Estonians and Russians in Contemporary Estonia: Is the Soviet Past still dominating the Present?

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Abstract

The current article focuses on a study about Estonians and Russians living in Estonia. As a method we used Identity Structure Analysis (ISA) to investigate their patterns of identification with 'Estonians', 'Russians in Estonia', 'Russians in Russia', and 'Estonian Government'. The themes embraced constructions of the past, including the context of the Soviet Union's role in WWII. Findings suggest that alarming events on the streets of Tallinn (April 2007) appear to be related to the role of the Soviet Union in WWII inter alia, where its construction as 'occupier' of Eastern Europe (as opposed to 'liberator') forms a 'core evaluative dimension of identity' for the Estonians, together with the Bronze Soldier having no symbolic salience or relation to the Estonian identity. Findings, such as Estonian Russians expressing much stronger idealistic identification with 'Estonians' than with the "own parents" group, also demonstrate ISA etic concepts that incorporate emic values and beliefs in contemporary Estonia. All Estonian people have experienced life in the EU for six years and this has deepened both Estonians' and Russians' emotional credit towards the EU. The most notable factor in this process has been rapid economic growth, although personal well-being has mostly been experienced by younger generations.

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About the History of Relations between Estonians and Estonian Russians.

Estonia became independent from Russia after WWI on the 24th of February 1918. On the 23rd of August 1939 the Soviet Union and Germany signed a bilateral treaty in violation of principles of self determination (called the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) that divided Central and Eastern Europe between the USSR and Germany. Estonia remained under the Soviet sphere of influence (Misiunas & Taagepera, 2006, p. 15).

After the annexation of Estonia by the Soviet Union (1944), Estonian migration was no longer a naturally developing process, it was partly forced. Russians and others had arrived in different "migration waves" from the Russian Federation and other parts of theUSSR. As you see from Diagram 1, the most intensive immigration took place during the years right after the Second World War. From the mid-sixties, the hinterland of migration enlarged and another reason for immigration became obvious: immigrants looked for material welfare. Continuous industrialization caused the increased demand for extra labour force and it caused the second larger immigration wave in the 1960s. Most of the Russian-speaking population remained in Estonia (Tammur, 2008).

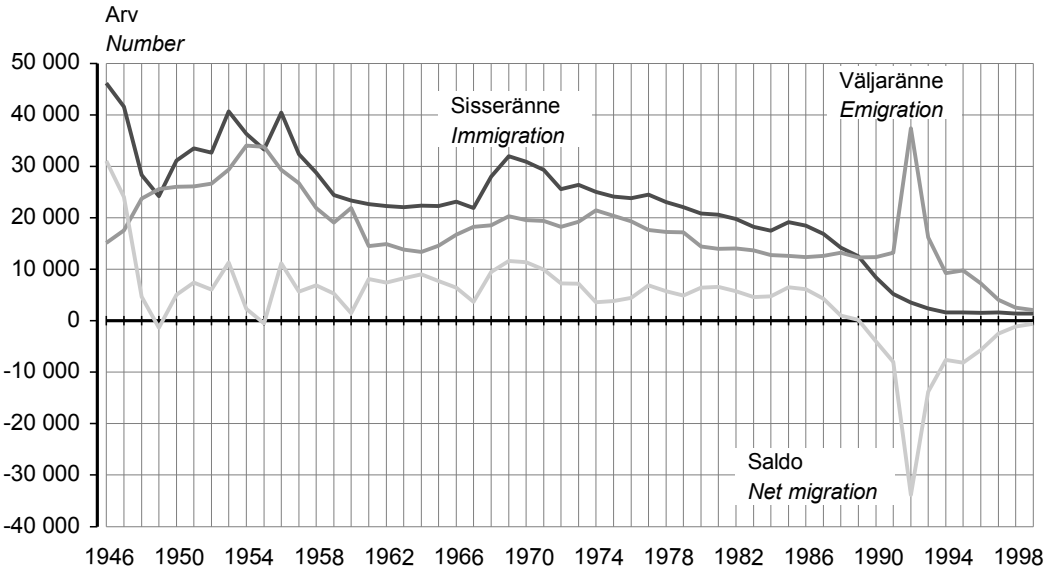

***Figure 1**. Migration in Estonia, 1946–1999 (Tammur, 2008 [a])*

[a] The data for 1946–1955 are only on urban population.

People who had settled in Estonia since 1945 came from a different geographical zone and a different national culture. At this point, an important aspect should be noted. The Russian colonists arriving in Estonia, who were different from Estonians in the ways mentioned above, settled in Estonia, thus forming a rather close community. Russians settled in places with definite spatial concentration rather willingly (i.e., medium-sized and large industrial towns), but not in rural settlements, in order to not assimilate among Estonians, whose culture was more Western and, therefore, significantly different from the colonists' culture, whose language and alphabet also were alien to them (Geistlinger & Kirch, 1995, p. 15). Owing to the weakness in Moscow's political power and the fall of the *iron curtain* at the end of the 1980s, Estonia restored its status as an independent state in 1991.

