Soviet Estonia, both by Estonians and non-Estonians.

The said differences in the interpretation of history should expressly manifest themselves in the assessments and attitudes regarding the status of a given ethnic group in the Soviet period in Estonia.

Estonians and non-Estonians hold different opinions as to whether Russians were in a more favoured position, as compared to Estonians, in the „Soviet time”. Estonians tend, most of all to support the view that this was how it actually turned out (44.3%). Non-Estonians are adamantly entrenched in the position that this was surely not the case (56.7%). Among Estonians, there are significantly more of those who are of the opinion that preferential treatment of Russians was prevalent. Their numbers are 7 times more than those of non-Estonians.

**Table 1. Do you think that in the “Soviet time” Russians were privileged compared to Estonians?**

	SAMPLE		Ethnic group			
	Number	%	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
			Number	%	Number	%
Yes, certainly	112	16.0	96	29.5	16	4.3
Yes, to some extent	241	34.4	144	44.3	97	25.9
No	244	34.9	28	8.6	216	57.6
Not sure	103	14.7	57	17.5	46	12.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Estonians' attitudes*

With Estonians, it is plausible to say that the age is not a vital characteristic, making difference in the respondents' attitudes. It is only with people over 60 that the number of those sharing the view that Russians were definitively in a more advantageous position is preponderant. Hence, the affiliation to generation does not play a significant role in formation of the attitude about the role of Russians in Estonia in the Soviet time.

The people of meagre means tend to assert that in witness was preferential treatment of Russians, those of lower educational level are also disposed to embrace that view. Considering that senior citizens and poorer people in Estonian society normally represent the same group, in this case these two factors are complementary.

The assessments that Estonians provide for the situation of ethnic groups in the Soviet period are quite closely related to overall attitudes to non-Estonians and to national policy. This interrelation is demonstrated by at least two factors: attitudes towards the issue of citizenship and to working in a multiethnic team.

Those people who find that it is first and foremost the native population of this country entitled to be citizen of Estonia, because it is their land, more often hold the view that in actual fact Russians were more privileged than Estonians (Russians were definitely preferred – 42%) . 29% of those who think that Russians were definitely preferred share the view that everyone is entitled to have the citizenship of the country where he has permanent abode and with which he is most of all associated.

The retrospective assessment of the situation of different ethnic groups is differentiated depending on attitudes towards the ethnic composition of a work team. Out of those preferring to work only in the collective of Estonians or in a mixed collective, 43% were absolutely positive that Russians were given preference. Among the people of indifferent attitude (“I cannot care less what the ethnic composition of the work collective is”) 28% were convinced that Russians were preferred. This means that ethnic origin is not of primary importance to those people. The mono-ethnic or mixed ethnic collective notwithstanding, the respondent will consider more important its other characteristic properties. The same tendency is noticeable also in case of the question what kind of people the respondents would like to have in the neighbourhood. The people of indifferent attitude take a considerably more neutral stance too in regard of the question, who were

„preferred’ in the „Russian” time than the people, who select their work collective and people in the neighbourhood on the basis of ethnic affiliation (mono- or multinational).

Notably, interest in Russian culture (or lack thereof) does not differentiate Estonians’ opinions.

#### *Non-Estonians*

The older the persons are, the higher the probability that they would deny preference of Russians in the Soviet period, as against Estonians. Consequently, the views of the younger people have been affected by novel circumstances and they are not as rigid as the views of people already in their declining years. Those considering themselves poorer are somewhat more certain that there was no preference accorded to Russians. For instance, among those of 20-29, there are 53% denying that preference was granted to Russians; among those of 60-74 they number 75%.

With non-Estonians, the educational factor does not actually possess any power for differentiating the opinions. This pattern is rather similar in all educational groups.

The citizens by birthright of the Republic of Estonia are the least convinced that there was no preferring of the Russians (42% hold that there was no preferring). The Russian citizens and the people of undefined citizenship are significantly more supportive of the view that there was no preferring of the Russians (respectively 76% and 74%).

The attitudes of non-Estonians related to the situation of ethnic groups in Soviet Estonia are closely related to their overall “egalitarian” approach and preferences in practically all ethnic relations issues. Further we will consider some of them:

#### **- Citizenship**

Those finding that anyone is eligible to hold citizenship of the country where he has a permanent dwelling place and with which he is most of all associated, are much more assured that there was no preferring of the Russians (68%), as against those who opine that the right to be citizen is vested, in the first place in the “indigenous population” of this country, because it is “their land” (30%).

#### **- Political participation**

Those non-Estonians holding that the country must be administered by representatives of the “indigenous population” and also by the people having supported evidence to their loyalty, feel less assured in that there was no preferring of the Russians in the Soviet time. Among the people of that category, there are significantly more of those finding that there was surely preferring of the Russians (14%) as compared to people holding that anyone has the right to give a hand in governing the country, regardless of their language and origin (among them there are 4% of those finding that in the “Soviet time” there was surely preferring of the Russians to Estonians).

#### **- “Collective rights” of an ethnic group**

Similar tendencies also manifest themselves in other issues, concerning the culture of “indigenous population” and preferences in political rights given to the “indigenous population” *versus* equal treatment. Those embracing the view that “indigenous population” has larger rights as compared to other nations believe more strongly in the fact of former privileges to Russians as against Estonians in the Soviet time, as compared to those, who are in favour of the equal treat-

ment principle. The latter are by far more certain that there was no preferring of the Russians to Estonians in the “Russian” time.

Those respondents, who anticipate in their forecasts more frequent contacts with Estonians in the future, are less certain that Russians used to be preferred to Estonians, as compared to those anticipating fewer contacts with Estonians.

Russians preferring the mono-ethnic environment claim by far more frequently that in the „Soviet time” there was no preferring of the Russians to Estonians as against those people, preferring either the ethnically mixed work collective or paying no whatsoever attention to ethnic origin. In that sense, the attitudes of Estonians and non-Estonians display a marked similarity. Failure to attribute significance to ethnic origin provides a milder undertone to assessment of the past, too. There is less manifestation of the black-and-white world outlook.

Of importance is not only whether or to what extent a given ethnic group enjoyed advantages in Estonia in the Soviet period, but where those advantages realised.

This issue was considered in the survey in 12 spheres, covering both political, economical, and cultural spheres (see Table 2).

In the opinion of Estonians, Russians had it easier than Estonians to get the apartment, in the first place, to be elected to bodies of authority, to use their native language, to travel abroad, to obtain a nice job, to advance in career. The small advantage of Estonians to Russians is perceived in two groups: to obtain the higher education, the opportunity to consume culture, e.g. books, theatre, museums, etc.

In the opinion of non-Estonians, Estonians were privileged in the following areas, in the first place: to get a nice job, higher salary, to advance in career, to be elected to bodies of authority, to acquire a summer cottage, a family house. There is only one activity that keeps to the average scale point – to use their native language.

t-test shows that the ethnic affiliation is, with all phenomena considered, a clearly differentiating feature, except one - the opportunity to consume culture, e.g. books, theatre, museums, etc.

### *Estonians*

With Estonians, the age characteristic correlates positively with only one feature, which is „getting the apartment’. The older the Estonians interviewed, the more convinced they are that Russians enjoyed privileges when getting the apartment.

Education correlates with by far more features. The higher the education of Estonians, the more convinced they are that Russians had more opportunity to be elected to bodies of authority, to get an apartment, to visit abroad and obtain prizes and awards.

With gender, there is only one statistically reliable connection to be isolated. Women are more convinced, as compared to men, that Russians got more apartments as against Estonians.

### *Non-Estonians*

Of particular interest is the tendency that with non-Estonians two features, education and gender fail to correlate with any of the specified features. This suggests that attitude in all educational and gender groups is relatively uniform. There is no great difference between generations, either. The attitudes of the older generation have been transmitted to younger generation. Lacking is the dimension of the so-called temporal distance. This is also quite characteristic to Estonians. The attitudes of Estonians, however, have been affected by the historical loss of independence as a background fac-

tor, which is particularly evident for older people who might have experienced unfair treatment themselves. In other areas, however the temporal distance does not have any great significance.

On the whole, the study shows that for Estonians education influences the assessment of the past in terms of ethnic inequality more than other social and demographic factors: the higher the respondent's educational level, the greater, in certain areas, the tendency to perceive the preferences accorded to Russians.

With non-Estonians, the education does not have any meaningful role in this respect.

## Table 2. Average value of the scale in different ethnic groups

**Average assessment on scale where 1 means that Estonians had it easier, and 7 means that Russians had it easier, to:**

Advantages	Estonian	Non-Estonian
Get the apartment	5,37	3,88
Be elected to bodies of authority	5,01	3,71
Use the native language	4,98	4,23
Travel abroad	4,78	4,01
Obtain a nice job	4,72	3,56
Advance in career	4,71	3,65
Acquire the family house, summer cottage	4,62	3,71
Get awards – letters of commendation, medals, diplomas, etc.	4,54	3,96
Draw higher salary	4,51	3,60
Participate in work of social organisations	4,48	3,96
Get higher education	4,21	3,87
Enjoy the opportunity to consume culture, e.g. books, theatre, museums, etc.	3,99	3,97

Distribution of frequencies of isolated features provides a general picture showing in which fields Estonians and non-Estonians living in the capital differently assess their situation in the past. At the level of society or an ethnic group individual features are interrelated and finding out their relations would be helpful to identify thinking stereotypes existing in the given issue. If a person thinks that inequality is manifested in allocating apartments, it is important to find out where else he or she sees manifestation of inequality. Or maybe the said isolated feature stands markedly apart and is not bound with other spheres of inequality?

In order to find out what the stereotypes of Estonian society are, we used the factor analysis (main components analysis) method. Five different paradigms of thinking can be identified on the basis of the outcome of the analysis (see Table 3).

The 1st paradigm (factor) consolidates in the first place the attributes related to **power**: salary, higher education, nice job, career and connection to bodies of authority and in certain cases also the opportunity to get the apartment.

The 2nd factor refers in the first place to **advantages extended to a few handpicked** people of the Soviet system, the opportunities to get fringe benefits, enjoyed by a limited contingent of people: travels abroad, the opportunity to get housing, awards, summer cottage, opportunities to acquire a family house.

The 3rd factor considers the **opportunities to gain a social (public) position**: the opportunity to join the Communist Party, to participate in the work of social organisations and to be elected to bodies of authority.

The 4th factor consists of one feature: **the opportunity to use one's native language**.

The 5th factor is also a one-feature centred: **the opportunity to consume culture**, e.g. books, theatre, museums, etc.

The fourth and the fifth factors can coincide in many instances, however coincidentally they stand conspicuously apart in attitudes of different social groups.

**Table 3. How do the attitudes form?**

	Factors				
	1st factor	2nd factor	3rd factor	4th factor	5th factor
To draw high salary	.803	.273	.143	.252	.068
To obtain higher education	.758	.063	.120	-.088	.432
To get a nice job	.722	.375	.188	.329	-.019
To advance in career	.690	.327	.344	.258	-.146
To be elected to bodies of authority	.540	.343	.492	.274	-.044
To travel abroad	.236	.817	.224	.034	.038
To get an apartment	.526	.583	.183	.218	-.027
To get awards - letters of commendation, medals, diplomas etc.	.203	.571	.133	.467	.117
To acquire a family house, summer cottage	.502	.504	.206	.154	.209
To join the Communist Party	.056	.271	.827	.119	.054
To participate in the work of social organisations	.343	.075	.803	.087	.100
To use native language	.233	.141	.159	.875	.103
The opportunity to consume cultures, e.g. books, theatre, museums, etc.	.071	.074	.073	.116	.941

The factor analysis enabled us to elucidate what paradigms of attitudes exist in Estonian population, however it does not enable to say, how much of the given paradigm exists in actual fact, how many spokesmen there are to a given mode of thinking in society as a whole. To supersede that problem, we used the methods of cluster analysis, basing on the average value of the features scale in concrete respondents. After scrutiny of several variants of cluster analysis, it turned out expedient to isolate five main clusters.

Clusters distributed as per size as follows: the first type includes 5.9% of all interviewees, the second cluster class includes 12.9%, the third type 9.9%, the fourth type 22.7%, the fifth type 48.7% interviewees.

In the following survey we call clusters the types, because that term characterises the sample better, while we treat the groups as integral entities, compared between one another. The type characterises a certain unique common part of behaviour and thinking, opposed to other types.

**Table 4. In what spheres did Estonians/non-Estonians have advantages in the Soviet time? The average frequency of occurrence as per clusters**

	Clusters (types) The average occurrence of features on the scale 1 – Estonians had it easier to, 7 non-Estonians had it easier to				
	1	2	3	4	5
Preferences					
To participate in the work of social organisations	3.51	5.18	3.22	4.62	4.03
To be elected to bodies of authority	1.68	<b>6.09</b>	2.64	<b>5.36</b>	4.01
To advance in career	<b>1.49</b>	<b>5.96</b>	<b>2.77</b>	4.72	4.00
To obtain higher education	2.37	4.76	3.64	4.23	4.02
To draw high salary	<b>1.56</b>	5.54	2.86	4.38	3.99
To get a nice job	<b>1.34</b>	<b>5.97</b>	2.64	4.55	4.01
To get an apartment	2.29	<b>6.39</b>	3.54	<b>5.43</b>	4.18
To acquire a family house, summer cottage	2.32	5.76	3.46	4.30	3.98
To travel abroad	2.80	5.73	3.48	<b>5.06</b>	4.04
The opportunity to consume cultures, e.g. books, theatre, museums, etc.	3.71	4.22	3.86	3.96	3.99
To use native language	3.51	<b>6.09</b>	4.04	4.99	4.22
To get awards - letters of commendation, medals, diplomas etc.	3.37	5.37	3.78	4.45	4.01
To join the Communist Party	4.00	5.60	<b>2.91</b>	<b>4.92</b>	3.95

**The first type** embraces one hundred per cent the residents of different ethnic affiliation. The people belonging to that group are the most extremist in their assessments, as compared to other types. In their opinion, the Estonians have been in preferential position in the spheres related to **economic power**. Meaning that with very many aspects they are persuaded it was the Estonians in the first place who were in a privileged position in the Soviet time. In case of no oth-

er type does one perceive the Estonians to have been in so predominantly a privileged position. In no other type are there so many people belonging to Russian citizenship and persons of undefined citizenship, and also the citizens of the Republic of Estonia, who were granted citizenship by way of naturalisation. The first type includes the least number of citizens of the Republic of Estonia by birthright. This type includes most of all of those who have no intention to apply for Estonian citizenship.

The contentment of the people belonging to the first type with integration policy is average. It does not differ significantly from the average estimates, although there are the most of those who cannot label that policy either good or bad.

With no other type are there so many people holding that the society has divided (66%) or that ethnic groups have drawn wide apart from one another (34%). As compared to other types they are most of all convinced that in evidence in Estonia, too often is discriminating against people of a given ethnic group (70%).

With no other type there are so many people over 50 (49%), while there are the least of those up to 29 years of age.

The people belonging to the 1st type do not highlight the hierarchy of problems related to integration. For them, the following problems are of almost equal significance: the problems related to language and culture, the legal and political aspects and social-economical problems of integration. The economic situation of the people belonging to the first type is that of the so-called "middle peasants" (borrowed from the pre-WWII Soviet collective farm terminology).

Among them there are most of all of those opining that in the Soviet time, Russians did not occupy a privileged position as against Estonians (88%).

