PARTY SYSTEM NATIONALIZATION IN ESTONIA, 2005—2019

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This article explores the Estonian 'integration' project, which was launched in the early 1990s to bridge the differences between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians by assimilating the latter with the former. Since the project will soon turn thirty, it is timely to ask whether it has been a success. This article employs Grigorii Golosov's index of political party nationalization to understand whether the 'integration' project has helped to narrow the ideological divide between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians. In other words, the study asks whether ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians vote for the same political parties in comparable proportions or there are 'Estonian' and 'Russian' parties in the country. The analysis of the outcomes of four local and four parliamentary elections that took place in Estonia in 2005—2019 shows that by the mid-2000s Estonia achieved a considerable level of political party system nationalization at both national and local levels. At the national level, political party system nationalization remained high in 2007—2019 despite significant changes in the country's political party system. At the local level, however, political party system nationalization has been diminishing since 2013, leading one to conclude that the Estonian 'integration' project has failed to close the ideological divide between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians.

Keywords:
comparative politics, political parties, party systems, nationalization, Estonia

A quarter of Estonia's population are ethnic Russians, which allows concluding that Estonia is a plural society, i. e. a society with deep religious, linguistic, cultural, ethnic and ideological cleavages [18]. Lijphart's 'consociational democracy' as well as a number of other models, including multiculturalism, suggests paths towards democratization in plural societies that include activities aimed at managing religious, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and ideological divides. Since its independence in 1991, Estonia has chosen the path towards democratization, which included activities aimed not at managing inner divides, but at eliminating them. Estonia's elite named the chosen path "integration". The use of the term "integration" in this context is problematic due to common belief that integration is a process of bringing different elements to a whole, the properties of

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which are different from the properties of each of the elements. To the contrary, the Estonian policy of so-called integration aims at the emergence of a whole, the properties of which would be exactly those as the properties of one segment of the Estonian society, namely ethnic Estonians.

Estonia is not unique in pursuing a policy of so-called integration aiming at eliminating differences between the dominant segment of the population and all other segments. According to Jansen [12, p. 89], "in the 1970s and 1980s, most liberal countries gradually adopted integration, because of the colonial and nationalist connotations of assimilation". In 1990s, many post-Communist countries in Europe followed the path. In Estonia, in particular, representatives of the Russophonic minority faced the choice between "integration" and segregation. In response, some of them "returned" to Russia, many more moved into other countries of the European Union, many preferred self-segregation in predominantly Russophonic enclaves, such as Narva and some other towns of North-Eastern Estonia and even some parts of Tallinn, the capital city of Estonia. Finally, many chose the path of integration, and it took more than a decade for many of the latter to realize the threat of falling into a mimicry trap described by Bhabha [3]: the deeply they "integrated", the more often ethnic Estonians thought that they only "mimicked" integration in order to avoid segregation or for other purposes, including serving the interests of Russia aimed at undermining Estonian statehood.

In 1990s, the identity of the Russophonic minority in Estonia was formed in the framework of relationship of the Estonian "ethnocratic" [39] regime pursuing the so-called integration, Russia, the "ethnic patron" state, and the West, mostly represented by international organizations such as the OSCE [28]. Even when the West sided with the Estonian government in 2000s, it did not help the policy of the so-called integration to succeed in the elimination of ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural divides between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians. Today, almost thirty years past 1991, Estonia remains a deeply divided polity, comparable to similarly divided polities ranging from Northern Ireland in Europe to Fiji in the Pacific [4]. However, there is no debate in the Estonian society on alternatives to the so-called integration model of inter-ethnic co-existence in the country, there are no policies aimed at facilitating active inter-ethnic dialogue between ethnic Estonian majority and predominantly ethnic Russian minority [36].

Ideological divide in the Estonian society seems the easiest to eliminate. In practical terms, ideological integration can be suggested successful in Estonia, when voting behaviour of ethnic Estonians does not differ significantly from voting behaviour of the country's Russophones eligible to vote. Specific features of voting of Russophones of Estonia are understudied. Estonian scholars tend to notice them, when they participate in popular unrest, but not when they go to polls a month before [30]. Russian scholars have not paid much attention to ethnic voting [6], not of Russophones in Estonia in particular, neither in general, not even in Russia itself. Studies have been made on ethnic voting in Russia [38], but not by Russian scholars. Research conducted outside of Russia or Estonia

tends to study voting behaviour of Russophones in Estonia as a part of comparative studies within a wider framework, sometimes within the framework of Central and Eastern Europe [5, 37], and sometimes involving countries beyond the region [20].

