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Voting along the ethnic line? Ethnic minority voters in Estonia and Lithuania

MA Thesis

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Author's declaration

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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Abstract

This thesis aims to examine the prevalence and predictors of minority ethnic voting in Estonia and Lithuania. The empirical results confirm that ethnic minorities in these two countries indeed vote as a homogenous group. Specifically, they are more likely to vote for an ethnic minority party, compared to their ethnic majority counterparts. In addition, it is found that minority ethnic voting is more prevalent in Estonia during the review period. Seeking to identify variables that can predict such ethnic voting behaviour, this thesis also tests two theoretical models, namely the social identity model and the rational model, with individual-level survey data from Estonia and Lithuania. Drawing upon these two established theoretical models, six hypotheses are formed and tested. The findings reveal that language serves as a powerful predictor of ethnic voting behaviour in both Estonia and Lithuania. Moreover, aside from language, an individual's placement on the left-right political spectrum appears to be another strong predictor of ethnic voting, with left-wing ethnic minority voters being more likely to cast their vote along ethnic lines. These findings contribute to a better understanding of minority voting behaviour in Estonia and Lithuania.

Keywords:

Estonia; Lithuania; Ethnic Voting; Ethnicity; Electoral Behaviour

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1. Introduction

“Socialism” became largely discredited all over Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) with the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and probably more so in the Baltic countries. Notwithstanding their almost half-century history as Soviet republics, the three Baltic nations vary greatly from the rest in the USSR. Following the disintegration of the USSR in the early 1990s, all three states have worked hard to distance themselves from the Soviet past. For example, the three Baltic states had adopted neoliberal ‘open market’ economic policies and implemented free-market reforms. Besides, they collaborated closely with their Western European counterparts and subsequently joined the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 2004. Although they managed to break free from the post-Soviet area and align themselves with Europe and the West, their Soviet legacy lingered on in many ways. In particular, ethnic issues as well as the sizable minority population that migrated to the Baltics during the Soviet era became the focus of the transition agenda (Saarts & Saar, 2022).

In 1989, prior to the full restoration of independence, Estonia and Latvia were home to an estimated 33%¹ and 48%² of ethnic minorities, mostly Russians. Such significant Soviet migrant communities were instantly transformed into a loyalty concern during the very national rebuilding period in these two new democracies (Herd, 2001). Having this concern, these two countries provided citizenship automatically to pre-war citizens and their descendants. Other non-citizens who would like to obtain citizenship had to complete the naturalisation process which entails passing a language proficiency test. As a result, it is reported that most of the Soviet-era immigrants are left without citizenship and subsequent political rights such as the right to vote (Carpinelli, 2019). Despite being the most homogenous state in the Baltic, Lithuania had an ethnic minority population of 20.4%³. Poles made up the biggest part of the pie, followed by Russian. Similarly, Clemens (2001) also asserted that Lithuania’s substantial minority population constitutes a threat to the country’s geopolitical security.

¹ Всесоюзная перепись населения 1989 года. (1989). Национальный состав населения по республикам СССР (in Russian), http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_89.php.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

To ensure external guarantees for their post-soviet nation-building process, the Baltic states stated their desire to join numerous European institutions from the moment they regained independence. Throughout the 1990s, each of these states had made substantial efforts to fulfil the prerequisites for membership in the Council of Europe (CoE), and later the EU and the NATO (Kramer, 2002). Ironically, in order to be granted access to Western organisations such as the EU, all of these nations have had to follow specific criteria on minority issues such as naturalisation and language law. There has been a widespread belief among the nationalist elites that making such a compromise is hindering the progression of nation-state building since the relationship between the ethnic minority and their residing states has been portrayed as a zero-sum struggle (Best, 2013). As a result, the discourse of minority threat was then resurfaced during this transformational period, resulting in a lack of interest by Estonia and Latvia to continue their efforts towards minority integration after joining those Western organisations (Agarin, 2017).

As time passed, despite the Baltic states' hesitation to relax citizenship laws, they smoothened the path to acquiring citizenship. By 2008, all these counties had simplified the naturalisation process, making it easier on certain requirements. For example, in 2016, the Estonian government revamped the naturalisation procedures, facilitating the process of citizenship acquisition for young individuals born after the country's independence (Carpinelli, 2019). Hence, there has been a growing interest in how this sizable minority group adjusted to liberal democracy, and more importantly, their voting behaviours.

Indeed, ethnic minority political participation has long been discussed in academia. It is suggested that a high ethnic minority voter turnout could ensure democratic stability and, more importantly, avoid ethnic conflict in multi-ethnic democracies (Birbir, 2007). Similarly, it is believed that electoral participation may improve minority group members' perceptions of system legitimacy as well as their trust in government (Tate, 1991; Mansbridge 1999). On the other hand, the absence of such electoral participation might lead to system instability (Cain, 1992).

On the contrary, despite the possible benefit that can be brought by the increasing ethnic minority electoral participation. Scholarship of post-communist transitional democracies suggested that ethnic minorities in these countries are likely to engage in ethnic voting, which in turn impedes the development of post-communist transitional democracies. For example, Saarts and Saar (2022) discovered that, despite the successful political and economic transformation, ethnic cleavage continued to serve as the major cleavage with regard to elections in the CEE region, superseding class cleavage. Likewise, Csörgő and Regelman (2017) observed that in post-communist CEE, ethnic minorities favour communal voting (known as ethnic voting). Houle (2018) further elaborate on how ethnic voting has the potential to have at least three negative implications for democracy. First of all, ethnic voting will reduce ambiguity in election results since ethnic identity is hard to be changed. At one extreme, it could lead to the formation of “permanent majorities” where the ethnic majority group permanently holds control of the government. In addition, ethnic voting could intensify the winner-takes-all characteristic of an election, which in turn fosters patronage politics (ibid.). Consequently, incumbents and politicians may prioritise the distribution of patronage products rather than improving the overall well-being of the country. Lastly, ethnic voting may result in an ethnic outbidding process (ibid.). To compete with others and appeal to the co-ethnic voters, the ethnic party will inevitably make extreme promises and radicalise its policy and rhetoric.