Contacts of people belonging to the first type with the Estonians have become less frequent, as compared to the Estonia of the period of the newly regained independence - 54%. This indicator is the highest, as against other types. Whereas among them are the least people predicting that those contacts might become closer in the future.

While speaking about the patterns of conduct of Russians in the future, they consider preservation of the Russian language and culture most important, as well as harmonious co-existence between two communities (32%), the second place being occupied by solution jointly with Estonians of the common problems, facing the country (24%).

As compared with other types, we most often come across the opinion that Russians should travel back to their homeland (12%) or as another radical device, they find that Russians must implement in Estonia the right of self determination of Russians (10%) or organise politically, with the aim to protecting the rights of Russians (10%).

The people belonging to the first type are extremely negatively tuned with regard to some laws of the Republic of Estonia like the Language Act, Citizenship Act, Aliens' Act and Basic School and Upper Secondary School Act. At least 3/4 of people belonging to that type see those laws in the negative light. Among those laws, the Local Self Governments Act is considered most positively.

**The second type** embraces 89% Estonians and 11% non-Estonians. The type includes 52% men and 48% women. As per age structure, the composition of the type is close to average, although the people over 60 are above average. According to ethnic affiliation, for 90% of people belonging to that type the language spoken at home is Estonian, for the remaining either Russian or some other language.

The views of people of that type are in many aspects opposite to those of the first type. They perceive strong preferences as having been given to non-Estonians. Seemingly, the people belonging to the given type are in their views most radical, in their own way. They see preferring of non-Estonians in the first place in the **power spheres**, added to which is one more essential aspect: privilege in getting the apartment. The material situation of those people is average. As compared to other types, this type embraces the most number of citizens of the Republic of Estonia by birthright (96%).

Analysis of the situation of ethnic groups in Estonia reveals that 62% of respondents are assured that ethnic groups have distanced. Among the people belonging to the second type there are the most of those, as compared to remaining types, finding that ethnic groups have equal rights (20%).

Out of people belonging to the second type, only 7% think that in evidence in Estonia is discriminating on national basis. This is the smallest indicator, as compared to other types. For the people belonging to the second type, the problems of integration are first and foremost related to language and culture (59%). Being the largest regarding that indicator, they see problems in juridical, legal and social economic areas less than others.

Like the people belonging to the first type, denying most categorically the allegation that Russians were enjoying certain advantages in the Soviet time, the people belonging to the second type are most convinced, as against other types, that non-Estonians were undoubtedly in the more privileged position as compared to Estonians (57%). Only 2% found that it was not so.

The attitudes of people belonging to the second type to the laws of the Republic of Estonia are predominantly positive or else neutral.

Assessing the causes why there are many Estonians holding key offices in public sector in Estonia, the people belonging to the second type point out, as of primary importance, the legal status of Estonians (36%), skills of the state language (21%), activeness and initiative (16%). As compared to other type, ethnic grounds are but little intimated as grounds (8%).

As per frequency of contacts with non-Estonians, the people belonging to the given type do not stand out, as compared to the average in the country. People belonging to the second type prognosticate that their contacts with non-Estonians will become a bit more frequent.

In evidence in **the third type** is the predominantly non-Estonians-type. They are 96%, Estonians 4%. Ethnic affiliation will also determine the language spoken at home. People belonging to that type are rather similar by their opinions as to what ethnic groups were privileged in the Soviet time with the opinions of people belonging to the first type, but they are not as categorical but somehow milder. They are more resolute as the first type in one aspect only. They are more inclined to think that Estonians enjoyed the preferential treatment as against non-Estonians regarding the joining of the Communist Party.

Representatives of that type are in a bit better economic situation, as compared with the average. From the citizenship aspect, the structure of that type is practically similar to that of the first type. That type embraces most of all men (60%). No other type has as many people aged 30-39 as this type. While in that type, the share of young people of 15-29 is smaller. Hence in evidence is the type where in the first place the middle-aged and senior citizens belong.

Assessment to the integration policy is somewhat more negative, as against the average.

The estimates to the Estonian society distribute practically equally between two characteristics: the society has divided, the ethnic groups have distanced from one another. The estimate

to how much people are discriminated against, on the basis of ethnic affiliation is similar to the first group, however it is milder, to a certain extent.

When speaking of the integration problems, people belonging to the third type consider as most important their political and legal aspects. That aspect has not been highlighted as conspicuously as that, with any other type.

Speaking about the problem whether Russians enjoyed advantages in Estonia, as compared to Estonians, they provide an estimate, which is relatively similar to the first type, although not as confidently (cf. – the first type – 87%, third type – 65%).

Estimates of representatives of the third type to the above Estonian laws are predominantly negative. Those people perceive the reasons of domination of Estonians in the public sector only in a couple of aspects: ethnic origin (55%) and connections and acquaintances (17%). In no other type have such aspects been highlighted to such an extent. The legal status (citizenship) as a reason for the dominance of Estonians in authorities is perceived by 7% only of the people of the third group, several times less than in other types.

In no other type are there so many people predicting that their contacts with Estonians will not change in the future.

Regarding the behaviour strategy that would be advisable for Russians, the representatives of this type largely tend to prefer the adaptation model: they think that Russians should be loyal to the state of Estonia, acknowledge the right of Estonians to govern the country (28%), find solutions of problems faced by the state of Estonia together with Estonians (25%), respect the Estonian culture and language and send children to Estonian schools (23%).

The fourth and fifth types are essentially multiethnic.

The **fourth type** embraces 75% Estonians and 25% people of other nationalities. Men constitute 46% of the type, women 54%. As compared to the average, the type contains more than average of people of advanced age.

Representatives of the type are most of all persuaded that non-Estonians had strong advantages as against Estonians, regarding the essential fringe benefits of that time (for example, travelling abroad) and being elected to bodies of authority and the opportunity to join the Communist Party. In all other aspects, the representatives of that type hold the average views. Meaning they do not perceive any stronger privileges on ethnic grounds.

In the material sense the people of the fourth type represent the so-called “middle peasant”. When dismissing the second type, this is where the most number of the people of undefined nationality are found. As compared to the so-called Estonians-type (the second type), the fourth type embraces by far more people of different citizenship status. Out of people belonging to that type currently not holding Estonian citizenship, there are the least number of people not intending to seek Estonian citizenship.

More than 2/3 of people belonging to that type have the opinion, when describing the Estonian society that the ethnic groups have distanced from one another. The estimate to the Estonian integration policy is average.

As compared to the second type, the representatives of the fourth type are a bit more content with Estonian integration policy and they find a bit more often that in evidence in Estonia is some discrimination on ethnic ground.

Like in the second type, it is found that the main integration problems are related to language and the cultural aspect, but they emphasise by far more the political and juridical aspect of

the problem. As compared to the second type, there are 2.5 more those people finding that in the Soviet time, there was preferring of Russians to Estonians.

The attitude to the laws considered is temperately positive.

Among the people belonging to the fourth type, as compared to other types, there are most of all those, who have started to communicate more with people of another nationality, as compared to the period of regaining independence in Estonia (24%). They view the future hopeful that communication will become even more closer.

**The fifth type** is the most numerous one. It embraces 64% non-Estonians and 36% Estonians, 46% men and 54% women.

Of the five types considered, people belonging to the fifth type are the youngest. No other type embraces so many young people of 15-29. As compared to other types, they are relatively most wealthy. In view of the ethnic composition of that type, it contains relatively more citizens of the Republic of Estonia by birthright.

They give the next to the highest estimate to Estonian integration policy. Their characterisation to the Estonian society is practically the same as that of the people of the fourth type. It is closer to the so-called Estonians' view.

They are somewhat more critical regarding the aspect of national discrimination than the people of the fourth type. While the fourth type makes an emphasis that the discrimination on ethnic grounds takes place or it is almost non-existent, the representatives of the fifth type underline that the said phenomenon can be witnessed rather often.

While the people of the fourth type perceived in the integration problems primarily the linguistic and cultural aspects, the representatives of the fifth type make more emphasis on social economic problem range. They do it with reserve, however.

Regarding whether there was preferring of Russians to Estonians in the Soviet time, in the fifth type, as compared to other types, there are the most of those who cannot answer the given question. It is explained, first and foremost by the fact that there are quite a lot of young people belonging to the type, who have not experienced the period before newly regained independence of Estonia. Attitude to the Estonian laws considered rather carries a negative undertone.

The dominating share of Estonians in the public sector will be accounted for, in the fifth sector, in the first place by ethnic origin (36%), legal status (24%) and skills of state language (20%).

People belonging to that type, do not offer a straight solution to solving the problems of Russians. Outstanding from other scenarios is the wish that Estonians jointly with Russians should solve the tasks facing the state (34%). In view of the ethnic composition of the type, quite impressive is the number of people finding that Russians should be loyal (19%) and duly respect the Estonian language and culture (14%).

## SUMMARY

There is a widespread stereotype, used when characterising the national relations in Soviet Estonia as compared to the present situation, to be formulated in a nutshell as follows: at that time, people communicated freely among themselves, they were neighbours, they visited one another and they had no "ethnic problems". The sociological researches actually show that formerly the communication between different ethnic groups was more frequent than now. However that does not mean that there were no dissenting opinions between different groups

about the status of some ethnic group in Estonia. That is a very complicated, multifarious problem. Our task is to find out whether and how much the yonder different conceptions affect the today's assessments.

The analysis of data revealed distinctly that Estonians and non-Estonians hold rather opposing positions in whether Russians were, at the Soviet time, in a privileged position as compared to Estonians. It is very important to point out that among Estonians, the age feature does not have a differentiating impact on attitudes. Meaning that the general attitude to the status of Russians is the same in various age groups and that is not affected by actual developments in the Estonian society. With non-Estonians, however the age feature plays a dramatic role. The younger the persons, the more their position differs from that of the older ones and the more they tend to think that Russians were to some extent preferred in the Soviet time (however, many of them cannot answer the question, due to their age). Hence the attitudes determining the status of nationalities survive among the Estonians by far more strongly than among non-Estonians.

Analysis of the perception of preferences that Estonians or non-Estonians had in some fields reveals however that the major part of population embrace the so-called mild position: admitting the preference of some group in one or another sphere, the majority does not follow any general idea of preferences given to Estonians or non-Estonians in general. This concerns mostly the younger people, but also the others, although to a somewhat lesser extent. Those, who perceived certain advantages enjoyed by a given ethnic group, limit themselves with stating the fact that there were some benefits like obtaining an apartment, a nice job, advancement in career, and election to bodies of authority. Those are the main domains, where different ethnic groups perceive themselves in different roles. Those are the benefits distributed by the state, and different national groups interpret those aspects differently, basing on principle of social equity. Actually, they reflect largely the problems of this formerly impoverished society, the problems of the society that acted in the role of "dispenser" of the benefits. The analysis of data revealed quite clearly that the conceptions of the status of nationalities, formed in the Soviet society differentiate very clearly also today's conceptions of ethnic relations, integration policy, its problems. The younger generation handles the ethnic relations according to the new social context, wherefore their attitudes regarding the Estonian integration policy are more multisided, more relieved of the experience of the past.

# MULTIPLE CITIZENSHIP AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN ESTONIAN SOCIETY

*Klara Hallik*

## 1. Introduction

In the widest possible meaning the term „citizenship” denotes affiliation (belonging) of a person to a given society and an official acknowledgement of that affiliation and a characteristic identification of the person with a specific society. Theoretically, when describing the nature of relations between a person and the state, the meanings of the „skin-deep” and the „committed” citizenship are kept apart. In the first case, in evidence is the minimalist model of relations between state and man, with the state guaranteeing a stable social and political environment and the person fulfilling minimum obligations to the state, being law abiding, paying taxes and doing his term of *corvée* in the defence force, if such service is exacted by public authorities. The second meaning of the citizenship embraces multifarious relations between the state and an individual, basing on reciprocal balance of rights and obligations, like prerequisite for comprehensive self-realisation of man in the community life.

Inasmuch as the borders of the given society evolve through agency of the state, the institute of citizenship is what moulds the affiliation of an individual to the society i.e. core and pith of the „membership”. The state’s citizenship policy lays down (prescribes and dictates) who can be its citizens and also whether the rights stemming from the citizen’s status are steadfastly equal to everyone or whether citizens are „catalogued” on some other basis, for instance by ethnic or confessional affiliation. Last, the citizenship goes with certain obligations, which are to provide for a minimum coherence between state and individual.

Insomuch that the person subjects himself to laws through his participation in those domains and activities where he enjoys the rights of unimpeded “home rule”, the “degree” of his being citizen varies<sup>1</sup>. Unless the citizen has no free and autonomous option to make choices, he is a mere „subject of the sovereign”, not a free citizen, and the public space of the society is no longer equally available to everyone, it may be either segmented between the groups entitled to different spate of rights, or monopolised by a dominating group. The issue of equal availability of public sphere, specifically, is the background problem having recently attracted much attention in the theory of democracy. There are quite a few reasons for that. On the one hand, it is caused by rapid societal so-called post-modernist changes, to which the society reacts by formation of particular interests and life strategies. This leads to the strengthening fragmentary identities, challenging the hitherto existing solidarity mechanisms and criteria of the society, while the „society at large” is ever more accepting such pluralism, on the strength of principles of human rights

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<sup>1</sup> J. Tully „The Challenge of Reimagining of Citizenship and Belonging in Multicultural Society”, in C. McKinnan and I. Hampsher-Monk (eds.) *Demands of Citizenship*, London, 2000. P. 215.

and equitable treatment. Another source is the changes of nation state paradigm due to the growing ethnic variegation of the population. How to bring the public sphere of the nation state basing on one culture and one language into conformity with the multicultural character of the society, is a burning issue in majority of the European states, being as it is largely related to the citizenship conception and policy.

The cultural content and identity of the nation state's citizenship continues to base on the culture and language of the mainstream society and on the so-called historic right of its bearers. Whereas, with a view to providing for equitable treatment of the nouveaux minorities, a large slice of the social benefits guaranteed by the states have been made available also to non-citizens. Such pluralism is manifested in the citizenship theory by categories like „social citizenship”, „cultural citizenship” or the „denizenship” – a legal tie between the state and the non-citizen based on residence permit (by definition, a denizen is in a kind of middle state between an alien and a natural-born subject). The version of „cultural citizenship” is pegged to recognition of the right of different national groups to preserve and develop their culture without an obligation to assimilate with the mainstream culture. In case of a nation state's „full citizenship“, the said attachments imply the so-called close-knit i.e. committed citizenship, while the reciprocal balanced dependence of the state and person on one another, and the rights of citizens and their opportunities of free performance in all domains of social life invariably accompany the affiliation to a state. In other cases, when the nouveaux minorities do not obtain the citizenship of the host country for any reasons (for instance due to inaptitude in mastering the language of the host country, due to restrictions of naturalisation or due to unwillingness to forgo the citizenship of the country of origin i.e. „old country”), the other quasi-citizenship statuses substitute for the absence of „full-blown“ citizenship. Whether or not such replacement compensates for the absence of participation, accompanying the juridical citizenship in public sphere, or in general and common affairs of the society, is a question begging an answer as yet. The dramatic developments of the recent period in several places of Europe, the outbreaks of exclusive and aggressive nationalism instigated by both majority and minorities seem to suggest, rather than non-participation of large groups of population in general community matters tends to deepen the entrenched demarcation lines and confrontations, which are not smoothed out by the state's social packages of charity.