This article seeks to answer whether the Estonian society as a whole, including both its ethnic Estonian and ethnic Russian segments, have been eliminating the ideological divide throughout the past fifteen years, or whether it has been moving in the opposite direction. To do so, this article employs Golosov's index of party nationalization in order to understand, whether people in different parts of Estonia, those inhibited predominantly by ethnic Estonians, like the Pärnu county, those inhibited predominantly by ethnic Russians, like the town of Narva, and those inhibited almost equally by representatives of the two segments of the Estonian society, like the capital city of Tallinn, tend to vote for the same or for different political parties. Below we will demonstrate that Estonia had reached a significant level of nationalization of its political party system by 2000s, but the situation started deteriorating in the 2010s. The article will also offer explanations of the tendency.

Index of Party System Nationalization as a Measurement of Political Integration in Estonia

Multiple tools have been developed in order to assess the relationship between a minority and the society and the state, in which the minority lives. An example is the Index of Identity Group Institutionalization [22]. This article attempts to measure success of political integration in Estonia by using Golosov's index of party nationalization [8, 9, 31]. Though the index emerged as a means to measure nationalization (or lack of it) of party systems in federations, this article seeks to demonstrate that the index is also helpful in studies of party systems in unitary states, where representatives of ethnic minorities are geographically concentrated in particular regions.

In the case of Estonia, most ethnic Russians live in the capital city of Tallinn and in north-eastern Ida-Viru county, including the country's third biggest town of Narva, which is located on the border with Russia, while voters in the country's second and fourth biggest towns Tartu and Pärnu, as well as in surrounding Tartu and Pärnu counties are mostly ethnic Estonians. The index of party nationalization will help to measure, In general, index to which extent voters in all above-mentioned parts of Estonia tend to vote for the same parties, and to which extent regional preferences play a role at elections.

In general, the index of party nationalization is computed as follows:

$$\mathrm{IPN} = 1 - \frac{n - {(\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i)^2}/{\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i^2}}{n-1},$$

where *IPN* is the index of party nationalization, p_i is the share of votes gained by a particular party at elections in each of the constituencies in the focus of the study, while *n* is the total number of constituencies in focus.

Below, I will analyse the results of four national and four local elections that took place in Estonia in 2005—2019 with a focus on nationalization of the country's party system. For example, during local elections, which took place in Estonia in October 2005, the country was the first in the world to introduce countrywide binding Internet voting [19]. Probably the most remarkable outcome of the 2005 local elections was the rapid decline in popularity of Res Publica Party. It succeeded at 2003 parliamentary elections as an 'anti-establishment reform party' [10], but it started losing popularity immediately after [32]. It came only fifth at 2005 local elections according to the number of votes gained by its candidates in over 200 urban and rural municipalities that Estonia was divided into in those times. Unlike in Latvia, which only abandoned local elections on county level after 1997, Estonia has not held local elections on county level since independence in 1991 [35].

Table 1 below, which demonstrates the results of the 2005 local elections in Estonia for the towns of Tallinn, Narva, Tartu and Pärnu, as well as indices of party nationalization for four political parties most popular in the four towns altogether, namely Centre Party, Reform Party, Pro Patria Union and Social Democratic Party, does not contain results for Res Publica Party. One should note the differences between voting in urban and rural areas of Estonia that existed in those times: for example, although the Social Democratic Party collected more votes than the People's Union (previously known as the Agrarian Union) in the four biggest towns in 2005, the People's Union came fourth according to the number of votes countrywide, thanks to its popularity in rural areas.