Triin Vihalemm and Marju Lauristin, social scientists at Tartu University who described Estonia's economic and political efforts to match the criteria of the West and to overcome the legacy of the communist past, have concluded that the criterion for the success of the efforts was Estonia's compatibility with the new emerging Europe. And in this societal process, the "Russian

issue" has been – and still is – the most complicated part of Soviet legacy (Vihalemm & Lauristin, 1997, p. 296).

In the post-communist countries, the construction of democracy inevitably means the use of political instruments for integrating ethnic elements into new systems, making special provisions for ethnic minorities. Since 1988-89, the civic-political-economic dimension – Estonian common political system, the national economy, a common system of social security, etc. – was subordinated to the ethnic cultural dimension. In this process of socio-cultural transformation, one central dilemma facing Estonia's Russians was that their perceived identification with the Soviet state was significantly stronger than their self-definition in term of Russian ethnic culture (Kirch & Kirch, 1995, p. 440).

In Estonia, there has been no violence in the relationships between Estonians and Russians since 1991 as many surveys, like *Freedom House Ratings 1991-2006*, show (Tilly, 2008, p. 47).

Given that Estonia gained EU membership in 2004, joined the European single labour market, and its being in the Schengen treaty space, the assumption of our research was that historical context would hold reduced salience for the two main ethnic groups of Estonia, giving way to perceptions, expressions, and nuances of some more modern, common European identity. Such assumptions are foregrounded by a number of social, economic, and demographic shifts since having joined the EU. Broader context of European Union has created a good base for a new generation of young Russian people compared with former generations (their immigrant parents). Further socialization and integration will depend also on satisfaction with life and solidarity within society, which is going to be determined by developments in economic status of younger generations.

Estonian people are still generally positive concerning the EU's economic future, and believe that the advantageous economic change will be quicker through joining the euro zone. In fact, Estonia's economic crisis has been very real. An excessively high social price has now been paid for the country's stabilisation achievements. The rate of registered unemployment has been growing rapidly, with unemployment reaching 15%.

In contrast to some of the newer EU member states, especially in Central Europe, support in Estonia's population for the EU membership is still significantly high. The last *Eurobarometer* survey (in November 2009) shows that about 62% of Estonians believe the EU membership is "a good thing" (EB 72). Despite positive trends in life satisfaction, a new question arises: Will the young Russian-speaking population living in Estonia turn into a multi-cultural ethnic group with a significant Estonian linguistic and cultural background and/or will the state-determined identity become a significant value for them?

It is evident that Estonia's accession to the EU has brought not only reconciliation with the Western economic system and legal culture, but also the adoption of European values, European political culture, etc. An interesting question is *What is or who is European*? Here, we try to limit our discussion and think about Russians' 'Europeanness'. Throughout the long period of its history, Russia has been commuting between two alternatives: trying to follow the European way of reforms on the one side, and looking for an original and different way of development, on the other (Asian) side. Indeed, a lot of Russian people are probably more European than those who live in states aspiring to become new EU member states. Nevertheless, instead of taking decisions based on people's knowledge of the internet, or traditions of Russian classical music or paintings, one has to look at the traditions of the Russian statehood, rule, and power. Traditions of Russian centralised power, hierarchy, and subordination are vital, and the inappropriateness of European traditions in this society is quite obvious.

European tradition is also to acknowledge the factual history. This is the best basis for respectable relations between partners. Especially for the three Baltic States, the Second World War recalls resentfulness. Russia cannot be a trustful neighbour for Baltic people before it admits the fact of occupation of the Baltic countries in 1940.

The attempt to understand very recent developments, which have had a strong influence on identity developments for both Estonians and Estonian Russians, also gave the authors a good reason to postulate a hypothesis based on the events that took place in Tallinn in April 2007. Just some weeks before Victory Day of the Second World War, the Government of Republic of Estonia moved the historical victory monument (named Bronze Soldier) to the war cemetery. Alongside moving the monument, a polarization occurred in the minds of Estonian and Russian people, which expanded to unexpected hooliganism in the centre of Tallinn. Despite the fact that the main "actors" in the streets were only around 2,000 Russian-speakers aged 15 to 25, rioting for two nights only, these events were enough to warrant the study of stereotypes and attitudes reflecting the historical past and the present, in order find some explanation of the question whether or not the past still dominates the present.