The core of citizen's identity is „... a form of self-awareness and self-formation that one comes to acquire through engagement with others in the public spheres where the exercise of political power is discussed and negotiated”<sup>2</sup>. Estonia is the society of multiple citizenship where side by side with the citizens of the state, part of its permanent residents are aliens, predominantly citizens of Russia and persons without citizenship. The situation when the state has a permanent numerous group of persons without citizenship and citizens of Russia, causes the erosion of the citizen's institution. Some citizens are fully fledged, the rights of others are restricted with the opportunity to elect „citizens proper” to local self-governments, still others have besides that the right to put in a word in the politics of the neighbouring country, i.e. in evidence is the segmented double citizenship of that group (predominantly citizens of Russia). As revealed from several integration- and ethnic relations related surveys, different citizenships are also sensitive to social status of the people. The group surveyed in this essay as per different citizenships represents in general outlines those status-related differences.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p.214.

**Table 1. Social-demographic characterisation of the sample as per citizenship %**

Demographic and social features		Citizen of the Republic of Estonia by birth N=378 54%	Naturalised N= 123 18%	Citizen of Russia and other states N= 99 14%	Stateless N=100 15%
Ethnicity	Estonians Other nationalities	85% 15%	2% Estonians 81% Russ.	69 % Russ. 18% Ukrainians.	76% Russ. 14% Ukrainians
Language spoken at home	Estonian Russian	85 14	3 95	99	91
Education	first level second level third level	13 57 30	4 50 46	0,5 69 28	9 80 12
Age	15- 29 30- 49 50 -74	37 28 35	33 45 22	11 34 55	19 45 36
Main occupation	- managers, professionals - business - empl., work. - students - not active	26 6 21 17 20	32 4 20 11 9	17 5 39 5 31	11 5 53 11 18
Assessment of economic well-being	- well off - coping - wretched, subsisting	48 43 7	64 30 3	49 46 5	40 52 5
Estimate of integration policy	- pleased - indifferent - not pleased - hard to say	31 30 28 11	34 39 21 6	20 37 42 1	15 37 43 5

This essay provides an overview of the estimates and opinions of citizens of Tallinn about performance of public institutions only as per citizenship. From the standpoint of an individual, the citizenship is the most universal and at the same time the most abstract mode of collective identification, which does not exclude but rather presupposes multiple identities. Therefore presumably the differences of social and demographic nature of different citizenships will have a certain influence on surveyed estimates and attitudes. Whereas it is evident that different „body politic” of different citizenships as per ethnicity helps understand, to what extent either of those factors, ethnicity or citizenship could affect the estimates to Estonian legal space and ethnic relations.

The new citizens of Estonia i.e. those having become citizens through naturalisation represent the up-and-coming, socially coping and economically well-to-do part of citizens of Tallinn. Among them, the most are in active working age, they have higher educational level and social status, and their contentment with their economic position and the national integration policy is appropriately high.

Citizens of Russia stand markedly apart from other groups by their age structure; the share of senior citizens and those ousted from the labour market is the highest, and labourers number more than average in that group. Characteristic to stateless persons is a more unfavourable social position: half of them are workers and operatives of the service sphere, the share of those having the third level education, and managers and specialists is the lowest among them.

## 2. Is the status of statelessness stable?

Hastening the process of naturalisation of people without citizenship has been proclaimed one of the priorities of the presently effective state programme of integration. True, it has been quite recently that the Government has taken concrete steps for financing the teaching to stateless persons of the state language and laws, for their organisational support. Those measures have been demanded or recommended for a decade by Russian politicians and public, and also by several European institutions. Now that the major part of non-citizens have by compulsion adjusted to their situation or have forfeited opportunities to improve their job-related or social position, the easier chances to obtain citizenship need not any longer be capable of functioning. Furthermore, there are grounds to believe that part of the residents without citizenship, especially those who have been born here and have stayed here the whole life continue to consider the requirements to pass naturalisation exams unfair and dismiss the whole procedure as a token of protest. In keeping with the data of monitoring the integration, Citizenship Act occupies the first or the second place among the laws the Russian speaking population thinks to be unfair. Upon data of the 2005 survey, 60% of Estonians view the Act as „normal” and meeting the international standards, while over 70% of non-Estonians deem it too exacting and impinging on human rights.<sup>3</sup> By assumption, the recent decision of the EU about widening the freedom of movement, by the right to work to long-term permanent residents independent of their citizenship would also sap the motivation to seek Estonian citizenship. The surveys hitherto held testify, however that lack of citizenship is not considered permanent and advisable and that actually the majority of stateless persons wish to normalise their legal relation via citizenship, as well as a certain part of citizens of Russia. The main obstacle is the lack of proficiency in Estonian and the money scarcity, making it difficult to pay for the courses, but also the fact that save the fulfilment of examination requirements, one manages fine without speaking Estonian. The data of that survey are presented in the table below.

**Table 2. Intention of seeking citizenship %**

<b>Estonian citizenship</b>	<b>Stateless persons</b> N = 100	<b>Citizen of Russia etc.</b> N= 99
- has sought	11	4
- intends to seek	35	14
- does not intend to seek	39	78
Citizenship of Russia	13	...

Multiple citizenships are a legal and political limbo - the problem concerning the whole Russian community. It is also keenly perceivable by those non-Estonians who are citizens of Estonia. To corroborate that surmise, in what follows are the data about the main problems of integration, and how important they are considered by residents of Tallinn holding different citizenship.

<sup>3</sup> K.Hallik, „Kodakondsus ja poliitiline kaasatus”// *Uuringu Integratsiooni Monitooring 2005 Aruanne*, Tallinn.

**Table 3. Vitality of areas of integration %****„What are the most vital problems of integration?“**

Area	Citizenship of the respondent				Ethnicity	
	by birth	naturalised	Russian / other	without citizenship	Estonian	other
Language / culture	<b>47</b>	29	17	27	<b>50</b>	<b>26</b>
Legal / political	21	27	<b>48</b>	<b>36</b>	18	<b>36</b>
Social-economical	26	<b>41</b>	29	<b>32</b>	26	34
Hard to say	6	3	5	5	6	4

The vision of residents of Tallinn about main problems of integration is similar to the views of all residents of Estonia, no changes have occurred as compared to the previous survey of residents of Tallinn (2001). For the main area of integration, Estonians consider the linguistic and cultural relations, thereby actually meaning proficiency in the Estonian language, while for the Russians, of major importance are problems of legal status and social-economical issues, to be followed by linguistic and cultural rapprochement of nationalities. Regardless of the fact that both ethnic groups perceive integration as a complex process of many faces, Estonians, twice as much as Russians give preference to linguistic and cultural integration, and conversely, they accord value to legal political integration twice as little as Russians. By implication those results mean that the vision of Estonians about integrated society converges on linguistic cohesion, while Russians yearn to be accepted as citizens without the corvée of linguistic adaptation.

### 3. Self-determination in legal and political space

Because Estonians and representatives of ethnic minorities nurture different views of the criteria of integration, it needs be known how either party perceives the so-called society at large, i.e. the public sphere, where they operate and communicate with one another. On principle, different nationalities are brought closer by the environment where all of them are subject to the same rules and requirements, rights and obligations. In the society operating in a democratic and integration mode, such areas should be ethnically neutral enough, in the sense that there is no ethnic discrimination, and that the individuals see it equally open to everybody. This survey tests the „neutrality” of the public legal space on the basis of estimates of respondents to those laws the most affecting the situation of minorities, and the „openness” on the basis of those estimates, i.e. how one thinks he is being treated in bodies of authority, and how feasible one considers participation in exercising political power.

**Table 4. Estimate to laws regulating the minorities' policy %<sup>4</sup>****„How do you regard the following laws adopted in Estonia, positively or negatively?“**

Laws	Respondent's citizenship				Ethnicity	
	Citizen of Republic of Estonia by birth	Naturalised citizen of Republic of Estonia	Citizen of Russia/ other country	Stateless persons	Estonian	Other ethnicity
Riigikogu (Parliament) Elections Act	34	2	-26	-26	27	-11
Self-Governments Elections Act	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>31</b>
Language Act	53	-46	-67	-56	66	-52
Citizenship Act	47	-46	-55	-56	58	-47
Aliens Act	37	-25	-47	-53	44	-33
Basic School and Upper Secondary School Act	31	-47	-48	-44	38	-41

The data presented are by no means indicative of how well versed the respondents are in those laws, but they are revelatory of the general standpoints. In the state's legal space, Estonians/citizens by birth and other nationalities determine themselves differently, independent of citizenship. Two laws seminal of most conflict, Language Act and Citizenship Act, in particular the first contributes the seeds of guarantees and privileges for Estonians, while for the speakers of other languages it contains the seeds of stress and obligations, which continue in existence. Suspicious of unequal treatment, the respondents assessed negatively all laws where they conceived the threat of such treatment. The assessments also bear the stigma of the given moment. Quite understandably, the motivations of a negative estimate given to Basic School and Upper Secondary School Act do not originate from the substance of the law, but from transfer of Russian upper secondary schools to bilingual instruction contemplated for 2007. This becomes obvious when comparing this survey to that held in 2001, when the Government vacillated and wavered in choosing between courses of action, regarding the deadline and scope of implementation of the law, thus planting hope in Russians that the state would go back on its commitment and would not put the law in effect in full. In comparison with data of the previous survey, the predominance of negative estimates over positive ones has increased by 62% (in the group of naturalised citizens) and by 33% among stateless respondents..

In comparison with the survey 2001, the disposition of the Russian speaking community has remained the same. The legal space continues to be seen as causing internal strife and being unjust. Alarming is, however that the negative attitude to the Language Act is more intense now, regardless of self-evident positive shifts in the linguistic situation of the capital city and improvement of the Estonian language skills. Insofar as Estonians know that skills of Estonian are demanded from Russians, they tend to assess the Language Act as positive, not delving into the difficulties those not fluent in Estonian face, due to that law. Persons without citizenship see themselves as being in the twilight zone of the legal space, in some sort of an outback, and their view of laws is overly negative. Intriguing is, however

<sup>4</sup> Table presents the data as a dominant score, as aggregate of positive and negative assessments.

the increase of a negative stance by those having obtained citizenship by naturalisation as against data of survey 2001, to both Language Act (by 34%) and Citizenship Act (by 31%). Passing from statistical sample data to generalisations this may suggest that the nouveaux citizens do not feel as treated equitably, although formally they have a legal right to that. Participation at local elections is the only domain named in the survey, where non-Estonians and non-citizens are not in the role of outsider but in that of an interlocutor, which contributed to the by far positive estimate to the respective law.

For the common citizen, the specific clauses of the law are not guidelines to everyday conduct, they just create a general legal environment, which either provides you a feeling of security to act in the society or does not. This also includes whether or not you have to obligatorily know the law. In the state based on the rule of law, the law is both the organiser of common life and helpmate to the citizen and guarantor of his rights, reciprocated by loyalty on part of the citizen. The aforementioned predominantly negative estimates to the laws regulating the minorities' rights and obligations speak clear and loud that the Estonian legal space is perceived as being on a collision course and as an instrument for coercion. Specifically, the stateless persons and aliens-permanent residents feel like marginal men in this society, for whom the laws carry mainly the injunctive meaning, requiring them to do or refrain from doing a particular act.

When opting for strategies securing societal cohesion of a democratic, monoculture dominant nation state, efforts must be applied to avoid coincidence of boundaries of groups embracing different cultures, including those of language affiliation with demarcation lines of social and political communities. For that end, two principles must be observed: first, it is necessary to create the optimum mental environment for acceptance and development of cultural pluralism, and second – on the individual level, in „horizontal” links of the society and in all public structures, participation of all residents (of the town) must be guaranteed, disregarding the borderlines of cultural/linguistic community.

There is something badly wrong with our vernacular of laws and the culture of clerical work. Over one fifth are constantly frustrated because discharging affairs in the governmental offices is a daunting task - they are disheartened because the laws are sophisticated, only 1/4 jump that hurdle easily. The procedure of clerical work and considerable waste of time is a cause of constant irritation to 1/4 of respondents; only 1/5 can handle that nuisance. Against the backdrop of that general plague the complaints over incompetence and carelessness of the officials are relatively few, although nearly half of those using public services have been harassed by those problems, time and again. The said trouble is faced by all users of public services whatever the ethnicity. The language related impediments, however are pestering mainly non-Estonians, due to that one fifth of them have constant difficulties in discharging their affairs in departments and boards, while almost half of them stumble upon that problem continually. The outcome of this survey provides valid grounds to assert that clients of different citizenship get the same service in the capital city departments and boards.

Public political life of multinational society must reflect its pluralist nature, to a certain extent. It is so even if the state has not been built in observance of the principle of territorial or cultural autonomy of the minorities, accompanied by the obligatory proportionate or quota-based representation of the minorities. The Estonian power structuring is liberal and does not grant to minorities the rights of collective political representation. Deplorably though, the self-evident under-representation of people belonging among minorities in public offices, solving the issues concerning the life of the whole society shows that mechanisms providing for democratic participation fail to operate smoothly enough. People are admitted to public service on the basis of professional qualification and skills, however the importance of social background of public servants cannot be underestimated. This is so because the majority of consumers and seekers of public services come, as a rule from risk groups

having the bare necessities of life, or generally from the groups not so well off, living on a shoestring budget. If the „clients” of that type are not represented in the bureaucracy, it is highly probable that the relations between power and public will be strongly biased and hierarchic. The ethnic „representation” among the officials is also vitally important, especially in the situation when the societal status of ethnic or linguistic groups and competitive posture are unequal, for any reasons.

Earlier studies of ethnic relations showed that the picture of Estonians and co-citizens of other nationalities about participation in political power continues to be different, different too are the substantiations offered to explain away the fact why Estonians have disproportionately large privileges in that area.

In this survey the respondents assessed several opportunities of self-realisation by Estonians and other nationalities: to advance in political career, to be successful in business, to get good education, to gain material wealth, to partake in social guarantees and participate in church and religious life. Inequality of Estonians and other nationalities is considered the largest in the area of involvement in politics. Answers to the question „Who finds it easier ... to advance in political career if there are equal opportunities, including proficiency in the state language and holding the Estonian citizenship?” were given on a scale of seven ranging from „Estonians have it easier” (1) up to „non-Estonians have it easier” (7), whereas the value 4 marks equal opportunities. The average value for the whole sample calculated on the basis of data obtained was 2.25, estimate of Estonians is 2.93 and of other nationalities 1.62, estimate of naturalised citizens 1.72 and that of respondents without citizenship 1.54.

- 42% of Estonians believe that the opportunities of all nationalities for participation in politics are equal, the same opinion is held by 11% non-Estonians;
- 36% Estonian make an allowance that Estonians will find it easier to advance in political career, the same is thought by 85% respondents of other nationalities.

In evidence is a general assessment on the ethnic ground, little affected by possession of Estonian citizenship. This widely divergent availability of opportunities to advance in political career is part of the image of Estonian polity as ethnically mono-polar mode of government. This image manifests itself with especial clarity when the respondents name the causes why Estonians are privileged.