Table 1

Index of party natio— nalization at 2005 local elections in Estonia

	Tallinn	Narva	Tartu	Pärnu	IPN
Kesk	41,1	59,4	15,7	24,0	0,75
Reform	20,7	6,4	34,9	20,2	0,74
Isamaa	12,2	1,3	19,0	13,6	0,68
SDE	11,1	2,1	13,8	8,4	0,74

Source: Estonian National Electoral Committee and the State Electoral Office, valimised.ee; author's calculation. Legend: Kesk — Centre Party, Reform — Reform Party, Isamaa — Pro Patria, SDE — Social Democratic Party.

As a result of 2005 local elections, the Centre Party came first according to the number of votes collected in Tallinn, Narva and Pärnu, and came only third in Tartu. In accordance with the formula presented above, the index of party nationalization for Centre Party for the four constituencies is computed as follows:

$$IPN_{kesk} = 1 - \frac{4 - {(41,1+59,4+15,7+24,0)^2}/{(41,1^2+59,4^2+15,7^2+24,0^2)}}{4-1} = 0,75.$$

The index of party nationalization can be computed calculated by means of dividing for the other three political parties; corresponding indices are presented in the last column of Table 1. Index of party nationalization varies from 0 to 1. The index equal to 0 demonstrates that all voters in one part of the country vote for "their" political parties, while all voters in other parts of the country vote for other political parties. In the case of Estonia, where most residents of the city of Narva vote for Centre Party, index of party nationalization equal to 0 would mean that all voters in Narva supported Centre Party, but nobody supported Centre Party in Tallinn, Narva or Pärnu. The index equal to 1 demonstrates that Centre Party enjoyed equal support in all four major cities during the 2005 local elections. At 2005 local elections Pro Patria Party demonstrated the lowest index of party nationalization due to weak performance in Narva and second best result in Tartu; the average index of party nationalization for the four parties was 0,72.

Below, this article will analyse results of local elections of 2009, 2013 and 2017 in the same manner as in the case of 2005 local elections studied above. In the cases of parliamentary elections of 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019, this article will analyse elections results in the capital city of Tallinn, Estonia's second biggest town of Tartu, and the Pärnu and Ida-Viru counties. Half of all Estonia's voters eligible to vote at parliamentary elections live in those four constituencies. At parliamentary elections the capital city of Tallinn consists of three electoral districts (altogether, Estonia consists of 12 electoral districts); each party's support in Tallinn is calculated by dividing the total number of votes given for the party in three electoral districts of Tallinn to the total number of valid ballots cast in the same three electoral districts.

Evolution of Estonia's Political Party System in 2005—2019

The period of 2005—2007 was crucial for the formation of Estonia's political party system. Estonia's political party system demonstrated greater stability than most Central and East European EU member states already in 2006 [17]. Res Publica and Pro Patria parties merged thus forming the Pro Patria and Res Publica Union, which had remained among four most popular political parties until 2019 elections, together with Centre Party, Reform Party and Social Democratic Party. The People's Union lost its popularity together with urbanization of Estonia and emigration from the country to European Union countries with higher living standards. The party gained only 6 seats in the parliament as a result of 2007 elections compared to 13 in 2003 [25]. Table 2 presents indices of party nationalization at 2007 parliamentary elections for the four parties in the four constituencies.

Table 2

Index of party nationalization at 2007 parliamentary elections in Estonia

	Tallinn	Ida-Viru	Tartu	Pärnumaa	IPN
Kesk	32,7	53,7	16,1	22,1	0,77
Reform	25,6	15,3	34,3	27,5	0,91
IRL	19,4	8,6	21,5	19,6	0,89
SDE	8,9	4,2	13,4	10,7	0,85

Source: Estonian National Electoral Committee and the State Electoral Office, valimised.ee; author's calculation. Legend — same as in table 1, except that IRL stands for Pro Patria and Res Publica Union, the product of the merger of Pro Patria Union and Res Publica Party on the threshold of 2007 elections.