Method of Identity Structure Analysis and the Study Instrument

A comprehensive research method called Identity Structure Analysis (ISA) was considered applicable for the current study. The method of the ISA covers the authors' need for cross-cultural comparison and in-depth analysis providing the use of cross-cultural universals (e.g., standardised parameters like *contra-identification with others*) called *etics*, together with *emic* qualities which reflect indigenous psychologies of local cultures. It is evident that ISA *etic* parameters of identity (i.e., indices) require no translation across languages and cultures. As Weinreich underlines, "…investigators have to be keenly aware of the *emic* qualities of the discourses that are incorporated within the etic parameters." (Weinreich, 2003, p. 79).

We also give definitions of the method and of 'identity' as follows: Identity Structure Analysis (Weinreich, 1980/1986) is an open-ended conceptual framework, which can be used to explore individual or group identities within particular socio-cultural and historical contexts. It is, thus, primarily concerned with the 'individual and societal phenomena' within which issues of identity are implicated. Definition of identity: A person's identity is defined as the totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future (Weinreich, 2003, p. 26).

Our hypothesis in the current study is testing the symbols of World War II as expected core symbols of the identity of both ethnic groups – Estonians and Estonian Russians (using student respondents at International University Audentes). We expect that opposite poles, used for creation of the bipolar construct, probably show the split of the society, i.e., Estonians probably claim the Bronze Soldier monument as symbol of WWII is not a part of their identity, while Russians are likely to admit that this monument forms one of the core symbols of their identity.

In order to investigate the background of the identity-related processes, the authors have used Identity Structure Analysis for several times since 1993 (Tuisk, 1994; Kirch et al., 2001; Kirch, Tuisk, & Talts, 2004; Kirch & Tuisk, 2007). The experience of all earlier studies was taken into account in the planning phase of the study and for the preparation of the study instrument. The fieldwork was carried out at International University Audentes (Tallinn, Estonia). The sample comprised 100 respondents (students of social sciences and business administration), with numbers almost equally distributed between the two criterion groups – Estonians (n = 54) and Estonian Russians (n = 46). 45% of Estonians were female and 55% male, while among Russians the gender distribution was equal. Age distribution varied from 18 to 37, most falling within the age bracket of 18 to 22 years.

The questionnaires were given to each person in their mother tongue. Instructions about how to complete them were also given by a respective native speaker. Students were chosen as a target group in order to access the active part of population, and also in order to access respondents who had grown up during Estonia's period of re-independence. The assumption of the authors was that Estonians and Estonian Russians have had different experiences in this situation. That is, despite a number of shared characteristics (age range, occupation, and rather

similar general fields of study), it was expected that the two sets of respondents would experience their social worlds (and thus construe their identity) from differing perspectives.

This assertion about the influences on Estonian Russians' stereotypes was also confirmed by a representative public opinion survey that was carried out in June 2007 where 1,000 Estonians and 500 Russians were questioned. The object of this study was to investigate interethnic relations and determine the challenges to integration policies after the Bronze Soldier crisis in Estonia. The main finding is shown in the survey results: while 66% of Estonians shared the opinion that moving the monument from the Tallinn centre was the government's only choice and 5% named it totally unfortunate, it was reverse among Russians, where only 5% supported the moving and 56% considered this action as totally unfortunate (University of Tartu, Saar Poll, & Office of Population Minister, 2007, p. 28).The instrument used was specially designed for our ISA-study and consisted of eleven rating sheets, each headed by a bipolar construct (i.e., a pair of opposing values/beliefs). Respondents were asked to construe specific entities against these constructs, on a zero-centred rating scale.

Within the ISA framework, certain entities are mandatory (i.e., current, past and aspirational selves, an admired person, and a disliked person). These form the basis of the individual value-system and form a relation between individual and group identity. At the same time, our instrument included entities reflecting respondent's socio-biographical context (e.g., my parents) and from the wider socio-cultural domain (e.g., the Estonian government, and respective ethnic groups like Estonians, Estonian Russians, and Russians in Russia). The authors expected that Estonian and Russian respondents' evaluation of these entities would help to test the research hypothesis.

The constructs themselves were chosen to reflect essential issues and life in contemporary Estonia. Because of the nature of the study, attention was focused primarily on issues of Estonian language and culture within a globalising world and on the influence of Russia on Estonia. We also "tested" the symbols of World War II in the case of both ethnic groups. Also broader issues such as the threat of globalisation giving the possibility to facilitate one's emigration and 'feels European' were also included for each ethnic group in the study instrument. See the full instrument in the Appendix.

Results

Patterns of Identification

Positive role models: idealistic identification with others. Positive role models are those entities who are perceived as possessing qualities to which individuals aspire, i.e., with whom they idealistically identify. In Figure 2, these entities have been ordered according the value of an index that can vary from 0 to 1. The index value has been considered high when above 0.70 and low when below 0.50.