**Table 5. Distribution of answers to the question**

**„...What constitutes the preference of Estonians as compared to non-Estonians in bodies of government?” (2005 and 2001) %**

	Estonian		Other ethnicity		Naturalised citizen of Republic of Estonia	
	2005	2001	2005	2001	2005	2001
Citizenship of Republic of Estonia	32	39	19	17	15	14
Proficiency in the state language	31	20	14	12	19	9
Ethnicity	9	15	48	44	49	46
Connections/acquaintances	9	12	11	19	9	21
Active/initiative	10	9	5	4	6	6
Foreign language skills	5	3	1	...	...	...
Hard to say	4	2	2	3	2	3

Both the previous and this surveys show that Estonians view their privileges in political power as natural and as stemming from two main prerequisites, being citizen and proficiency in the state language, hence from objective causes. Consequently, this is considered as being a major cause why non-Estonians have failed to jump on the bandwagon of politics. Whether this is so, in actual fact will be clarified by the opinion of the naturalised citizens of other nationalities. Upon their estimate, the two named prerequisites cover only one third of the causes of power monopoly of ethnic Estonians. As many as one half of that group like also of all non-Estonians links the root cause of political privileges with the ethnic affiliation. The estimate of Estonians of their privileges seems to have become more „politically correct”, ethnicity as the political capital wins the modest ten percent vote. This opinion may largely reflect the actual life experience of the people and particularly the fact that co-citizens of non-Estonian ethnicity do not compete with Estonians for political positions. This is caused by nationalist isolation in everyday life or low involvement in parties. There is no denying the dismissive attitude of Estonians to the options of involvement of non-Estonians in power bodies, which stance is still prevalent, the positive changes notwithstanding (Monitoring of integration 2002 and 2005).<sup>5</sup>

In Tallinn, non-Estonians have been represented to some extent both in the council and city government, the degree of sufficiency of representation aside. According to data of this survey 63% non-Estonians have put their trust in city authorities (against 43% Estonians). Therefore it can be presumed that the above estimates rather express the general nationalities' policy stances and reflect the collective feeling, to which extent one regards the facts of reality as the „exceptions confirming the rules”. In any case, this supports the evidence that distancing of minorities from representative and executive power, their being out of involvement for any whatsoever reason will of necessity result in disturbance in communication between institutions and clients. Besides the linguistic relations, this will also happen in the area of culture and value estimates. If the institutions do not excel themselves in straining to supersede the linguistic or cultural border between themselves and the clients, this will conserve the prejudices and negative stereotypes extant in the society and will, besides that contribute to ethnic-social stratification. If the options for participation of minorities in formation of political decisions and their fulfilment are deliberately avoided, the shunned group will regard the decisions as hostile, to be fulfilled by administrative coercion, therefore they consider it plausible to ignore fulfilment thereof.

#### **4. Social well-being and trust in institutions**

The Estonian public opinion has made an agonizing reappraisal regarding the ever more aggravating inequality in the society and the unequal chances to share in social benefits. The catchword „Two Estonias“ has transformed, from social-critical figure-of-speech of the social scientists into a widely popular sign, filled with content topical to different groups. This survey testifies, too that our society is not considered cohesive and basing on common values, it is rather seen as a split society (1/4 respondents), where ethnic groups have distanced from one another (60%); only 5-3% consider nationalities equal. This all-pervasive conception is not affected by different citizenships, and only slightly by ethnic affiliation. In opinion of Estonians, ethnic groups are more equal than in opinion of non-Estonians, however the general picture is similar. This is a well-acknowledged fact. Respondents are hopeful that the tide of disruption of the society, its dissension will be stemmed

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<sup>5</sup> Klara Hallik, *Ibid*

and the equality of ethnic groups will increase, while half of the respondents opine that by ethnic affiliation the Estonian society will remain divided in the nearest future.

The social well-being can be determined on the basis of various criteria. They may be human development index, level of prosperity, stage of freedom etc. One of the options is to compare, in the ethnically divided society, the problems of different ethnic groups, which they solve through agency of the institutions of the „society at large”. If the trajectories of activities of people, hard and easy solutions are the same, the situation of ethnic groups in public sphere can be assessed as being equal; however, if they differ as to their nature or complication, that should suggest different availability of common goods. The scale used in methodology of the survey contained the following options: „I have solved that problem’, „I have not come across it”, „there have been cases when that has turned out a problem’ and ’that problem continues in existence for me”. Presented in the following table are the two last variants of answers as per citizenship.

**Table 6. Problems and difficulties one comes across (%)**

**„Do you personally have to come across the following vital problems?”**

In connection with what...	It has turned out a problem sometimes				There is a constant problem			
	Estonian citizen by birth	Naturalised Estonian citizen	Citizen of a foreign country	Stateless person	Estonian citizen by birth	Naturalised Estonian citizen	Citizen of a foreign country	Stateless person
Legal status and documents	3	19	<b>38</b>	<b>37</b>	0,0	1	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>
Getting a job	16	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>	2	11	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>
Own or children's education	9	<b>46</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>35</b>	3	6	8	7
Connections with relatives living abroad	9	26	<b>33</b>	<b>49</b>	2	18	19	10
Travelling abroad	5	15	<b>25</b>	<b>35</b>	0,0	1	6	6
Privatisation: land, flat	5	8	17	12	2	...	1	....
Getting social security	7	11	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	0,0	1	1	3
Participation in social-political life	2	5	2	6	2	...	2	1

In the above areas the residents obtain a major part of public services or an opportunity to freely operate according to their interests. The access to opportunities of those areas of life, are indirectly or directly related to holding citizenship. The difficulties arising of legal status affect primarily non-citizens, both the aliens and persons without any citizenship, whereas as many as three quarters of the latter. This is so regardless of the fact that the majority of persons without citizenship have the status of permanent resident, which should, in its turn guarantee in main areas of life the treatment equal with citizens and also the opportunities to travel to the „next-door” foreign countries. However, the actual life seems to differ from the norms, and those who lack the protection by the state in the form of citizenship, must continue to do with incomplete rights. The difficulties in getting a job and in implementing one’s professional skills continue, according to data of this survey, to be the problem of ethnic inequality, less than average affected by whether you or do not hold the

citizenship. Opportunities to get the required or sought education are assessed by all non-Estonians as problematic. As a whole, however the aforementioned data refute the widespread conception that absence of citizenship will restrict opportunities to participate in the political life only. Rather, in evidence is the situation that absence of citizenship or specifically absence of Estonian citizenship accumulates a rather wide spectrum of non-success, ranging from scanty language skills and insecurity on labour market to opportunities to maintain communication with foreign countries.

Consent with societal environment and feeling of security depends to a great degree on whether the institutions responsible for common interests of the society and for well-being of all members of the society enjoy the trust of citizens. Trust is one of the most significant sources of moral legitimacy of the power. In this survey, like in the survey of 2001 the respondents were asked to estimate how greatly they trust various state and societal institutions (altogether 12 institutions on the scale of four: „have no whatsoever trust”, „would rather not trust”, „would rather trust”, „trust fully”). The distributions presented in the following tables are presented as a dominant score; deducted from the value indicating trust (%) has been the percentage of those who do not trust.

**Table 7. Trust in state and social institutions (%)**

Institution	Respondent's citizenship				Ethnicity	
	Citizen of Republic of Estonia by birth	Naturalised citizen of Republic of Estonia	Citizen of Russia / other country	Person without citizenship	Estonian	Other
President of the Republic	70	48	21	31	78	36
Riigikogu (Parliament)	- 2	14	34	- 11	- 5	- 3
Government of the Republic	8	28	10	- 3	7	13
Court	47	39	8	4	49	20
Prosecutor's Office	42	34	14	12	46	20
Police	49	44	32	23	55	32
Tallinn city authority	4	46	46	32	1	40
Trade unions	27	28	8	4	30	10
Church	48	72	57	53	44	61
Estonian TV channels	68	57	8	29	60	34
Estonian language printed press	33	36	0*	14	37	17
Estonia's Russian language printed press	- 9	43	28	32	- 14	33

\* 25% of citizens of a foreign country trust and 25% do not trust in Estonian language printed press

Trust in institutions is not anything invariable and can fluctuate largely depending on individual circumstances of the societal life and politics. Because there were no important political events or crises happening at the time of survey, the data obtained may be considered as indicators of relatively stable attitudes. Somewhat surprising and problematic is that fact, however that the institutions of symbolic power merit greatest trust (among Estonians President and among Russians church), while the rating of democratically elected *Riigikogu* is the lowest among the structures of state power.

Trust is affected both by citizenship and ethnic affiliation:

- Estonians / citizens by birth trust President, TV-channels and police the most;
- Russians hold the most trust in church, to be followed by Tallinn city authority;
- The trust of nouveaux citizens of Estonia in bodies of state power follow basically the preferences of citizens by birth, whereas as compared to the latter they trust the Government more, and especially Tallinn city authority;
- The trust rating of police, prosecutor's office and court is uniformly high among people of both ethnic groups and different citizenship, showing that in the activity of those institutions, no inequality is perceived on the basis of ethnicity or language. Contributing to formation of such assessment is certainly the fact that in those institutions the services are provided, beside Estonian, also in Russian and the policemen directly communicating with citizens of the city are often non-Estonians.

Trust to media is the area where the language barrier and mass preferences are decisive. This survey like surveys of many other media use, show that Estonian TV indisputably occupies the first place in formation of the common media space. This is so even in the situation where practically all Russian-speaking citizens of the city watch constantly the programmes of Russian TV stations. Regarding the Estonian and Russian printed press, the reciprocal negative assessment rather shows that Estonians do not read the local Russian language dailies and magazines, nor do Russians read the same in Estonian.<sup>6</sup>). Negative prejudiced stances of both parties are largely fed by critical commentaries released in both medias about the publications in the opposite media, or the reprints of biased selection.

Summarily this survey provides grounds to make a definite conclusion that two important components of the public sphere - access to public services and trust in institutions supplying them – are markedly differentiated ethnically and as per citizenship. The Estonians and citizens by birth have either solved the absolute majority of problems presented in the survey, or they have not come across them. It is evident too that Estonian non-citizens, aliens and stateless persons must surmount and overcome more bureaucratic hurdles to obtain the same services. Distribution of the Estonian media landscape as per language used and sources of information available, is one of the factors reproducing difference in the range of information, perception, or understanding of the Estonian speaking and Russian speaking residents, is inhibitive and does not contribute to the grasping one another's problems.

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<sup>6</sup> Klara Hallik, *Ibid*

## 5. Identification with Estonia. Citizenship and ethnicity

This survey fixed the limits of self-determination by Estonian citizens, ethnicity (Estonian, Russian; while the variant „someone else” permitted to mark the ethnic affiliation different from those two) and location (Estonian resident, Tallinn’s resident, European). The respondents were requested to determine who they considered they were, in the first place. Here we are interested in whether and to what extent respondents are cognisant of citizenship, in case the answer is spontaneous. The opportunity to mark Russian or some other country’s citizenship as the first option was there („someone else”), but that was practically not used. Three most important identifications covered ca. 90% of options, in case of all citizenships.

**Table 8. Three most essential collective identifications, %**

Order	Respondent’s citizenship				Ethnicity	
	Citizen of Republic of Estonia by birth	Naturalised citizen of Republic of Estonia	Citizen of Russia/ of another country	Stateless person	Estonian	Other ethnicity
I	Estonian citizen (42)	Estonian citizen (34)	Ethnicity (34)	Ethnicity (36)	Ethnicity (45)	Ethnicity (31)
II	Ethnicity (38)	Ethnicity (24)	Estonian resident (30)	Tallinn resident (32)	Estonian citizen (43)	Estonian resident (24)
III	Estonian resident (7)	Estonian resident (19)	Tallinn resident (30)	Estonian resident (26)	European (6)	Tallinn resident (23)

Unlike the Estonians’ identity, in which ethnicity and the state of domicile are equally important and embrace 90% of the options offered in the survey, the non-Estonians identify themselves in three relatively balanced dimensions of collective affiliation, whereas half of respondents have marked, as the first the Estonian territorial identity (together with Tallinn). Existence of Estonian citizenship (naturalised citizens) seems to dislocate the ethnic identification of that group of non-Estonians to the second priority. To the contrary, those lacking the local citizenship, identify themselves primarily with ethnicity, to be followed by the feeling of territorial affiliation. Those data allow us to pose the hypothesis that the normalised legal relation to the country of domicile, the existence of its citizenship will reduce the need for ethnic mobilisation of the minorities. Instead of that, priority will be gained by feeling of belonging to a society „at large” i.e. citizen’s identity. True, as aforementioned, the personal and social resources of those having obtained citizenship by way of naturalisation are better than average (age, education, social position, well-being), which will quite naturally diminish unidimensional focussing of identity, and citizenship may here play the role of a complementary factor.

Whereas this survey also confirms that the citizen’s and the ethnic identity are not isolated from one another. Citizenship and citizen outside the cultural affiliation are just an abstraction. The issue is whether the culture of minorities operates as phenomenon of public or private

spheres and to what extent the boundaries of different cultures can be superseded, and what is their common denominator (the part of common values). Our survey testifies that:

- Absolute majority (over 80%) of non-Estonians of different citizenship (over 90% of Estonians) consider Estonian Russians (Russian residing in Estonia) as different from their compatriots residing in Russia, in other words both acknowledge the local identity of Russian minority and their belonging to Estonia, not to Russia;
- All elements of cultural structure of nationalist identity - language, culture, literature, history and religion are assessed (with minor differences) as equally important, regardless of ethnicity and citizenship;
- 85% of respondents - citizens of Estonian and Russian ethnicity and respondents without citizenship do not consider it necessary for development of Russian culture to be supported by Russia (20% of Russian citizens supports that idea); this is considered to be the task of the state of Estonia by 1/3 naturalised citizens and 40% of persons without citizenship and aliens, and by only 14% of citizens by birth; of the latter, 60% consider promotion of the Russian language and culture the task of Estonian Russians, i.e. their private business, in respect of which the state has no obligations; almost half of the naturalised citizens hold the same view, testifying to the larger capacity of the given group to also contribute to development of local Russian culture and preservation of ethnic-cultural identity;
- The above data show that Estonians and Russians perceive differently the performance of Estonian multicultural society, in what concerns the state's support to the Russian language and culture. While Russians are ready to shoulder the promotion of the local Russian language culture equally with the state, the Estonians prefer distancing of the state from such support, meaning that multicultural character of the country should not be recognized on the governmental level;
- For formation of cohesion of the multicultural society, the common public sphere is just not enough; equally significant are contacts between different cultures and mutual respect; our survey shows that the reciprocal cultural interest of two communities is asymmetrical; fewer than one fifth of Estonians consider the Russian culture as close to their heart and one third is interested in it; the nature of contact with Estonian culture of Russian respondents varies depending on citizenship, 60% of Estonian citizens consider Estonian culture intimate to them and 75% is interested in it, citizens of Russia respectively 30 and 45% and stateless persons – 40 and 50%.

For Estonian Russians and other ethnic groups to strike root in the newly independent state as fully-fledged citizens and members of society, vested with all rights, will take time and calls for personal efforts and adequate integration-oriented policy and openness and tolerance on part of the ethnic majority. Going straight to the point without ambiguity or hesitation, the data of sociological survey of ethnic relations of Tallinn analysed in this review proves that formation of local, Estonian-centred identity of Estonian nouveaux minorities are supported by multiple affiliation associations and links. Those are Estonian citizenship, place-of-residence and territory based identity, as well as localisation of ethnic-cultural identity.

## INTERETHNIC RELATIONS AND UNEQUAL TREATMENT

*Vadim Poleshchuk, Aleksei Semjonov*

In a survey conducted in Tallinn in September 2005 respondents were asked to express their opinion about the problem of unequal treatment in Estonian society. The authors of the survey acted in the spirit of EU policies. As the representative of the European Commission Odile Quintin stressed, “[a]nti-discrimination policy is an important part of the EU’s approach to immigration, inclusion, integration and employment. By clarifying rights and obligations and highlighting the positive benefits of diversity in a multicultural society, it can help to guide a process of change based on mutual respect between ethnic minorities, migrants and host societies”<sup>1</sup>. Here we should add that in the Estonian context the benefits of this policy can also be enjoyed by the representatives of traditional minorities.