By 2007, the four parties in the focus of this article became also the four most popular parties countrywide; some Estonian experts even expressed concerns about potential cartelization of the country's political party system [33]. As a result of 2007 elections, Centre Party won Tallinn and the Ida-Viru county, where most Russophonic voters live, but Reform Party won Tartu and Pärnu counties as well as countrywide [30], thus paving the road to an almost ten-year-long period of Reform Party's domination in Estonia's politics on the national level. The results of 2009 local elections in Estonia were similar to those of 2005 elections. Likewise in 2005, in 2009 the Centre Party won the towns of Tallinn, Narva and Pärnu (the Reform Party won the town of Tartu) by mostly taking votes away from the Reform Party, whose performance in Centre Party-dominated towns was very similar to that of the Pro Patria and Res Publica Union. Table 3 presents indices of party nationalization at 2009 local elections for the four Estonian parties for the four constituencies.

Table 3

Index of party nationalization at 2009 local elections in Estonia

	Tallinn	Narva	Tartu	Pärnu	IPN
Kesk	53,5	76,6	17,4	21,8	0,67
Reform	16,6	7,7	30,8	14,1	0,74
IRL	15,4	5,9	23,5	12,4	0,78
SDE	9,8	4,8	15,9	6,6	0,77

Source: Estonian National Electoral Committee and the State Electoral Office, valimised.ee; author's calculation. Legend — same as in Table 2.

After having won the 2007 parliamentary elections, Andrus Ansip, then leader of the Reform Party, decided to move the WWII monument from downtown Tallinn to a military cemetery in the suburbs, thus provoking mass protests of ethnic Russians in Tallinn that became commonly known as the "Bronze Night" [16].

However, the growing division between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians after the "Bronze Night" did not result in a drop of average index of party nationalization at 2011 parliamentary elections compared to 2007 parliamentary elections. The performance of the two major rival parties, the Centre Party and the Reform Party, did not change significantly in the four constituencies, while the Social Democratic Party improved its performance at the expense of the Pro Patria and Res Publica Union, thus levelling the number of votes gained by the two latter parties nation-wide. Table 4 presents indices of party nationalization at 2011 parliamentary elections for the four Estonian parties for the four constituencies.

Table 4

Index of party nationalization at 2011 parliamentary elections in Estonia

	Tallinn	Ida-Viru	Tartu	Pärnumaa	IPN
Kesk	32,6	54,5	15,5	17,4	0,72
Reform	25,9	12,5	34,4	28,5	0,88
IRL	19,5	10,7	24,3	21,9	0,91
SDE	13,3	12,4	18,7	12,5	0,96

Source: Estonian National Electoral Committee and the State Electoral Office, valimised.ee; author's calculation. Legend — same as in Table 2.

At 2009 local elections three-quarters of voters in Estonia's third-biggest town of Narva, where the overwhelming majority of the population are ethnic Russians, supported the Centre Party. At 2013 local elections other parties united in an attempt to challenge the dominance of Centre party in Narva. Social Democrats, whose Narva activist Jevgeni Ossinovski gained extreme popularity among voters that year, led the attempt. Popular activists of other parties, for example, Katri Raik, an activist with the Pro Patria and Res Publica Union, and then Director of the Narva College, the main higher education provider in Narva, ran on Social Democratic list [2]. The Reform Party did not propose its list of candidates in Narva at all. As a result, Social Democrats gained more than one-third of votes in Narva, but scores for the index of party nationalization declined for all parties participating in the compact, but mostly for Social Democrats and the Reform Party. Table 5 presents indices of party nationalization at 2013 local elections for the four Estonian parties for the four constituencies.

Table 5

Index of party nationalization at 2013 local elections in Estonia

	Tallinn	Narva	Tartu	Pärnu	IPN
Kesk	52,7	60,1	18,4	26,1	0,78
Reform	10,6	0,0	28,2	15,1	0,52
IRL	19,2	2,9	21,1	17,0	0,75
SDE	9,9	35,8	15,8	6,6	0,59

Source: Estonian National Electoral Committee and the State Electoral Office, valimised.ee; author's calculation. Legend — same as in Table 2.

The start of EU-Russia conflict over Ukraine could not help influencing electoral campaign in Estonia prior to 2015 parliamentary elections. While most ethnic Estonians sided with the EU in the conflict, most ethnic Russians, especially in Narva, sided with Russia. To play with the feelings of his ethnic Russian voters, then leader of the Centre Party Edgar Savisaar publicly supported the March 16, 2014 referendum in the Crimea [7]. In turn, Taavi Rõivas, the leader of the then ruling Reform party, attempted to refocus the attention of voters away from the economic difficulties that the country was facing by presenting himself as a defender of the nation facing hypothetical aggression from the East.