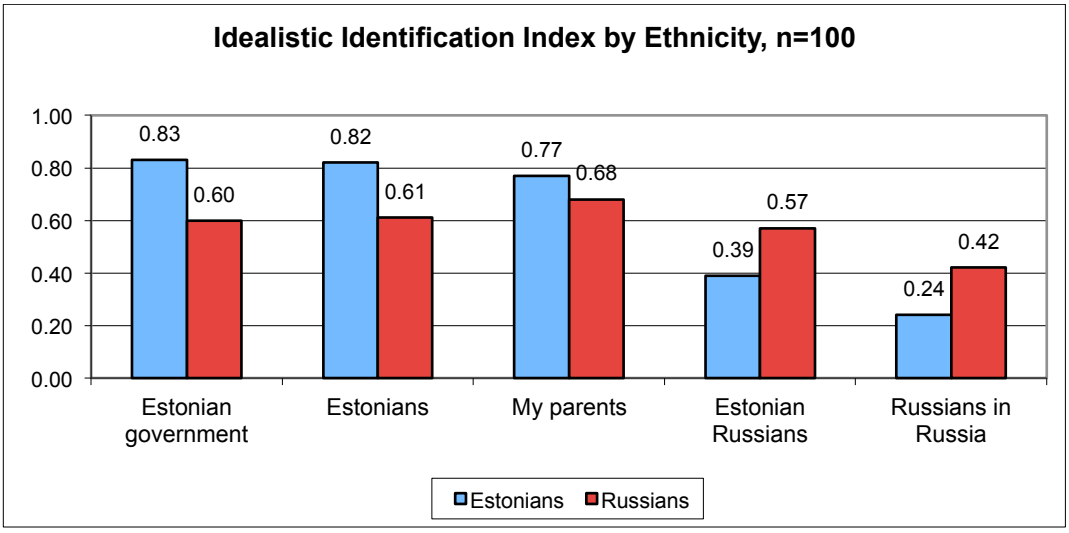

Figure 2. *Idealistic Identification Index by Ethnicity, n=100.*

As expected, Estonians' very high idealistic identification with the government (0.83) and their own ethnic group (0.82) can be easily explained by recent events described in part 3 of this paper. Unexpectedly Estonian Russians also show higher idealistic identification with Estonians (0.61) than with their own "titular" group, called here 'Estonian Russians' (0.57). Despite a slight difference (0.04), these index values still remain moderate. We also have to mention that the highest positive role model for Estonian Russians is 'parents', which can also be explained further as an entity found in the search for the origin of stability in the disorder caused by the events in April 2007. We can conclude here shortly that 'Estonian Russians' as a unit do not form a group to identify with, but Estonians as such or the parents of Russian speakers rather form a more positive role model. This is an example that demonstrates heterogeneity of Estonian Russians. This entity as such seems to be a fuzzy role model for idealistic identification. It seems that we can suppose that even if any kind of common category to "label" Russians in Estonia exists, it is not directly related to their ethnicity. There should be other dominants that bind these people on different bases (e.g., local identity or religion etc.). In the case of Estonians, those very high index levels ('Estonians' and 'Estonian government') express loyalty to the government that managed to handle the situation in April 2007 and to Estonian statehood as such, more than "simple support".

Negative Role Models: Contra-Identification with Others

Contra-identification pertains to negative role-models, i.e., entities from whose (perceived) attributes the respondent wishes to dissociate (Weinreich, 1980/1986). The contra-identification index values are considered high when above 0.45 and low when below 0.25. Figure 3 shows that 'Russians in Russia' form the group both Estonians and Estonian Russians contra-identify the most, and we notice that here the Estonians' index value is very high, while the Russians' value (0.44) almost reaches a high level. The second position with which to contra-identify is for both groups 'Estonian Russians' (the values are 0.59 and 0.38 respectively).