In recent years Europe has come to the understanding that unequal treatment of minorities can lead to large-scale disasters. Thus, by ensuring the signing of the Ohrid “framework” agreement on 13 August 2001, Western countries stopped Macedonia from falling into the abyss of another ethnic war in the Balkans and forced the country’s authorities to guarantee, among other things, equal treatment for the Albanian minority.<sup>2</sup> According to a number of experts, the problems of systematic discrimination have become the main reason for the extensive migrant unrest that swept over French suburbs in autumn 2005.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the problem of ensuring equal treatment for both traditional and new minorities is to a large extent related to prevention or eradication of ethnic conflicts.

If we, following A. Dmitriyev, define a conflict as a “manifestation of objective or subjective contradictions expressed in the confrontation of the parties”<sup>4</sup>, ethnic conflict could be a particular case of such confrontation. Discrimination, in fact, is nothing but the limitation of fair access to some resources for the representatives of a certain group, which could lead to non-acceptance and protest among the members of this group. Thus, unequal treatment may be the basis for ethnic conflicts.

The 2005 survey in the Estonian capital provided information on the views of (ethnic) Estonians and non-Estonians on the problem of ethnic discrimination both at the group level (i.e. the nature of connections between the communities) and as reported individual experience. The significance of the issue in the eyes of people can be seen either as too low or as too high. Still, it is impossible to imagine that a non-existent problem could attract such remarkable attention on the part of minorities. At the same time, without combating discrimination efficiently, the harmo-

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, *Equality and Non-discrimination in an Enlarged European Union. Green Paper*, 2004. p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> For details see: U. Schneckener, *Developing and Applying EU Crisis Management. Test Case Macedonia*, ECMI Working paper no. 14, Flensburg, January 2002.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. see, M. Artiguelong, “France: Violence in the Suburbs, the Urgent Need for a Social Response”, in *ENARgy*, vol. 14, December 2005. p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> А.В. Дмитриев, *Конфликтология*, (A.V. Dmitriyev, *Studies on Conflicts*), Moscow, 2001. p. 54.

nisation (integration) of Estonian society would become a back-breaking task: unequal treatment could nullify all possible advantages that a minority representative has expected to get by implementing an “individual integration plan”.

Considering discrimination as a possible manifestation of (latent) ethnic confrontation, we should find out the reasons of the apparent stability of Estonian society. To do this, we should study the respondents’ attitudes towards the official ethnic policy and point at the positive/negative factors that affect the way they assess the national integration strategy. Here we presume that the influence of minorities on political decision-making is insignificant. Furthermore, there are some differences in the views of the representatives of the two communities on the past and future of Estonia in the context of interethnic relations.

The situation in Tallinn is interesting because here Estonians and non-Estonians are represented as almost equal parts of the population where the representatives of the two major communities inevitably not only have contacts but also compete. To trace the dynamics of interethnic relations we used the data of a similar study conducted in July 2001<sup>5</sup>.

## 1. Ethnic situation in Estonia

### *General assessment*

The report of the 2001 study emphasised that the “mutual isolation or, as it sometimes said, *separation* of the two communities is to a large extent a fact”<sup>6</sup>. This conclusion was based on the analysis of the state of interethnic relations and contacts. The 2005 survey asked direct questions about the situation in society and future forecasts. It was found that respondents’ subjective feelings were in keeping with our conclusions.

**Table 1. How do you assess the current situation in society?<sup>7</sup>**

	SAMPLE		Ethnic group			
	Number	%	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
			Number	%	Number	%
The society is divided and there is apparent inequality	170	24.3	55	16.9	115	30.7
Ethnic groups are isolated from each other	427	61.0	205	63.1	222	59.2
Ethnic groups are equal	65	9.3	41	12.6	24	6.4
Not sure	38	5.4	24	7.4	14	3.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>5</sup> А. Семенов (ред.), *Интеграция в Таллине 2001. Итоги социологического исследования*, (A. Semjonov (ed.) *Integration in Tallinn 2001. Results of the Sociological Study*), Tallinn, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 72.

<sup>7</sup> The full answers were worded as follows: “1. The society is divided and there is apparent inequality (discrimination); 2. Ethnic groups are isolated from each other but there is no apparent discrimination; 3. Ethnic groups are equal and enjoy partnership and cooperation”.

The vast majority of respondents believe that the main ethnic groups are mutually isolated. Still, for many respondents the fact of ethnicity-based fragmentation does not mean that there are discriminatory relations in society. We assume that this relative optimism is associated with the practical absence of the discrimination theme in public discourse (moreover, both journalists and officials thoroughly avoid this subject). In other words, respondents often do not clearly understand what discrimination is. However, almost a third of Russian (non-Estonian) respondents believed that there was inequality between the ethnic groups and 17% of Estonians agreed with them. Furthermore, those who believe that the ethnic groups are equal in Estonia are clearly in minority (the number is twice as high among Estonians as among Russians but still only 12.6%).

**Table 2. What do you think the situation in society will be in 5 years?**

	SAMPLE		Ethnic group			
	Number	%	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
			Number	%	Number	%
The society is divided and there is apparent inequality	91	13.0	24	7.4	67	17.9
Ethnic groups are isolated from each other	336	48.0	132	40.6	204	54.4
Ethnic groups are equal	129	18.4	74	22.8	55	14.7
Not sure	144	20.6	95	29.2	49	13.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As to short-term forecasts, respondents (particularly Estonians) express, as we can see, cautious optimism. However, the number of those who preferred not to give an answer grew significantly. Nevertheless, more than a half think that the society will continue to be divided and therefore inequality is not going to disappear.

*Concept of discrimination: community level*

The survey looked at the frequency of contacts of Estonians and non-Estonians with the representatives of the other group at work, in the family, in places of recreation, in social organisations and in the neighbourhood. Such contacts mostly take place at work and in the neighbourhood (for non-Estonians also in places of recreation). Remarkably, in Tallinn where Estonians and non-Estonians are represented almost equally, just about a half of both have contacts with the representatives of the other group at work often or sometimes. It indirectly confirms that there is substantial ethnic segregation in the Estonian capital's labour market.

**Table 3. How did your contacts change compared to what was before Estonia's independence was restored? (%)**

	Ethnic group			
	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
Became more frequent	14.5	17.5	23.5	18.4
Remained at the same level	50.9	51.4	49.2	48.0
Reduced	27.5	22.5	15.2	22.1
Not sure	7.1	8.6	12.2	11.4

There were practically no changes among Estonian respondents compared to the previous 2001 survey. However, Russians were more optimistic in 2001 compared to Estonians (23.5% thought that contacts had become more frequent), but in 2005 their answers were quite similar to responses provided by Estonians. On the whole, at the personal level the situation looks quite positive: for half of the respondents contacts have remained at the same level, although the proportion of those who reported reduction of contacts is higher than the share of “optimists” and this trend continues.

We get a different picture if we look at the mutual satisfaction with these contacts, i.e. how positively people see actual relations with representatives of the other community. The answers to the following question are a warning against excessive optimism.

**Table 4. How did relations between Estonians and non-Estonians change compared to the “Soviet time”? (%)**

	Ethnic group			
	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
Improved	29.9	30.5	13.8	8.0
Remained at the same level	41.7	32.9	31.8	34.9
Deteriorated	13.9	12.6	38.7	43.7
Not sure	14.5	24.0	15.7	13.3

It is obvious that the subjective perceptions of Estonians and non-Estonians differ quite a lot. While 30% of Estonians have thought and continue to think that interethnic relations have improved after Estonia regained independence, only 14% of Russians agreed with them in 2001 and as little as 8% in 2005. This obvious discrepancy in perceptions demonstrates the alienation degree of the two communities and confirms the conclusion about evident fragmentation in Estonian society.

Nevertheless, it is interesting that quite a significant number of respondents believed that positive changes had occurred in the period between the two surveys:

**Table 5. How would you personally assess relations between Estonians and non-Estonians on the whole if you compare it to five years ago? These relations have...**

	SAMPLE		Ethnic group			
	Number	%	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
			Number	%	Number	%
Improved	230	32.9	117	36.0	113	30.1
Remained at the same level	314	44.9	121	37.2	193	51.5
Deteriorated	62	8.9	21	6.5	41	10.9
Not sure	94	13.4	66	20.3	28	7.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In other words, up to a third of respondents believe that relations have improved, if not compared to the Soviet period but at least in recent years: this is true both for Estonian and non-Estonian respondents. It is difficult to say whether this information can be interpreted in the sense that the lowest point of the divide has already been overcome or people simply get used to any situation. We could leave this question open for now and only stress that a substantial number of Estonians (one in five) were not sure about their opinion.

To be confident about possible positive changes in the near future, we should focus on the dynamics of readiness for interethnic contacts. Five years ago we came to the conclusion that the members of the non-Estonian community on the whole are much more open to interethnic contacts than Estonians. As a kind of test, we applied a standard ethnic tolerance attitudes set used in American sociology: tolerance and readiness for contacts at work, at home (relations with neighbours), and in the family.

**Table 6. Attitudes towards interethnic isolation/openness (monoethnic – multiethnic) (%)**

	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
<i>Preferred team at work</i>				
Monoethnic	36.3	34.2	11.0	7.2
Do not care	48.9	48.3	43.0	53.3
Multiethnic	14.7	17.5	44.9	39.5
<i>Preferences for neighbours – attitudes</i>				
Monoethnic	48.6	45.8	4.9	4.3
Do not care	42.3	43.1	57.7	63.2
Multiethnic	9.0	11.1	37.4	32.5
<i>Attitudes towards mixed marriages</i>				
Negative	30.6	28.0	12.2	10.4*
Undetermined	28.5	30.2	25.8	28.3*
Positive	40.8	41.8	62.0	61.3*

\* Data are provided only for those who answered the questions in Russian

The data enable us to conclude that the overall situation practically has not changed. Slight shifts towards tolerance among Estonians (1-2%) do not provide clear evidence that their generally negative attitudes towards interethnic contacts have changed. Given such attitudes in the community that represents the majority of the population, it is difficult to expect any trends towards actual integration in society. The only circumstance we could see as positive is that tolerance and open-mindedness among Russians have remained at the same level in spite of their isolation that has lasted for 15 years and obviously unequal status in the Estonian society and state (see below).

The information that xenophobic attitudes among Estonians are several times as high as such attitudes toward ethnic isolation among Russians is also confirmed by other studies. The sociologist Iris Pettai got quite similar results using a slightly different set of indicators.

**Table 7. Lack of readiness for contacts 1999 – 2005 (%)<sup>8</sup>**

		Estonians		Non-Estonians	
		Would not like to	Rather not	Would not like to	Rather not
		1999	2005	1999	2005
Live in the same house with Estonians/Russians	<b>All sample</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
	Young people	28	28	2	4
Be in a hobby club/society with Estonians/Russians	<b>All sample</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>
	Young people	29	28	10	12
Work in a team where the majority is Estonians/Russians	<b>All sample</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>
	Young people	44	37	15	15
Be a patient of a Russian/Estonian doctor	<b>All sample</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
	Young people	32	43	11	15

*The national study "Integration monitoring" 2005, and the Monitoring of the Estonian Open Society Institute, 1999*

According to I. Pettai's data shown in Table 7, a significant proportion of Estonians continuously demonstrates xenophobic attitudes, while the respective indicator for Russians is 3 to 7 times lower (the maximum for Russians is 15%). Although on the whole the numbers are lower than in our study, the overall tendencies continue. The difference can largely be ascribed to the sample: we only surveyed Tallinn residents but I. Pettai used a nation-wide sample.

Another difference is that in I. Pettai's study there is clear positive dynamics among Estonians in some parameters, which, however, is not the case with young people. This is a worrying signal because previously many experts emphasised higher openness and tolerance among younger age groups.

Interestingly enough, answers to the direct question whether any ethnic groups are discriminated against in Estonia are slightly inconsistent (see below). Thus, in our study 10% of Estonians and 41% of non-Estonians (naturalised citizens – 38%) answered "yes, frequently" or "yes, rather frequently". On the other hand, the answer "not so frequently" was chosen by 33% of Estonians and 43% of non-Estonians. Here we should also note that among Estonians who believed in the discrimination of some ethnic groups, one in four meant their own ethnic group, i.e. the discrimination of Estonians. The answer "not at all" was chosen by every second Estonian and every tenth representative of minorities.

<sup>8</sup> The whole question was worded as: "What would you think if you had to ...". I. Pettai, „Sallivus rahvussuhetes Eestis”// Uuringu "Integratsiooni monitooring 2005" aruanne ("Tolerance in Interethnic Relations in Estonia", in *Integration Monitoring 2005 Study Report*), Tallinn. p. 36.

*Discrimination: individual experience*

State organs' statistics can say nothing about minority discrimination cases: the organs either do not collect such data or can only report isolated complaints<sup>9</sup>. Therefore in the 2005 survey the respondents were asked whether their rights had been infringed upon in the past three years or whether they had experienced maltreatment due to their ethnic background in a number of areas and situations.

**Table 8. Experience of the infringement of rights or maltreatment in the past three years due to ethnic background (%)<sup>10</sup>**

	Estonians		Non-Estonians		Naturalised citizens of Estonia		Russian citizens		Stateless	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Educational establishments	<b>2.8</b>	58.5	<b>11.2</b>	53.6	<b>11.4</b>	59.3	<b>5.1</b>	41.0	<b>12.0</b>	55.0
Shops	<b>12.3</b>	74.2	<b>28.8</b>	65.6	<b>21.1</b>	74.0	<b>38.5</b>	55.1	<b>38.0</b>	58.0
Bars and restaurants	<b>5.8</b>	72.0	<b>9.9</b>	74.9	<b>6.5</b>	82.9	<b>7.7</b>	64.1	<b>12.0</b>	75.0
Housing	<b>3.1</b>	63.7	<b>12.5</b>	66.4	<b>13.0</b>	67.5	<b>12.8</b>	61.5	<b>15.0</b>	72.0
Transport	<b>8.0</b>	75.1	<b>21.3</b>	73.3	<b>15.4</b>	78.9	<b>23.1</b>	73.1	<b>29.0</b>	69.0
Work	<b>1.8</b>	---	<b>17.1</b>	---	<b>15.4</b>	---	<b>16.7</b>	---	<b>23.0</b>	---

Of course, the data do not provide evidence of actual discrimination cases in the legal sense of the word. As we can see from Table 8, both Estonians and non-Estonians have most frequently experienced (or think they have experienced) infringement of their rights and maltreatment due to their ethnic background in shops and transport. 17% of non-Estonians have had this kind of experience at work and another 23% mentioned that their mother tongue was a reason for the infringement of rights or undignified treatment. Remarkably enough, among naturalised citizens (i.e. people with regulated status, normally speaking Estonian) 15% (ethnicity) and 23% (mother tongue) reported discrimination at workplace. Although the question about discrimination with regard to language was only asked in relation to work, the reason for the inappropriate treatment of non-Estonians in other spheres might also be the use of Russian rather than their ethnic background.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, in 2005 the Estonian Labour Inspectorate did not collect data about ethnic or racial discrimination, although existing Estonian labour laws included detailed norms concerning such discrimination at workplace. Labour Inspectorate letters no. 1-05/13815v of 28 July 2005 and no. 1-05/13815-3 of 19 August 2005.