As a result, outcomes of 2015 parliamentary elections did not differ significantly compared to 2011 election, except for the drop in popular support to Pro Patria and Res Publica Union, whose voters preferred to support newly established far-right Estonian Conservative People's Party and Free Party [15]. Index of party nationalization did not change significantly for any of the four parties in focus. The Estonian Conservative People's Party demonstrated low score for the index of party nationalization due to low support to the party not only in predominantly Russophonic Tallinn and Ida-Viru County, but also in Tartu, which is the home for Estonia's biggest higher education provider, the Tartu University. Table 6 presents indices of party nationalization at 2015 parliamentary elections for the four Estonian parties for the four constituencies.

Table 6

Index of party nationalization at 2015 parliamentary elections in Estonia

	Tallinn	Ida-Viru	Tartu	Pärnumaa	IPN
Kesk	33,6	59,0	15,1	19,1	0,70
Reform	25,7	11,9	33,4	28,9	0,88
IRL	11,5	8,2	14,4	13,5	0,95
SDE	12,7	11,3	16,8	11,8	0,97
EKRE	6,2	3,1	6,9	18,2	0,59

Source: Estonian National Electoral Committee and the State Electoral Office, valimised.ee; author's calculation. Legend — same as in Table 2, except that EKRE stands for Estonian Conservative People's Party.

At 2017 local elections Social Democrats, Reform party and Pro Patria and Res Publica Union continued their effort to challenge the dominance of the Centre Party in Narva. This time, Social Democrats did not propose a list of candidates under its name, but most Narva Social Democratic activists and their allies from the two other parties ran under "Our Narva" non-party list of candidates [21], which gained support of 23,3% of the city's voters. That attempt was even less successful than at 2013 local elections, because in 2017 the Centre Party enjoyed support of three-thirds of voters in Narva, compared to 60% in 2013. Index of

party nationalization for the three parties attempting to challenge the dominance of the Centre Party in Narva at 2017 local elections dropped even compared to 2013 scores. The Estonian Conservative People's Party also demonstrated low score for the index of party nationalization due to lack of support to the party in Tallinn and Narva. Table 7 presents indices of party nationalization at 2017 local elections for the five Estonian parties for the four constituencies.

Table 7

Index of party nationalization at 2017 local elections in Estonia

	Tallinn	Narva	Tartu	Pärnu	IPN
Kesk	44,0	66,8	13,7	19,1	0,66
Reform	20,3	1,3	37,4	22,8	0,62
IRL	6,6	1,0	7,4	18,9	0,51
SDE	11,0	0,0	16,6	5,4	0,52
EKRE	7,0	0,0	11,2	15,4	0,58

Source: Estonian National Electoral Committee and the State Electoral Office, valimised.ee; author's calculation. Legend — same as in Table 6.

The 2019 parliamentary elections in Estonia witnessed "demobilization" [34] of low-income citizens and ethnic Russian citizens, the two largely overlapping segments of the Estonian society. That helped the Reform Party and the Estonian Conservative People's Party to significantly improve their performance compared to 2015 elections. To the contrary, electoral outcomes for the Centre Party and the Social Democratic Party were moderate compared to 2015 elections. The political party previously known as the Pro Patria and Res Publica Union was this time running under the name of Pro Patria Party; the return to the pre-2007 name did not influence the electoral performance of the party significantly. Table 8 presents indices of party nationalization at 2019 parliamentary elections for the five Estonian parties for the four constituencies.

Table 8

Index of party nationalization at 2019 parliamentary elections in Estonia

	Tallinn	Ida-Viru	Tartu	Pärnumaa	IPN
Kesk	31,4	50,7	13,6	19,2	0,74
Reform	28,9	14,0	34,6	26,3	0,90
Isamaa	8,8	6,5	12,1	12,2	0,93
SDE	9,2	14,8	11,3	6,7	0,90
EKRE	11,7	8,3	17,0	28,1	0,77

Source: Estonian National Electoral Committee and the State Electoral Office, valimised.ee; author's calculation. Legend — same as in Table 6, except that Isamaa stands for the Pro Patria Party, which ran under that name at 2005 local elections and before, and which ran under the name of Pro Patria and Res Publica Union at elections from 2007 through 2017.