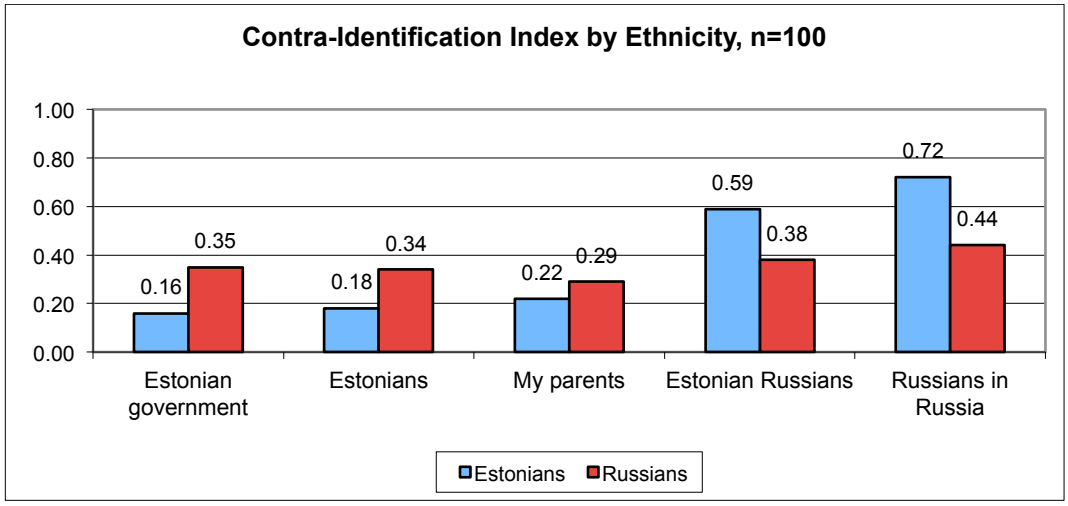

Figure 3. *Contra-Identification Index by Ethnicity, n=100.*

Empathetic Identification

In order to investigate current perceptions of the surrounding environment more precisely, the authors also used "the empathetic mode of identification, which refers to self's sense of an identity existing between self and the other in actuality – of having characteristics in common irrespective of whether these might be for emulation or dissociation". The extent of one's current empathetic identification with another is defined as the degree of similarity between the qualities one attributes to the other, whether 'good' or 'bad', and those of one's current self-image (Weinreich, 2003, p. 60). The ISA considers the index value high when above 0.70 and low when below 0.50. From Figure 4 we can see that Estonians have very high empathetic identification with the government, 'Estonians' and parents, while Russians reach the higher level only in their identification with their parents.

But also 'Estonian Russians' plays a rather significant role for them, attaining a value of 0.66.

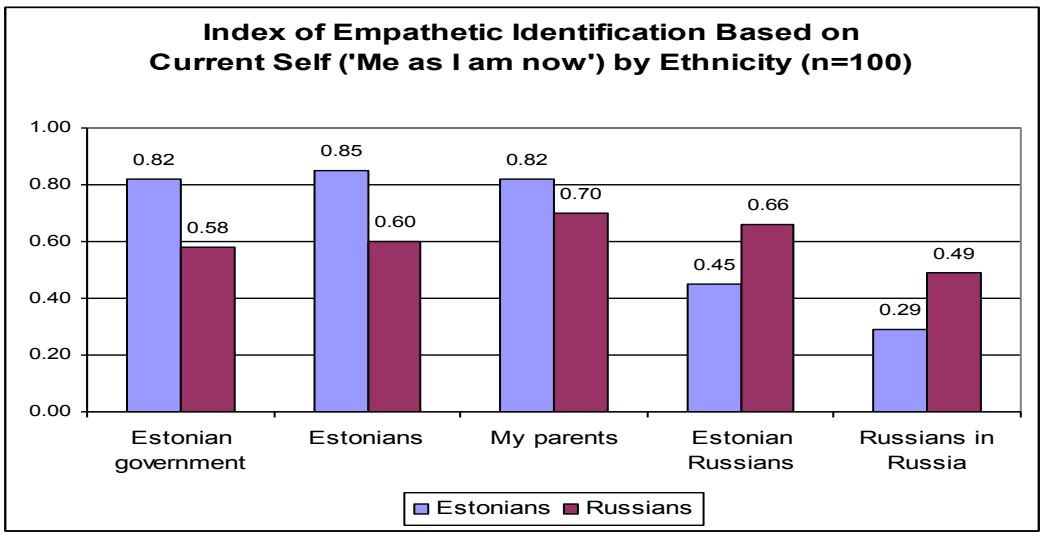

Figure 4. *Index of Empathetic Identification Based on Current Self ("Me as I am Now") bu Ethnicity (n=100).*

Conflicted Identification

If one empathetically identifies with another person, while simultaneously contra-identifying with them, one's identification with the person in question is conflicted. From Figure 5 we notice that the highest identification conflict among both groups is with 'Estonian Russians'. As the index value here is considered to be high when between 0.35 and 0.50, we see that 0.47 and 0.46 match this level. Overall, conflicted identification with 'Estonian Russians' becomes rather clear as expected 'carriers' of this identity (i.e., Russian respondents) obviously share and accept "their own group's" values while at the same time contra-identifying with these same values as well.