<sup>10</sup> The whole question was worded as follows: "Have you experienced any infringement of your rights or maltreatment due to your ethnic background in the past three years?" As to educational establishments, we should note that 25% of naturalised citizens, 51% of Russian citizens and 30% of stateless people had not been there in the specified period. 24% of Russian citizens had not visited bars or restaurants within this period. This can explain a remarkable difference in answers for these categories compared to other non-Estonians.

Although in some spheres non-Estonians report cases of unequal treatment based on ethnic background or language 10 times as frequently as Estonians, the overall situation is far from critical, at least, from the respondents' point of view. We could suggest that, as it was already noted, due to the absence of the discrimination topic in public discourse people do not tend to interpret their everyday difficulties and events in this light. For example, not inviting candidates with Russian surnames for a job interview, or career difficulties are often taken for granted, differently from European countries where human rights organisations and anti-discrimination authorities focus on such cases. The existence of the problem can be confirmed by some (although rare) publications in the press about the tendency of changing Russian surnames for Estonian. Experts say directly that "most often in such a situation Russians are motivated by the desire to get a more attractive and better paid job"<sup>11</sup>.

The questions about the negative experience of contacts between the communities also included a question about ethnic violence. The question did not mention any timeframe and therefore cannot be used to characterise the current situation. Interestingly enough, one in five Estonians and one in three non-Estonians have never heard of such situations. However, approximately 6% from either group reported having fallen victim to ethnic violence and more than 18% in either group witnessing such violence. Furthermore, many people in either group have never witnessed or fallen victim of ethnic violence but "have heard of such cases". Among non-Estonians the number was less than 50% and among the representatives of the majority almost 60%.

In other words, half of both Estonians and non-Estonians believe in what other people or the media say about the reality of ethnic violence which is extremely rarely registered by authorities. The data of other studies confirm the high degree of confrontation in Estonian society, which, however, rarely leads to violence-related incidents<sup>12</sup>.

**Table 9. Witnessing conflicts between Estonians and non-Estonians in the past two years (%)<sup>13</sup>**

	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
	2000	2005	2000	2005
Media	40	43	28	32
Public places	39	45	47	44
Neighbourhood	21	26	12	22
Public institutions	11	10	32	25
Workplace	---	8	---	14

*National study "Integration Monitoring", 2000 and 2005.*

<sup>11</sup> See, for example "Русские все чаще меняют имена и фамилии" ("Russians Change their First Names and Surnames More Frequently", *Delfi* (23.01.2003).

<sup>12</sup> Pettai 2005 (note 8), p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, Table 1. The full question was worded as follows: "Have you witnessed conflicts between Estonians and non-Estonians in the past two years or encountered cases of hostile attitudes to Estonians or non-Estonians?" The table gives the sum of answers "Yes, frequently" and "Yes, sometimes".

## 2. Attitudes towards ethnic policies, including integration policies

### *Integration strategy*

In this section we will look at how Estonians and non-Estonians see ethnic policies, including integration policies. This will enable us to feel the context shaping the above ideas of unequal treatment.

Since the late 1990s the official declared goal of ethnic policies at the national level has been the integration of ethnic non-Estonians meaning primarily so-called “Russian-speaking population”. The state programme “Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007” passed in the year 2000 provided a kind of ideological basis for this policy, although its influence on specific political decisions has never been decisive. Officially integration is seen as “on the one hand, social unification of society on the basis of Estonian citizenship and the knowledge of the Estonian language, and on the other hand, having a chance to maintain ethnic differences on the basis of the recognition of the cultural rights of ethnic minorities. The unification of society means the integration of both Estonians and non-Estonians around the basic common core that unites them”<sup>14</sup>. The basic common core is defined as “general humanistic and democratic values; common information space and Estonian-language communication environment; common state institutions; the knowledge of basic facts about Estonian history, the recognition of the value of being an Estonian citizen and the understanding of the multicultural nature of Estonian society”<sup>15</sup>.

According to one of the authors of Estonia’s current integration conception Raivo Vetik, the integration policy attempts to combine two opposite approaches: modern (aimed at unification) and post-modern (aimed at maintaining differences). The modern project should be completed because it was forcibly interrupted in 1940 when Estonia was annexed to the USSR. Post-modern approaches should be taken into account because they dominate the political discourse of today’s West (as the so-called multicultural discourse<sup>16</sup>). We would add that such a position inevitably leads to a contradiction between the ethnocentric approach to statehood (represented, for example, in the preamble to the Estonian Constitution<sup>17</sup>) and liberal “civil” principles (that can be found in the state integration programme).

Thus, the concept of the common core of society, apart from some self-evident criteria (common human values, civil patriotism, etc.), includes the Estonian language, the vital symbol of the ethnic Estonians’ “mindedness”. Considering the principle of Estonian cultural dominance<sup>18</sup>, the strategy of the language unification of an actually bilingual society, which is the central idea of the whole Estonian integration policy, has an apparent assimilatory bias. Therefore, the main funds of the integration programme have been constantly used to teach Estonian to non-Estonians and to ensure the transition of Russian upper secondary schools to Estonian as the lan-

<sup>14</sup> State programme “Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007”, cl. 3.2.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, cl. 3.4.

<sup>16</sup> See R. Vetik, *Democratic Multiculturalism: a New Model of National Integration*, Aland Islands, 2000. p. 18-19.

<sup>17</sup> “The people of Estonia having expressed their unshakable and strong will to enhance and develop the state, ... aimed at maintaining the Estonian nation and culture for centuries, by the national vote on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 1992 passed... this Constitution”. The “people” (“rahvas”) here is a “civil” concept and the “nation” (“rahvus”) is ethnic. P. Järve. *Ethnic Democracy and Estonia. Application of Smooha’s Model*, Flensburg, 2000. p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> State programme (note 14), cl. 3.4.

guage of instruction. At the same time, the recognition of the cultural rights of minorities in the national integration programme has had little effect on the reality of integration policy<sup>19</sup>.

The Estonian political scientist Rein Ruutsoo, when analysing Estonia's citizenship policy, directly said that "the ethnic collectivist nature of the Estonian state is expressed through emphasising the collective goals of Estonians as representatives of a particular nation and through privileges of Estonians as people belonging to a certain ethnic group"<sup>20</sup>. Ruutsoo believes that the privileges guarantee eight provisions of the Constitution. Priit Järve, another Estonian political scientist, agrees with this to a large extent. He thinks it is possible to apply to Estonia the so-called "ethnic democracy" model developed by the Israeli sociologist Sammy Smooha<sup>21</sup>. The situation can also be explained using the system of the majority's ethnic control over minorities described by Ian Lustick. The Estonian researchers Vello Pettai and Klara Hallik have tried to do this in practice<sup>22</sup>. Thus, several serious works by local authors point at the ethnic bias of the Estonian state.

Estonia's integration strategy is strictly individual. Only those who have met certain requirements, i.e. learnt Estonian and acquired a certain set of "common" values, can be integrated. The programme has totally ignored the issue of what should be done with those who do not "qualify" for integration (in terms of language or for identity "faults"). There are well-grounded concerns that non-Estonians who are not able or willing to integrate on the conditions that are offered to them will be marginalised in Estonian society. The processes that will happen among marginalised people will certainly go out of the authorities' control. If economic inequality deepens, or any other significant factor enhances the feeling of being alienated from the "official society" the ethnic mobilisation of the marginal elements of the non-Estonian community is quite probable. The consequences of such mobilisation multiplied with the minorities' territorial compactness may be particularly unpleasant for the Estonian capital.

#### *Estimation of the integration policy*

In Estonia national policies are always expressed in legal acts that are more or less thoroughly enforced. In the 2001 and 2005 surveys the respondents assessed the laws that in the specific Estonian situation directly affect minorities. The attitudes towards many of them turned out to be quite contradictory among Estonians and non-Estonians.

Non-Estonians valued as highly positive only the law that gives the right to vote in local elections not only to Estonian citizens but also to the vast majority of people who do not have Estonian citizenship. Furthermore, in 2005 *negative* attitudes towards the Language Act were reported by 69%, towards the Citizenship Act by 66%, towards the Aliens Act by 50% and towards the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act by 57% of non-Estonians. These laws were assessed *positively* by 74%, 64%, 46% and 43% of Estonians, respectively. Thus, we could assume that the authorities' current policies of language regulation, the status of an alien and access to citizenship are supported by the majority or at least a half of Tallinn Estonians but not by non-Estonians.

<sup>19</sup> The detailed description and criticism of the Estonian Integration Programme: "Minority Protection in Estonia: An Assessment of the Programme Integration in Estonian Society", in Open Society Institute, EU Accession Monitoring Program, *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection, Part 1*, Budapest, 2002.

<sup>20</sup> R. Ruutsoo, "Eesti kodakondsuspoliitika ja rahvusriigi kujunemise piirjooned" // M. Heidmets (toim.), *Vene küsimus ja Eesti valikud* ("The Frames of Forming of the Nation State and Estonian Citizenship Policies", in M. Heidmets (ed.), *Russian Issue and Challenges for Estonia*), Tallinn, 1998. p. 176.

<sup>21</sup> Järve 2000 (note 17).

<sup>22</sup> V. Pettai and K. Hallik, "Understanding Process of Ethnic Control: Segmentation, Dependency and Co-optation in Post-communist Estonia", in *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2002.

The 2001 survey also asked about the need to comply with unjust laws and the non-Estonians who answered it were more prepared to passively obey such legal acts. Considering this fact, Klara Hallik who analysed the data on support for laws came to the conclusion that for most non-Estonians “Estonia’s legal space is contradictory because two different motives, on the one hand, the normative requirement of being law-abiding and, on the other hand, the negative attitude to laws, create constant disharmony... [This situation] inevitably brings about legal nihilism”<sup>23</sup>.

In 2005 the question about obeying “unjust laws” was not asked but both Estonians and non-Estonians were asked about their trust in the institutes of power. Both groups could be characterised by a relatively high degree of trust in the Parliament (the sums of the answers “mostly trust” and “completely trust” were respectively 45% and 42%) and the Government (51% and 52%). Data concerning the President differed more (86% and 64%). Minorities trust significantly less than Estonians the courts, prosecutors and police but much more Tallinn city authorities. However, it is not quite clear how knowledgeable was the minority representatives’ assessment, for example, of the Government. We have every reason to think that non-Estonians have much less information about its work. During the survey the respondents were asked to name the Estonian Prime Minister. While 87% of Estonians answered the question correctly, the respective figure for non-Estonians was 44%. It is remarkable that 41% of the minority representatives knew the name of the Russian Prime Minister (5% of Estonians). This, at least partly, can be ascribed to the constant consumption by non-Estonians of the production of the Russian media, particularly TV.

The authorities’ actual integration policy creates little enthusiasm in either community.

**Table 10. What is your attitude towards the integration programme and policies in Estonia?**

	SAMPLE		Ethnic group			
	Number	%	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
			Number	%	Number	%
Positive (satisfied)	195	27.9	92	28.3	103	27.5
Ambivalent (partly satisfied, partly unsatisfied)	233	33.3	94	28.9	139	37.1
Negative (unsatisfied)	216	30.9	96	29.6	120	32.0
Not sure	56	8.0	43	13.2	13	3.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100.0</b>

People can roughly be divided into three almost equal groups in terms of their satisfaction with the governmental programme. This in itself shows that it does not get enough support from the Estonian public. Moreover, the attitude towards the integration programme has significantly deteriorated in the five years (particularly among Estonians). In 2001 the attitude towards the *programme* was as follows:

<sup>23</sup> К. Халлик, „Позитивные и негативные факторы интеграции” (K. Hallik, “Positive and Negative Factors of Integration”, in Semjonov 2002 (note 5)), p. 89.

**Table 11. How do you assess the programme “Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007?” (%)**

	SAMPLE	Ethnic group	
		Estonians	Non-Estonians
Totally positively/ Mostly positively	25	31	20
Ambivalently/Neutrally	50	48	51
Mostly negatively/ Totally negatively	10	3	17
Not sure	15	18	12

We can say with great certainty that the growth of negative attitudes is related to the lack of satisfaction with the Government’s practical integration action. In 2001 they just started implementing the programme and we only asked a question about the *assessment* of the programme. In 2005 the respondents already expressed their attitudes both towards the *programme* and the *policy* of integration in Estonia. The proportion of those who are not happy has almost doubled among non-Estonians and grew almost 10 (!) times among Estonians.

However, the communities see the main problems of integration in different ways. The priorities for half of Estonians are issues related to language and culture. Then follow social and economic problems (26%) and legal and political problems (18%). For minorities, on the contrary, the latter group of problems is first (37%), socioeconomic problems second (34%) and language and culture last (26%). In 2001 the list of priorities was similarly asymmetrical with the only difference that this asymmetry has now increased. Estonians put ever greater emphasis on the issues of language and culture, and Russians on legal and political aspects. Thus, the outcome of the survey reflected arguments between majority and minority leaders about what is more important in the integration process as the first step: learning Estonian or becoming an Estonian citizen<sup>24</sup>.

It was also found out that minorities are poorly informed about the activities of official institutions involved in integration and do not appreciate them. For example, 65% of non-Estonians are not informed about the work of the Office of the Minister for Population Affairs, and among the rest 14% mostly trust this institution and 22% mostly do not trust (among naturalised citizens respectively 24% and 24%). 74% of non-Estonians are not aware of the activities of the Non-Estonians’ Integration Foundation. 8% mostly trust it and 18% do not (among naturalised citizens respectively 12% and 18%). By comparison, the level of trust in the leading public organisations of Russian and Russian-speaking people fluctuates among non-Estonians between 26% and 36%.

The data presented in this section prove that the minorities do not accept the legislative basis of the local ethnic policies but have a relatively high degree of trust in official institutions. The Estonian state, as it was mentioned above, does not have to be ethnically neutral. Nevertheless, non-Estonians are quite loyal being ready to obey even the laws that they see as unjust. As long as this situation exists, an open ethnic conflict in Estonia is improbable.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Open Society Institute (note 19).

*Reform of Russian-language education*

We are particularly interested in the reform of Russian-language education, which is undoubtedly one of the key issues of the official integration strategy. The attitudes towards this reform will help us to explain why both Estonians and non-Estonians are not very impressed by the official integration policy.

**Table 12. What kind of educational model do you think is most suitable for Russians living in Estonia? (%)**

	<b>Estonians</b>	<b>Non-Estonians</b>
<b>Model 1.</b> Instruction from the 1st to 12th year in Estonian; Russian is taught as a separate subject	28.6	5.6
<b>Model 2.</b> Instruction in primary school is in Russian and in basic and upper secondary school in Estonian	28.0	5.3
<b>Model 3.</b> Instruction in primary and basic school is in Russian and in upper secondary school (10th to 12th year) in Estonian	14.8	7.2
<b>Model 4.</b> Instruction in primary and basic school is in Russian and in upper secondary school (10th to 12th year) at least 60% of subjects are taught in Estonian	16.0	19.2
<b>Model 5.</b> Instruction from the 1st to 12th year is in Russian but some not major subjects are taught in Estonian	3.1	33.3
<b>Model 6.</b> Instruction from the 1st to 12th year is in Russian; Estonian is taught as a foreign language	0.9	19.5
Not sure	8.6	9.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

As we can see from Table 12, more than a half of Estonians would prefer assimilatory educational models for Russians, while most non-Estonians would choose the models that are least compatible with the assimilation option. It is remarkable that Model 4, the current official model in Estonia that will be introduced in 2007, is not particularly popular in either community, being in fact a kind of compromise between the two extremes (this model, apparently, will not totally satisfy either community).