From 2005 through 2019, index of party nationalization at local elections in Estonia was lower than at national elections; that tendency concerns all parties involved in this study. Three factors explain that tendency. First, mostly ethnic Russian "aliens" (non-citizens) vote al local elections, but not at national elections. As it was expected [11], those Russophonic citizens of Estonia, who were least satisfied with the ethnocratic regime in the country, migrated to other EU member states after restrictions to free movement of labour force from new member states were removed in 2007 and thus stopped playing an important role at national elections. "Aliens", whose opportunities to migrate to other EU member states were limited due to absence of Estonian citizenship, remained in the country, thus continuing to play an important role at local elections. Second, local citizens' electoral alliances still play an important role at local elections, despite that role declined between 2005 and 2017 local elections [24]. Third, even exactly those same voters facing the choice between exactly those same parties tend to behave differently at elections on different levels [23].

Factors of Declining Nationalization of Estonia's Political Party System on Local Level

On the national level, nationalization of the political party system has been high across the twelve years between 2007 and 2019 general elections. In 2015, the arrival of the far-right Estonian Conservative People's Party resulted in a slight decrease in average index of party nationalization, but the index almost returned to the level observed in 2007 by 2019. On the local level, nationalization of the political party system has been declining between 2005 and 2017 local elections. Average indices of party nationalization for the four national and four local elections analysed in this study are presented in table 9. At 2005 local elections, the Pro Patria Party, whose voters were predominantly ethnic Estonians, demonstrated the smallest score for the index of party nationalization. By 2009 local elections, however, the merger of the Pro Patria and Res Publica parties helped their union to receive votes of both ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians; for example, in predominantly Russian Narva almost 6% of voters supported the merged party in 2009. The index of party nationalization for the merged party improved correspondingly.

Table 9

Average index of party nationalization at Estonia's elections, 2005—2019

	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Kesk	0,75	0,77	0,67	0,72	0,78	0,70	0,66	0,74
Reform	0,74	0,91	0,74	0,88	0,52	0,88	0,62	0,90
IRL	0,68	0,89	0,78	0,91	0,75	0,95	0,51	0,93
SDE	0,74	0,85	0,77	0,96	0,59	0,97	0,52	0,90
EKRE	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0,59	0,58	0,77
Average	0,72	0,86	0,74	0,87	0,66	0,82	0,58	0,85

Source: data in tables 1—8 above; author's calculation. Legend — same as in Table 6.

At the 2009 local elections, the Centre party demonstrated the smallest score for the index of party nationalization, thanks to higher support to it in Tallinn and Narva compared to the 2005 elections, and to smaller support to it in Tartu and Pärnu. However, the average index of party nationalization for all four parties remained almost unchanged compared to 2005 elections. First signs of deterioration of the situation emerged during 2013 elections, when the compact between the Reform and the Social Democratic parties resulted in the absence of the former and collecting of more than one-third of votes by the latter in Narva. As a result, scores for the index of party nationalization declined in the cases of both parties, thus decreasing average score for all four parties. In 2017, when the Estonian Conservative People's Party entered the field, the situation deteriorated even further: all parties demonstrated lower scores for the index of party nationalization at 2017 elections compared to 2013 elections.

The most important factor, why the relationship between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians improved before the 2000s and deteriorated again in 2010s was the EU's "minority condition" [27], which forced Estonia to change its legislation aiming at levelling of political rights of citizens and "aliens" in times, when it was a candidate country. Then, the EU demanded that potential new members from Eastern Europe adhered to higher standards than those adopted in Western European EU member states at that time [13]. While EU institutions pressured Estonia to naturalize all its Russophonic residents, whom ethnic Estonians construed as "representatives of the Russian threat" [14], many ethnic Estonians depicted European integration as dangerous to Estonian identity.