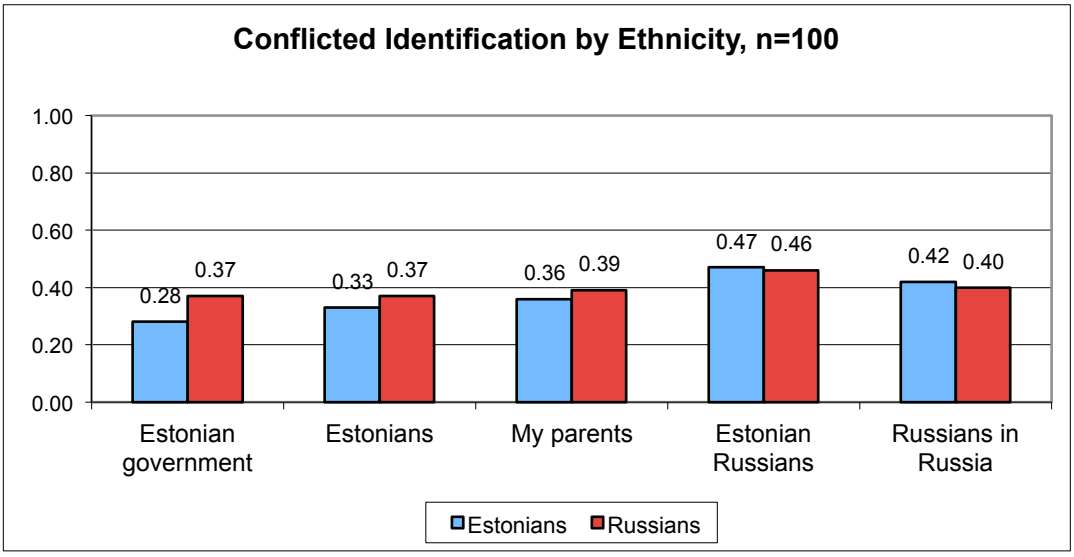

Figure 5. *Conflicted Identification by Ethnicity, n=100.*

What we can conclude at this point is that 'Estonian Russians' is a category which has conflicted identification values common for both Estonian- and Russian-speaking respondents, and both groups want to dissociate strongly from this entity as well.

Identity Variants

In order to understand the matters behind the conflicted identity levels, the ISA uses identity diffusion as a characteristic. Identity diffusion is considered to be the dispersion of conflicted identifications with others, where the greater the magnitude of identification conflicts and the more extensive their dispersion across others, the more severe is the diffusion (Weinreich, 2003, p. 64). When we combine self-evaluation with identity diffusion, nine identity variants result. The combinations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The Identity Variant Classification

	Identity diffusion		
Self-evaluation	**High (diffused variants)**	**Moderate**	**Low (foreclosed variants)**
High	Diffuse high self-regard	Confident	Defensive high self-regard
Moderate	Diffusion	Indeterminate	Defensive
Low	Crisis	Negative	Defensive negative

In Table 2, the results of a study of the distribution of these identity variants are shown. We first focus on 'defensive high self-regard' that is common for about 1/5 of Estonian respondents.

Table 2

Distribution of Identity Variants (Estonians n = 54, Russians n = 46)

Identity variant	Estonians	Russians
Diffuse high self-regard	2	5
Diffusion	8	17
Crisis	3	4
Confident	13	5
Indeterminate	14	8
Negative	1	-
Defensive high self-regard	11	2
Defensive	2	5
Defensive negative	-	-

This group has high self-evaluation and low identity diffusion. This type of identity variant has been considered as a foreclosed variant, which means that instead of moderate conflicts which are considered optimal, the low level of identity-conflicts together with high self-esteem shows strong defensiveness against possible "attacks". Some Estonian researchers also warn about the presence of such a trend among Estonians and envision this phenomenon as a possible threat to the integration of the society. Based on our research, we notice that although a category involving such a contingent exists, it is decently low. Besides 'defensive high self-regard' discussed here, we see that in fact variants such as 'confident' and 'indeterminate' dominate among Estonian respondents.

In the case of Russians, it is noticeable that more than one third of the respondents belong to a variant called 'diffusion'. When we sum up all of those Russian respondents who have high identity diffusion, we notice this number (26) exceeds even 56% of respondents, while for Estonians it reaches just 24% (13 respondents out of 54). The high identity diffusion (weighted index value = 0.39) of all Russians indicates an overall strong identity conflict that is even more explanatory regarding the identity processes than separate conflicted identification values presented by Figure 4.

Structural Pressure

Structural pressure refers to the consistency with which a particular construct is used in the appraisal of self and others. This consistency derives from the compatibility of the construct's evaluative connotations with one's overall evaluation of the identities to which it is attributed.

Table 3 shows the construct marking the Bronze Soldier monument's role in one's evaluation as having the strongest structural pressure among Estonian respondents (84.97***) and is ranked as the second in the case of Russians (55.62*). As expected, opposite poles of the construct apply here – Estonians claim the Bronze Soldier monument as a symbol of WWII is not a part of their identity, while Russians agree that it forms one of the core symbols of their identity.

The second and third strongest structural pressures measured for Estonians underline the Soviet Union's occupier role in WWII (82.19***) followed by Russia's aggressive policies towards its neighbours (71.01***). The latter reflects, in a way, a still existing fear of WWII's historical outcomes concerning Estonia and their reoccurrence.