From the data shown in Table 12 we can also conclude that most non-Estonians want school education, which is an important part of the socialisation of their children and young people, to be entirely in their mother tongue. Some other recent studies confirm that the secondary education reform causes a lot of concern among non-Estonians about whether Russian young people can keep their language and culture<sup>25</sup>. All this also shows that the core of the Russian community wants to avoid assimilation and maintain their mother tongue and culture, which is, incidentally, fully in keeping with the officially *declared* integration principles.

<sup>25</sup> I. Pross, „Eestivenelaste keeleoskus ja suhtumine 2007. aasta gümnaasiumireformi“ // *Uuringu „Integratsiooni monitoriing 2005“ aruanne* (“Estonian Russians’ Language Proficiency and Attitudes towards 2007 Upper Secondary School Reform”, in *Integration Monitoring 2005 Study Report*), Tallinn. p. 30.

### *Identity*

Estonian sociologists have recently introduced a new term, “Estonian Russians” (eestivenelased). This was an attempt to get rid of the constantly criticised concepts of “Russian-speakers” and “non-Estonians”. The very fact of the use of the neologism signals the wish to see the shaping of a kind of new community in the minority environment. This is also confirmed by the answers to the question about the similarities/differences between Russians living in Estonia and Russia, which the 2005 survey asked both Estonians and non-Estonians. Half of non-Estonians chose the answer “differ in some aspects” and about a third “differ significantly”. Almost a half of Estonians believed that the two groups differ significantly and a third that they differ in some aspects. Thus, the majority representatives are even more certain about the differences between Estonian and Russian Russians than Russians themselves. The very existence of differences is taken for granted by both groups.

But how important is the ethnic component for the identification of both groups? In the survey people had to choose between civil, territorial and ethnic identity. The question was worded “Who do you think you are in the first place?” While most Estonian respondents answered “Estonian citizens” (43%) or “Estonians” (45%), the most popular answers for non-Estonians were “Russians” (31%), “Estonian residents” (25%), “Tallinn residents” (23%) and “Estonian citizens” (16%). More than a half of non-Estonian respondents could not choose the last option because they are not Estonian citizens. Many of them, however, preferred territorial identification. As many as a third of naturalised citizens considered themselves as “first of all Estonian citizens”.

It is interesting to compare these answers to what non-Estonians see as the main responsibilities of “Russians in Estonia”. The respondents were offered a list of seven possible options formulated on the basis of newspaper clichés<sup>26</sup>. This was done to find out the most important general tendencies that should reflect the whole spectre of possible behaviour models: from segregation to integration<sup>27</sup>.

A large part of non-Estonian respondents (38%) put first the answer “to solve problems faced by our country together with Estonians”. A quarter of respondents chose the answer “to preserve the Russian language and culture and develop the harmonious coexistence of the two communities”. The third place was shared by two opposite attitudes: 10% thought that it is most important “to be loyal to the State and respect the Estonians’ right to run their country” and 8% “to organise politically in order to protect the interests of Russians”. The option “to realise the right of Russians in Estonia for self-determination” was only chosen by 6%. These data show that the degree of the political mobilisation of non-Estonians is rather small, and that most of them have chosen the integration strategy. However, there is still some potential for political mobilisation: if we look at the three main priorities, the answer “to solve problems together...” was put first, second or third by as many as 83%, “to preserve language and culture...” by 78% and “organise politically...” by 40% of non-Estonians.

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<sup>26</sup> The whole list looked as follows: to leave Estonia for their home country; to respect Estonian culture and teach children in Estonian schools; to be loyal to the State and respect Estonians’ right to run their country; to solve problems faced by our country together with Estonians; to preserve the Russian language and culture and develop the harmonious coexistence of the two communities; to organise politically in order to protect the interests of Russians; to exercise the right of Russians in Estonia for self-determination.

<sup>27</sup> Similar methods were already tested in 2001. Semjonov 2002 (note 5), p. 59-63.

Estonians in their answers to this question demonstrated quite strong both integration and assimilatory attitudes<sup>28</sup>. At the same time, only 17% of Estonians included the option that non-Estonians “should leave Estonia for their home country” in the *three* priorities.

It is interesting to see how the representatives of the two communities perceive the distance between the cultures. The differences between Estonians and non-Estonians are quite significant. While 16% of majority representatives in Tallinn answered that they see Russian culture as close rather than distant, more than 40% of non-Estonians answered so about Estonian culture. The same tendency can be observed not only for the closeness of, but also interest in the other community’s culture. While only a third of Estonians are very interested or just interested in Russian culture, more than a half of non-Estonians feel so about Estonian culture. As many as 59% of Estonians reported little or no interest in Russian culture and only a third of non-Estonians provided such answers about Estonian culture. However, the following trend was noticed: interest in Russian culture among Estonians grew with the level of education and for people with a university degree it was close to 50%.

The data provided in this section can be interpreted as the existence in Tallinn of two communities whose identity has an ethnic component (for non-Estonians it is related to the Russian language and culture). Either group has a strong core which can consolidate “tribesmen” on the basis of ethnic background. Non-Estonians are more open to Estonian cultural influence. As the data in Table 12 show, most of them want to keep full education in their mother tongue, i.e. so far try to avoid the blurring of their community’s boundaries.

#### *Segregation and discrimination*

Can an ethnically divided society where ethnic groups are isolated avoid the discrimination of minorities by the majority? Can the state in this situation efficiently guarantee the minorities their right to equal treatment and equal access to participation in social, political and economic life? These questions might be rhetorical because historical practice knows almost no examples of isolated but equal coexistence of “two societies in one country”: at least, in a unitary rather than federal state. Although our Estonian colleagues use the “mild” term ethnic *separation* to describe the situation, it is not commonly accepted at the international level where the notion of segregation is used<sup>29</sup>. Therefore we should not unconditionally trust the subjective opinions of respondents provided in Table 1 above. It would be reasonable to analyse the ethnic inequality situation and discrimination tendencies in more detail and look at the outcome of the official ethnic policies of the past 15 years.

Let us start from indicators comparing the opportunities of Estonians and non-Estonians (Russians) in different spheres of life.

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<sup>28</sup> Estonians’ ideas about the main task of local Russians were as follows: the primary task “to be loyal...” was chosen by 33%, second was “to respect Estonian culture and teach children in Estonian schools” (26%) and third “solve problems together...” (21%).

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, “SEGREGATION 2”, in *The American Heritage Dictionary*: “The policy or practice of separating people of different races, classes, or ethnic groups... especially as a form of discrimination”. Available at <http://www.answers.com/topic/segregation> (accessed 16.03.2006).

**Table 13. What do you think for whom, other things being equal, including the command of the official language and Estonian citizenship, it is easier and simpler to...?***(1 – easier for Estonians, 4 – equal opportunities, 7 – easier for non-Estonians)*

	SAMPLE	Ethnic group	
		Estonians	Non-Estonians
Make a political career	2.25	2.98	1.62
Be successful in business	3.25	3.90	2.70
Get a good education	2.92	3.59	2.35
Achieve economic welfare	3.19	3.94	2.55
Get pensions and benefits	3.57	3.77	3.39
Participate in religious and church life	3.91	3.93	3.89

Practically all numbers in the table are lower than the average (4). It means that, in respondents' opinion, Estonians have an advantage in all listed spheres of life. The only exception for Russians is a chance to participate in religious and church life. Furthermore, Estonians think that minorities have equal opportunities in the economic sphere – business and economic welfare – but non-Estonians do not share their optimism. Here is an example of independent statistics showing that the point of view of Estonian respondents is quite far from reality, particularly in Tallinn.

**Table 14. Net income of Estonians and non-Estonians in Tallinn\* (%)<sup>30</sup>**

	Low	Average	High	None
Estonians	25	41	25	10
Non-Estonians	31	37	15	17

\* *Apart from those who refused to answer the question*  
*National study "Integration Monitoring", 2005*

Of course, one can speculate that our survey asked about *possibilities* that Estonians use successfully while Russians do not. However, because we are talking about *systemic* inequality, an unbiased researcher cannot help making the conclusion that the subjective opinion of the Russian respondents coincides with the actual situation in society. Moreover, the data of Table 13 almost totally coincide with the results of the 2001 survey and in this respect the situation has not changed for the better. Furthermore, the data are in keeping with the results of "Integration Monitoring":

<sup>30</sup> M. Pavelson, „Eestlaste ja eestivenelaste sotsiaalmajanduslik seisund: ootused ja muutused” // *Uuringu "Integratsioonimonitoring 2005" aruanne* ("Social-economic Status of Estonians and Estonian Russians: Expectations and Changes", in *Integration Monitoring 2005 Study Report*), Tallinn. p. 12.

**Table 15. Assessment of the position of Estonians and Russians in Estonian society (%)<sup>31</sup>**

	Estonians	Russians			
		All	Estonian citizens	People without citizenship	Russian citizens
Estonians' position is higher	73	87	83	90	90
Estonians and non-Estonians are equal	19	12	15	9	7
Non-Estonians' position is higher	2	1	...	...	2
Not sure	6	1	1	...	1

National study "Integration Monitoring", 2005

We can only repeat the conclusion that was made on the basis of the previous 2001 study:

*The data enable us to conclude that Russian-speaking Tallinn residents feel that their rights are infringed and they are unequal compared to Estonians. Estonians on the whole agree with such assessment. The degree of infringement is, of course, different. In terms of religion there is practically no difference; in business or in social security there is small "moderate" inequality. In education as well as in the possibility to achieve economic welfare respondents feel that their rights are very much infringed. The situation in politics is perceived as obvious discrimination<sup>32</sup>.*

We can add that the right to equal participation in social and political life belongs to the group of basic (fundamental) human rights, and therefore discriminatory relations in this sphere are particularly illustrative.

It is interesting to see the dynamics of the answer to the question, with the help of which we tried to find out what "objective reasons" respondents name to explain existing inequality. The question was worded as follows: "As we know, most positions in the Parliament, Government and local authorities are occupied by Estonians. What do you think are Estonians' advantages over non-Estonians?" The answers are shown in Table 16 (each respondent only chose one option):

**Table 16. What are Estonians' advantages over non-Estonians? (%)**

	Ethnic group			
	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
Legal status (citizenship)	38.8	32.3	16.9	18.9
Knowledge of the State language	19.5	31.4	12.4	14.4
Ethnicity	14.5	8.6	44.2	48.0
Circle of acquaintances	12.1	9.2	18.5	10.7
Activity and enterprise	9.2	10.2	4.1	4.8
Knowledge of foreign languages	2.7	4.6	0.6	0.8
Not sure	3.3	3.7	3.3	2.4

<sup>31</sup> Pettai 2005 (note 8), p. 39. The sums of the answers "to some extent higher" and "remarkably higher" are provided.

<sup>32</sup> A. Semjonov 2002 (note 5), p. 53.

As we can see, five years later a lot Russian respondents (almost a half) were still convinced that *discrimination* in terms of access to national and political positions *exists and is based on ethnic background*. For them legal status (citizenship) and the natural advantage of Estonians in speaking the official language were secondary and personal characteristics (enterprise and the knowledge of foreign languages) played practically no role.

The latter factors are secondary also for most Estonian respondents, although the percentage of those who highly regard their own personal strengths is twice as high. However, we have to admit that on the whole the Estonian respondents apparently live in the reality of the early 1990s when there was a situation of the mass statelessness (legal inequality) and most Russian people had a poor knowledge of Estonian (the State language). The situation has significantly changed in the meantime, particularly in terms of language and particularly in Tallinn, so this opinion seems to be apparently superficial and simplified. Regretfully, this is also the official position of the Estonian authorities, which, among other things, is expressed in the national integration programme.

### 3. Perception of history and the choice of society development models

#### *Situation of the communities in the Soviet time*

The stubborn unwillingness of Estonian respondents to admit ethnic inequality could be explained by a number of circumstances. First of all, in Estonian public and media discourse there is a strong opinion that Russians feel their rights are infringed because they have been deprived of the *privileges* that they enjoyed in the Soviet time. Therefore, it is not discrimination of Russians but the comeback of “historical justice”. At some point there were even attempts to find a scientific ground for this opinion. Thus, Aksel Kirch wrote that “immigrants had *real economic privileges* and could get good housing almost immediately, while native population needed to wait for decades”<sup>33</sup>. Ironically enough, however, he failed to identify any other “real economic privileges” apart from the housing queues.

Nevertheless, the notion about the “privileges Russians had” first became the favourite journalistic cliché and now has turned into a stable public stereotype for Estonians. Most Estonians and even a large number of Russian respondents agree with it:

**Table 17. Do you think that in the “Soviet time” Russians were privileged compared to Estonians?**

	SAMPLE		Ethnic group			
	Number	%	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
			Number	%	Number	%
Yes, certainly	112	16.0	96	29.5	16	4.3
Yes, to some extent	241	34.4	144	44.3	97	25.9
No	244	34.9	28	8.6	216	57.6
Not sure	103	14.7	57	17.5	46	12.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>33</sup> A. Kirch, M. Kirch, T. Tuisk, *The Non-Estonian Population Today and Tomorrow: A Sociological Overview*, Tallinn, 1992. p. 5.

As we can see from Table 17, although Estonians' opinion is not unanimous, three-quarters of them believe in the privileged position of Russians in the Soviet time. Still, as it was mentioned before, experts in the early 1990s could provide no other proof apart from some housing benefits for migrant workers. Indeed, there was a housing problem in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, how could Soviet national enterprises import labour force and not provide it with apartments? Moreover, the "good housing" mentioned by A. Kirch in fact were low-quality blocks of flats built of concrete panels in newly developed suburbs, which can hardly be seen as "*real economic privileges*" highlighted by the author. It is well known that the majority of the imported labour force was miners, dockworkers, construction builders, and to a lesser extent qualified workers and engineers. If one considers builders and dockworkers as a privileged group, the entire concept of "privilege" is emptied of all meaning.

What do the respondents see as the privileged position of Russians?

**Table 18. What do you think for whom it was easier and simpler in the "Soviet time" to...**

*(1 – for Estonians, 4 – equal opportunities, 7 – for non-Estonians)*

	SAMPLE	Ethnic group	
		Estonians	Non-Estonians
Get a flat	4.67	5.59	3.86
Use their mother tongue	4.65	5.09	4.26
Travel abroad	4.46	5.03	4.01
Be elected to power structures	4.37	5.23	3.66
Join the Communist Party	4.36	4.94	3.86
Get bonuses (letters of appreciation, medals, diplomas, etc.)	4.27	4.65	3.95
Participate in public organisations	4.23	4.57	3.95
Make a career	4.17	4.85	3.60
Get a house, a dacha	4.16	4.77	3.66
Get a good job	4.11	4.83	3.49
Get a university degree	4.03	4.24	3.86
Get a high salary	4.03	4.61	3.54
Enjoy culture (books, theatres, museums, etc.)	3.98	3.99	3.97

For Estonian respondents practically all numbers for the above parameters are higher than 4, i.e. they think that Russians were privileged in all the above spheres, except culture.

Remarkably, this opinion is not confirmed by statistics or social studies. Thus, wages and income levels were practically equal, as well as the possibility to participate in public organisations. Moreover, for some parameters the situation was the opposite, i.e. Estonians had the advantage. In 1994 the sociologist Andrus Park noted that although the share of Estonians in the population of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic in the late 1980s was 62.5%, their share in the bureaucracy of state was 72%, among science personnel 67%, in culture and art 84% and in education 71%. Russians only accounted for 20.2% and Estonians respectively for 79.8% among the students of Estonian universities and colleges. The data about participation in public and political life are even more impressive. In the 1980s, 70-80% of the members of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic were ethnic Estonians and, even more importantly, they also had 70-80% in the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party, or, in other words, in the real political elite and nomenclature<sup>34</sup>.