Thus, at the 2003 referendum on EU membership in the Baltic States, over 90% of voters in Lithuania, where Russophonic minority comprises less than 10% of the population, supported EU membership, but in Estonia and Latvia, where Russophonic minorities are bigger than a quarter of respective populations, only two-thirds of voters supported EU membership. While elites of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia "unequivocally heralded accession to the European Union as the main foreign and security policy goal" [29: 1089], populations in the two latter countries, both ethnic majorities and Russophonic minorities were more cautious of European integration. However, after 2004, Estonia lost the most important factor of legislative change aimed at greater participation of "aliens" in the country's politics. As a result, the transformation of legislation aimed at building peace between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians stalled, thus leading to deterioration of the situation in inter-ethnic relations in Estonia in general and in the nationalization of the country's political party system in particular in 2010s.

Other reasons why the inter-ethnic situation in Estonia deteriorated throughout the observed period are linked to domestic processes in the country itself rather than external factors like the influence of the EU. First, the dichotomous differentiation of Estonian identity from the country's Russophonic population characteristic for the 1990s was in the 2000s replaced by "competing modes of identity

politics that rely on less dichotomous differentiation" [1]. In the 2010s, when the "Res Publica" part disappeared from the name of the Pro Patria and Res Publica Union, and when the Estonian Conservative People's Party entered the field, the dichotomous differentiation returned to Estonia. Second, throughout the 1990s, the Estonian political community gained a considerable degree of control over the country's Russophonic community, thus contributing to ethnic peace and stability in the country [26]. The "Bronze night" of 2007 demonstrated that the control was lost. So far, there has not been evidence allowing to conclude that the Estonian political community has re-gained control over the country's Russophonic minority.

Conclusions

Bridging the ideological divide was the most promising aspect of the Estonian project aimed at "integration" of the Russophonic minority launched by ethnic Estonians-dominated elite of the country after the independence of 1991. The project received the name of "integration" because of the negative connotations of the term "assimilation", despite the project aimed not at "integrating" of different properties of various segments of the Estonian society, but at assimilating of representatives of other segments of the society into a homogenous group bearing properties of only one segment of the society, namely ethnic Estonians. In this context, bridging the ideological divide meant creating conditions, under which ethnic Russians and representatives of other segments of the Estonian society would vote the same political parties as ethnic Estonians. This article has demonstrated that Golosov's index of party nationalization is an effective tool helpful to assess, to what extent the task to bridge the ideological divide has been fulfilled in post-Communist Estonia.

Above we presented the results of the analysis of the outcomes of parliamentary elections that took place in Estonia in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019, as well as of the local elections that took place in the country in 2005, 2009, 2013 and 2017. We employed Golosov's index of party nationalization in order to understand whether votes in places predominantly inhabited by ethnic Estonians, such as the Pärnu county, in places predominantly inhabited by ethnic Russians, such as the town of Narva, and in places with almost equal distribution of ethnic Estonians and Russians, such as the capital city of Tallinn, distribute among major political parties in a similar manner. Analysis of the elections demonstrated that voters in Narva and in Tartu differed in the way that the former preferred the Centre Party, while the latter preferred the Reform Party. In a similar manner, voters in Ida-Viru County preferred the Social Democratic Party, while voters in Pärnu County preferred the Pro Patria Party. At the same time, the results demonstrated that Estonia as a whole achieved a considerable level of political party system nationalization by mid-2000s.

The level of party nationalization at parliamentary elections was higher than at local elections, because mostly ethnic Russian "aliens" in Estonia can vote at local elections, but they cannot vote at parliamentary elections. In 2007—2019, the average level of party nationalization at parliamentary elections did not change significantly, despite the country's political system has overcome an important change caused by far right Estonian Conservative People's Party's entry into politics in 2015. On local level, however, the average level of party nationalization changed significantly in 2005—2017. Besides the factor of the Estonian Conservative People's Party, another reason for that were attempts by three political parties, namely the Reform Party, the Social Democratic Party and the Pro Patria Party to create informal unions at 2013 and 2017 local elections aiming to end the dominance of the Centre Party in Narva. Having done this, the three parties declared themselves "Estonian" parties and contrasted themselves to "Russian" Centre Party, thus seriously damaging the process of bridging the ideological divide between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians.

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