Table 3

Core constructs of Estonian and Russian Respondents

Estonians			Russians		
No	**Construct**	**SP**	**No**	**Construct**	**SP**
11	Bronze Soldier is not related to my identity	84.97***	7	Media and internet of Russia influence Russians in Estonia	57.06*
9	Soviet Union was the occupier of Eastern Europe in WWII	82.19***	11	Bronze Soldier is one of the symbols of my identity	55.62*
4	Russia's policies towards its neighbours are aggressive	71.01***	5	It is easy to melt into Estonian society by knowing the language	49.45
5	It is easy to melt into Estonian society by knowing the language	67.50**	6	Estonian government is responsible for hard economic situation of the population	48.70
7	Media and internet of Russia influence Russians in Estonia	67.00**	3	Estonian Russians have more in common with Estonia, their country of residence	48.62
8	Estonian language and culture have history, traditions and future	65.62**	8	Estonian language and culture have history, traditions and future	48.08
10	Intends to bind future definitely with Estonia	57.79*			
2	Estonia has expectancy for fast economic development as its economy is flexible and innovative	54.32*			

Note: Structural pressure (SP) is scaled from –100 to 100. 'Core' evaluative dimensions are ***70-79; **60-69; *50-59. In the table above SP > 48.00 has also been shown to illustrate the trend and facilitate better description of structural pressure among both groups although all levels below 50 are considered as moderate and do not form the 'core'.

We have to notice that for Russians, the strongest structural pressure is given by their acknowledgement of the role that Russia's media plays on themselves (57.06*). Unexpectedly, Russian respondents have also positively ranked the construct about the key role of the Estonian language in integrating into society (49.45), and this construct is even ranked third. We think that here we can see some positive outcome of the government's continuous efforts in emphasising the importance of the language as a prerequisite and tool for successful integration

of all different ethnic groups into Estonian society. This third ranking also helps disprove an attitude that is expressed rather often (by some sceptics) that the command of the Estonian language has no use and does not grant smooth acceptance of a foreigner by Estonians. The fourth position among Russian respondents is held by a construct that claims that the government is responsible for the hard economic situation (48.70). In the light of the events of April 2007, on the one hand, we can see that the government has been made responsible for "everything", but on the other hand, we have to take into account that this can express respondents' nostalgia about Soviet-time governments that indeed had to grant jobs and accommodation together with healthcare to every single working person.

Both Estonians and Russians show their trust that the Estonian language and culture have traditions and a future by positioning this construct at the same level (as the sixth). When we compare the values, we see that the Estonians' index (65.62**) has a higher value than the Russians' (48.08). This occurred as expected.

Despite interesting findings expressed by the index values of idealistic and contra-identification and of structural pressure, we can see from Table 3 that Russians' 'core' evaluative constructs have not been as strongly formed as those of Estonian respondents. This leads us to a new search for the factors really having influence.

On the basis of the researches of Korastelina in the Crimea (South Ukraine) (see Korostelina, 2007, p. 52), we can argue that Soviet identity (in form of Soviet-centred identification with historical symbols) of Estonian Russians still occupies a leading place as a core identity not only among middle-aged and elderly people but among students, too. According to Korostelina "core identities can remain, however, even in the situation of the destruction and disappearance of their respective social groups: identity-related processes continue to be organized in the same way that they had been within the whole system in the past. Consider, for example, the Soviet identity in the population of the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. In spite of the disappearance of the common "Soviet people", Soviet identity still occupies a leading place as a core identity among middle-aged and elderly people" (Korostelina, 2007, p. 52).

Discussion

There are many varieties of what people may think as being European. Can we say today that due to Estonia's EU membership, the European dimension is now forming a part of Estonians' self-perception more than six or seven years ago? According to a survey conducted by Estonian media researchers (Lauristin & Vihalemm, 2009), we can conclude that the Estonian society has reached the stage where increasing international communication as well as economic and cultural ties have initiated a small but relevant shift towards the creation of a new *"borderless"* identity. European enlargement has influenced the self-definition of Estonian people and has provided the opportunity to redefine *"Europeanness"* from the viewpoint of new European identity components incorporated into Estonian identity.

As Piret Ehin from Tartu University said, in Estonia, there is a clearly evident ethnic gap in public attitudes towards the state and its institutions. Despite the progress that has been achieved in naturalization, almost half of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia (many of whom are Estonian citizens) do not consider themselves to be part of the Estonian nation in the constitutional meaning of the term. The results of a survey study, which was carried out in spring 2008, show that the crisis of trust accompanying the "bronze events" turned out to be deeper and longer lasting than expected (Ehin, 2009, p. 94).

Findings of the analysis suggest that the April 2007 events on the streets of Tallinn appear to be strongly related to the role of the Soviet Union in WWII. Its construction as 'occupier' of Eastern Europe (as opposed to 'liberator') forms a 'core evaluative dimension of identity' for the Estonians, although the Bronze Soldier has no symbolic salience or relation to the Estonian identity. For Russians, the monument is continuously one of the core symbols of their identity.