One of the actual advantages of Russians, apart from the notorious “housing issue” probably was the possibility to use of their mother tongue (which was *de facto* an official language in the Soviet Union) and, with some reservations, a chance to go abroad. In the latter case, it often was not about the ethnic discrimination of Estonians but many of them had relatives abroad (post-war emigrants), which was a compromising circumstance in the eyes of visa officials.

Answers provided by Russian respondents, on the contrary, fluctuate around the average score or are even below 4. In other words, they do not share the opinion about their privileged position, which, as it was shown above, is evidently closer to reality. However, it is still unclear what was meant by the 30% who agreed with this statement according to Table 17. Many of them might have simply repeated the stereotype that dominates the official discourse.

#### *Society development models*

The second circumstance, due to which Estonian respondents demonstrate some kind of “insensitivity” in minority discrimination issues, is related to their ideas about *society development models*. Before we describe the data related to this subject, we should repeat some clarifying and theoretical remarks quoted in the 2001 survey report.

The process of nation building is based on either explicit or implicit understanding of the phenomenon. The two opposite approaches that dominate both academic discourses and social and political discussions can be broadly defined as *inclusive* and *exclusive* discourses. Practically in all Eastern and Central European countries (leave alone the Caucasus and Central Asian countries) the most “popular” approach has recently been exclusion on ethnic and/or language grounds. The approaches are respectively described as the civic and ethnic models of nation building.

*The civic model* is derived from the experience of successfully developing democracies based on common standards that are obligatory for everyone, including the participation democracy principle. The interests of all social groups should be balanced and protected by law. The ethnic identity and interests of all groups should be equally respected. The civic model implies the establishment of impartial and independent political institutions, equal access of all society members to participation in these institutions, and the shaping of the idea of unity and solidarity among the members of the society. Of course, inequality and discrimination may (and often do) exist in the society based on the civic model, but they are not seen as a *norm* and the state and society take effort to combat them.

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<sup>34</sup> A. Park, “Ethnicity and Independence: The Case of Estonia in Comparative Perspective”, in *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 46, no. 1, 1994. p. 69-87.

*The ethnic model* is based on the “nation state” idea where the term “nation” is synonymous to “ethnicity” and thus substitutes for it. The state is therefore viewed as primarily belonging to one predominant ethnic group. This group endeavours to legitimise its exclusive right to power using such concepts as “indigenous”, “constituent”, “historical” or “state-building” nation. A representative of the titular ethnic group becomes a member of society automatically due to his or her ethnic affiliation. Other ethnic groups may be formally declared equal but in fact they are more or less explicitly perceived as an “anomaly”. They are tolerated as aliens who should “deserve” the right to a place in society. In this case the unequal status of ethnic groups is perceived as a normal situation.

Based on these general theoretical descriptions we selected four problem areas where differences between the two models are particularly sharp. Specifically in the Estonian situation these are (1) the problem of citizenship; (2) political and human rights; (3) right to participation in government; (4) culture and language. Pairs of contrast statements were formulated for each sphere and respondents had to choose one of them, with which they tend to agree. In all cases the choice of option A meant orientation at the civic model and B at the ethnic one. Answers provided by respondents in 2001 and 2005 are shown in the following tables and on the whole they speak for themselves:

**Table 19. Which statement is most in keeping with your views? (%)**

- A – Every individual has the right to be a citizen of the country where he or she permanently resides and with which he or she has the strongest connections*  
*B – Representatives of the indigenous nation have the right to citizenship in the first place because it is their country*

	Ethnic group			
	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
Statement A	47.9	49.2	94.8	90.1
Statement B	49.1	44.3	3.6	6.9
Not sure	3.0	6.5	1.7	2.9

**Table 20. Which statement is most in keeping with your views? (%)**

- A – Every citizen has the right to participate in government, notwithstanding his or her language or origin*  
*B – The state should be run by representatives of the indigenous nation as well as those who have proven their loyalty*

	Ethnic group			
	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
Statement A	20.4	18.8	74.9	80.5
Statement B	76.0	75.7	15.7	15.2
Not sure	3.6	5.5	9.4	4.3

**Table 21. Which statement is most in keeping with your views? (%)**

*A – All permanent residents of the country should enjoy human rights, including political rights*

*B – All citizens should enjoy human rights, but political rights should be enjoyed primarily by representatives of the indigenous nation*

	Ethnic group			
	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
Statement A	53.8	52.6	87.6	86.9
Statement B	43.8	40.0	6.6	10.1
Not sure	2.4	7.4	5.8	2.9

**Table 22. Which statement is most in keeping with your views? (%)**

*A – Every individual has the right to keep their language and culture. One culture cannot be developed at the cost of another*

*B – The country should primarily develop the culture of the indigenous nation, and other cultures could develop in their own countries*

	Ethnic group			
	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
Statement A	69.8	69.5	92.5	91.2
Statement B	27.2	23.4	4.7	4.3
Not sure	3.0	7.1	2.8	4.5

Thus, most Estonians only support liberal attitudes in the cultural sphere. At the same time, three-quarters (76%) of Estonian respondents continue to think that the right to participation in government should be enjoyed not by all *citizens* equally but only by representatives of the indigenous nation, i.e. themselves. This in turn means that although a little more than a half of Estonians support the granting of citizenship and political rights to all permanent residents of the country, many of them are still not ready to see Russians as equal partners and compatriots. Minority should be happy with a role of passive objects in the political process, the subjects of which are Estonian political parties. This idea is typical for the so-called *ethnic democracy* model<sup>35</sup>. It is obvious that most Estonian respondents sincerely fail to understand that this kind of relations in society is what can be defined as *segregation*.

<sup>35</sup> S. Smooha, "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype", in *Israel Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1997, p. 198-241. See also: G. Smith, "The Ethnic Democracy Thesis and the Citizenship Question in Estonia and Latvia", in *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 24 no. 2, 1998; Järve 2000 (note 17).

The data also show that these ideas and attitudes have been rather stable: during the time that elapsed between the surveys the changes in the distribution of answers were minimal, and the 1-3% difference might be ascribed to sample variations and a slight increase in the number of those who were not sure. The readiness of the Estonian population for society integration is still low, and activities in the framework of the governmental programme have changed nothing in this respect.

Russian (non-Estonian) respondents, on the contrary, demonstrate a stable trend to support the civic nation building model. There has been no ethnic mobilisation of Russians (either against Estonians or against the Estonian state). This can be considered as a positive factor as it decreases the probability of an ethnic conflict in Estonia. However, it is obvious that the two ethnic communities assess the models and prospects of Estonia's development in different, almost opposite ways. This is yet another proof of the deep divide in society, which we see as more serious than political and economic inequality, or information (media) isolation stressed by many Estonian colleagues. This is about fundamental values.

On the basis of this information we can conclude that the vast majority of surveyed Russian-speaking Tallinners are staunch supporters of the civic social model. There is an interesting nuance here, though. The statements representing the other, "ethnic", model were formulated based on the specific situation in Estonia and the argumentation of Estonian ethnic nationalists. It is not surprising that these statements sounded familiar and were perceived negatively by most Russian respondents. Does it mean that the situation of the "discriminated minority" trying to overcome their isolation is projected on their attitudes and that the results would have been different if they were in the dominant position? It was impossible to get a clear answer to this question in this study. However, there is proof that Russians have always demonstrated greater openness and readiness for interethnic contacts than Estonian respondents, also in the Soviet period (when they were, as Estonians think, privileged). For example, according to American sociologists, the following attitudes to interethnic isolation or openness were demonstrated by respondents in the late 1980s (cf. Table 6):

**Table 23. Preferring monoethnicity (%)<sup>36</sup>**

	Estonians	Russians
<i>Preferred place of work</i>		
Monoethnic	65	7
Do not care	33	57
Multiethnic	3	35
<i>Preferred neighbourhood</i>		
Monoethnic	67	5
Do not care	32	78
Multiethnic	1	17
<i>Preferred marriage</i>		
Marry within group	61	10
Do not care	34	83
Marry member of other group	4	8

*Study conducted by B.A. Anderson, B.D.Silver, M.Titma and E.D.Ponarin*

<sup>36</sup> B.A.Anderson, B.D.Silver, M.Titma, E.D.Ponarin, "Estonian and Russian Communities", in *International Journal of Sociology*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1996. P. 40.

Emphasising the remarkable prevalence of Russians in terms of open-mindedness and tolerance, the authors made a reservation that in a unitary nation state where Russians would be in a situation of a suppressed minority, they might change these attitudes for more closed ones as a kind of defence. As we can see, this has not happened yet.

*The 1940 events*

Yet another factor and proof of asymmetrical inter-community relations and attitudes is different, almost opposite interpretation of historical events. This concerns, first of all, the annexation of Estonia to the USSR in 1940.

**Table 24. The Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic was declared and Estonia became part of the USSR in 1940. How do you assess this event?**

	SAMPLE		Ethnic group			
	Number	%	Estonians		Non-Estonians	
			Number	%	Number	%
This was military occupation that lasted until 1991	236	33.7	209	64.3	27	7.2
Estonia was annexed to the USSR with a threat to use force	205	29.3	88	27.1	117	31.2
Estonia joined the USSR voluntarily	151	21.6	3	0.9	148	39.5
Not sure	108	15.4	25	7.7	83	22.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100.0</b>

These data need no comments. However, we cannot help noting that although the idea of fifty-year occupation now unambiguously dominates the official discourse, a third of Estonian respondents do not share this position. As to Russians, about 40% believe that Estonia joined the USSR voluntarily. Quite a significant number of Russian respondents (22%) were not sure and only 7% agreed with the statement about long-lasting occupation.

The latter number coincides with integration monitoring data obtained by Estonian colleagues. Thus, in Raivo Vetik's study the question was worded as follows:

**Table 25. Did Estonia join the USSR voluntarily or was it occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940? Non-Estonians (%)<sup>37</sup>**

	2002	2005
Entirely voluntarily	16	20
Rather voluntarily	27	36
Rather occupied	26	23
Of course, occupied	6	7

*National study "Integration Monitoring", 2005*

Here we should focus on several circumstances. First, the question was not quite appropriate: in fact, the only alternative to occupation was voluntary joining, which is an apparent simplification of the complicated historical and political reality. However, this approach perfectly reflects the categorical peremptoriness of the official discourse. Also, it is not quite clear what those who chose "rather voluntarily" or "rather occupied" actually meant. In any case, among non-Estonian respondents the proportion of people thinking that Estonia joined the USSR voluntarily grew between 2002 and 2005 and only 6-7% fully agreed with the idea of occupation.

If it were about the historical events that happened a long time ago, we would not focus on this issue. However, the official interpretation of the events directly affects the attitude to the current situation. Such interpretation too easily "justifies" the unequal situation of people who came to Estonia in the Soviet time by referring to occupation. Moreover, the denial of occupation is regarded (at least in the media and at the official level) as suspicious non-approval of the official minority policy.

## Conclusions

- A significant proportion of Estonians believe that relations between Russians and Estonians have improved during the years of independence. Most non-Estonians do not agree.
- The intensity of contacts between Estonians and non-Estonians is lower than could be expected considering the ethnic composition of the city of Tallinn. It is remarkable that only a half of respondents in either group meet the representatives of the other group at work often or sometimes.
- Russians (non-Estonians) continue to demonstrate greater open-mindedness and readiness for interethnic contacts than Estonian respondents, and this trend has continued during the past 20 years. On the whole, the share of people with xenophobic attitudes among Estonians is several times as high as among Russians, which is confirmed by other studies.

<sup>37</sup> R. Vetik, "Identiteedi probleem integratsioonis: sobiva proportsiooni leidmine avaliku sfääri ühtlustumise ja eras-fääri erinevuste säilitamise vahel" // Uuringu "Integratsiooni monitooring 2005" aruanne ("Identity Problem in Integration: In the Quest of Appropriate Proportions between Unifying Public Domain and Preserving Differences in Private Domain", in *Integration Monitoring 2005 Study Report*, Tallinn, p. 89.

- The vast majority of respondents agree that the main ethnic groups in Estonia are isolated from each other. However, for many respondents the fact of ethnic isolation does not provide evidence of discriminatory relations in society.
- Nevertheless, the study data enable us to conclude that the Russian-speaking residents of Tallinn feel that their rights are infringed upon and that they are unequal to Estonians. Estonians mostly agree with this opinion. Almost a half of Russians think that discrimination in access to governmental and political positions exists and is based on ethnic background. Estonians tend to ascribe their own privileged position to their legal status (citizenship) and the knowledge of the State language.
- On the whole, non-Estonians negatively estimate the laws that form the basis for language policies as well as policies related to citizenship and aliens. At the same time non-Estonians have a high degree of trust in authorities and government, which ensures social stability.
- Personal discrimination experience in the past three years was mostly reported by non-Estonians, although in some spheres Estonians also referred to such experience. Most of all both groups referred to the cases where their rights were limited or they experienced maltreatment due to their ethnicity in shops or public transport, i.e. in places where even “isolationists” from both groups are forced to get in touch with representatives of the other community. A significant number of non-Estonians (17%) referred to such negative experience at work (including 15% of naturalised Estonian citizens, i.e. people with a regulated status who normally speak the official language).
- The official integration programme does not get much support from the population, and in recent years the attitudes towards it have become worse, particularly among Estonians. The grounds for discontent are different for the two groups, which is related to their different expectations to the programme. For Russians, integration is primarily associated with actual social needs, while Estonians’ vision of integration is dominated by symbolic values. Furthermore, minorities are poorly informed about the activities of major institutions dealing with these issues. It is obvious that approaches to the reform of Russian-language education (as an element of the integration policy) in the two communities are very different.
- The lack of readiness among Estonian respondents to admit ethnic inequality is caused by a number of circumstances. First, Estonian public and media discourse attempts to convince people that Russians only lost the *privileges* they enjoyed in the Soviet time and therefore it is the comeback of “historical justice” rather than discrimination.
- Second, most Estonians advocate the *ethnic* rather than *civic* society model. Therefore, they take their own domination for granted and do not see any signs of segregation in it. Russians’ attitudes are quite different, which is yet another proof of the deep divide in society.
- Finally, most Estonians share the idea of the fifty-year occupation of Estonia by the Soviet Union, which now unambiguously dominates the official discourse (and many social studies). Therefore people who came to Estonia in this period are not perceived as equal compatriots, and infringement of their rights is not seen as discrimination. The fact that 64% of Estonians and only 7% of Russians fully agreed with the idea of occupation only aggravates the mutual misunderstanding and divide in society.



## **The Legal Information Centre for Human Rights**

The Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (LICHR) was founded on May 2, 1994. Intimately involved in the setting up and consolidation of the LICHR were the non-governmental organisations of Denmark and Estonia. The LICHR launched its activities at the beginning of January 1995.

The LICHR is an independent non-governmental NGO, which activities are based on projects.

In its activities LICHR has mapped four high priority strategic spheres:

1. Conflict prevention: identifying the causes of potential conflicts through analysis and dissemination of information, as well as by enhancement of awareness and knowledge about the human rights;
2. Fostering the creation of the society based on human rights standards;
3. Analysis of the Estonian legislation for its conformity with the international instruments on human rights;
4. Provision of legal advice and aid to individuals, whose rights are not duly guaranteed or are violated.



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