Also, we have to admit that the April 2007 events in Tallinn have created a still existing strong base for conflicted identifications among Estonian Russian youth. Without strong belief in the unity of their "titular" group as such, their identification first turns towards their parents and is followed by 'Estonians'. The values of structural pressure show that besides Estonians even Russians have optimism about the continuity of the Estonian language and culture within a globalising world. Estonians and Russians both share a strong understanding of the key role of Estonian language for integrating into society.

It is evident that Estonians have mobilised themselves, and the 2007 events have even facilitated this new unity together with optimistic beliefs about the future because they are now a member of the EU and the NATO. However, Russian media, Russia's perceived hostility towards its neighbours, and the history of World War II still remain in their minds, preventing them from forgetting the past. In general, for Russians it is clear that their integration mechanism is going to occur via the Estonian language and culture; our research indicates that convergence in values with Estonians take place. At the same time, however, significant symbols such as the Bronze Soldier still have their role in Russians' memories and attitudes, causing conflicted identification leading to high identity diffusion that restricts smooth integration into Estonian society.

The role of Russia's media and internet cannot be underestimated in the case of Estonian Russians (as this forms their strongest 'core' evaluative dimension). We see that the adaptation of Estonian Russians to Estonian society is influenced by an ideology pushed from Russia's information channels. Unfortunately, interpretation of the Soviet Union's history (including Estonia's) in certain aspects remains unchanged. This is also why there are young Russians who still have a one-sided cliché in their minds, for instance about World War II.

Today, integration is a continuous process for the first and second generations of Russians in Estonia, in which they gradually become closer to Estonian society, while simultaneously losing their original cultural heritage (Russia as homeland – heritage). The results of our study show that two approaches exist simultaneously among Russian respondents: Estonia-centred and post-Soviet-centred approaches. This study reinforced our view that the integration process has become more complicated than it had been expected in Estonia about 20 years ago.

Estonian researchers (P. Ehin, M. Lauristin) are right in the perspective view that the somewhat greater support for political institutions and greater identification with the Estonian people among young Russian-speakers offer some hope that ethnic differences in political attitudes may decrease over time. However, the current gap between the political assessments of the ethnic majority and the minorities is so large that we cannot rely on the slow process of a generational change to reduce it (Ehin, 2009, p. 94).

All Estonians have experienced life in the European Union for six years by now and this has deepened both Estonians' and Russians' emotional credit towards the EU. Estonian people are still generally positive concerning the EU's economic future, and believe that the advantageous economic change will be quicker through joining the euro zone.

However, the answers that were gathered with this ISA-study showed that most of the respondents' life experience has created a positive attitude concerning integration issues, as they have got preconditions (e.g., belief in the role of the Estonian language as an integrator) for moving towards Estonia-centred dominants within their identity structure.

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Appendix

Feels European	<1>	Does not/do not feel European at all
Me as I am now	- - - - 0 - - - -	
Estonians	- - - - 0 - - - -	
Government of Estonian Republic	- - - - 0 - - - -	
Me as I was 4 years ago	- - - - 0 - - - -	
Russians in Estonia	- - - - 0 - - - -	
Person whom I admire highly	- - - - 0 - - - -	
Person whom I don't like at all	- - - - 0 - - - -	
My parents, e.g., someone of the generation of my father and my mother	- - - - 0 - - - -	
Russians in Russia	- - - - 0 - - - -	
Me as I would like to be	- - - - 0 - - - -	

Estonia has the likelihood of fast economic development as its economy is flexible and innovative	<2>	Estonia hasn't any likelihood of fast development as the country is small and resources are low
Russians living in Estonia have more in common with Estonia as of their country of residence	<3>	Estonian Russians feel more in common with Russia as with the country of their origin
Russia's policies towards its neighbouring countries are aggressive	<4>	Russia's policies towards its neighbouring countries are amicable
It is easy to melt into Estonian society by knowing the Estonian language	<5>	It is hard to melt into Estonian society even when one has full command of the Estonian language
The Estonian government is responsible for the difficult economic situation of the population	<6>	First of all everyone has to manage himself/herself
Russian media and internet influence attitudes of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia in a great degree	<7>	Russian media and internet do not influence the attitudes of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia
Estonian language and culture have history, traditions and a future	<8>	Estonian culture and language are destined to vanish in a globalising world
The Soviet Union was the	<9>	The Soviet Union was the occupier

liberator of Eastern Europe in WWII		of Eastern Europe in WWII
Intends/intend to bind his/her future definitely with Estonia – to live and work here	<10>	Want/wants to live and work in some other country of the European Union or in the USA
The Bronze Soldier is one of the symbols of (my) identity	<11>	The Bronze Soldier has no relation to my identity