In recent years, minority threat and the subsequent ethnic voting concern have been raised in the post-Soviet space, in conjunction with Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. These incidents ring warning bells in all of Russia’s ‘near abroad’, prompting a re-examination of the electoral behaviours of Russian ethnic minorities outside Russia since voting can be weaponised by the Kremlin in the post-Soviet space. Given that each Baltic state has a demographically large concentration of ethnic Russians as well as Russian speakers, the debate over Baltic security concerns and Russia’s intentions toward the Baltic region have heated up. In fact, Russia has sought to claim those ethnic Russians living abroad as part of a larger Russian civilisation who are protected by the Russian state. As such, the possibility of Russian military intervention in the name of protecting the repressed ethnic Russian minority became a security concern for many in the Baltic states, reigniting the ethnic tension in the Baltic region (Rutland, 2021). Furthermore, the region’s public opinion echoes the growing ethnic tension in the Baltic. According to the findings of a Pew Research Centre

poll conducted in 2017 ⁴, a significant proportion of ethnic minorities in Eastern Europe (including non-former Soviet states), endorse robust Russian involvement in the region.

Despite the salience of ethnic voting, recent research has not yet systematically addressed this concern. While there are few attempts to explore ethnic minority electoral behaviour in the Baltics (see Zhirnova 2022; Agarín & Nakai 2021; Higashijima & Nakai 2016), the ethnic voting issues and their predictors have nevertheless remained untouched. This thesis begs the question of 1) whether ethnic minorities vote as a homogenous group based on their shared ethnicity, and 2) what serves as a reliable predictor of ethnic voting among minority groups. To address the first research puzzle, I shall first illustrate the prevalence of ethnic voting in the Baltic states across the review period in order to determine whether ethnic minorities vote collectively. Regarding the latter, I will conduct a logistic regression analysis by using large-N quantitative data from European Social Survey (ESS). I will test six hypotheses that deduce from two theoretical frameworks, namely the social identity model and the rational choice model, and determine the predictor of minority ethnic voting in the Baltics.

However, to address this research gap within the Baltic states, I decided not to treat these three countries as a homogenous bloc and instead investigate them individually. It is because the reality for the Baltic states is far more complex, particularly with regard to ethnic issues (Morkevicius et al., 2020). For instance, as Stepan (1994) pointed out, attitudes toward ethnic minorities differ among these three states. During the Soviet era, immigration into Latvia and Estonia reduced the percentage of the titular population, generating fears of “national extinction” (Brubaker, 1992). Drawing on the notion of “restorationism”, political elites in these two countries perceived the existence of the Russophone minority as an unlawful consequence of the Soviet invasion (Cheskin, 2015). This discourse provides grounds for the subsequent strict citizenship and language laws (Nakai, 2014). As a result, after regaining their independence in the 1990s, Estonia and Latvia were labelled as “ethnic democracy” (Smith, 1996; Linz and Stepan, 1996; Smooha, 2002). On the other hand, there was little discussion of “national survival” in Lithuania (Cheskin, 2015). In fact, Lithuania provided citizenship and voting rights to all minorities at a very early stage. Therefore, this thesis will be structured as case studies to highlight the peculiarities of the minority groups in different Baltic states.

⁴ Pew Research Center (2017). *Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey*. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/08/PG_2017.08.16_VIEWS-of-Russia_002.png?w=309

This thesis utilises survey data from the ESS Waves 2 to 10, spanning from 2004 to 2020. Unfortunately, Latvia will be excluded from the current study due to relatively limited data coverage in ESS. Within Wave 2 to Wave 10, there are only two Waves available resulting in a relatively small sample size. Moreover, empirical reality (see Appendix 1) revealed that less than 10%⁵ of respondents identify themselves as ethnic minority members, although demographic reality indicates quite different proportions. As mentioned, Latvia and Estonia share many similarities when it comes to dealing with ethnic minorities, therefore, I expect the findings for the latter could shed light on the situation of the former.

In sum, this thesis aims to fill up the knowledge gap on minority voting behaviour in the Baltic states. Although Latvia is not included in the present study, Estonia and Lithuania present two intriguing case studies due to their meaningful similarities and significant differences with respect to ethnic issues. Therefore, I expect the research findings not only to shed light on the situation in these two countries but also the post-Soviet democracies more broadly. This thesis is structured as follows: the second chapter will provide an overview of the existing literature and will present the arguments that support the hypotheses drawn from those two theoretical models. The third chapter outlines the research design and data employed in this study. The statistical model and findings will be presented in the fourth part, followed by the conclusion.

⁵ See Appendix 1

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Ethnic Voting

Voting is the fundamental process through which citizens engage in a representative democracy. It not only allows them to choose candidates for public office and also express their views on public issues. Apart from individual voting behaviour, scholars are also interested in how voting decisions are made on a group basis (Olayode, 2015). To explore the collective voting patterns, the sociological school (Rose & Urwin, 1969; Barker & Lijphart, 1980) focuses on the influence of a variety of social structural factors such as ethnicity, social class, and religion. The sociological lens scrutinises the interaction between individuals and the social structure. It points out that while individuals engage in politics, collective objectives and interests are considerably important (Olayode, 2015). In other words, voters cannot entirely detach themselves from their social groups when casting their ballot.

Ethnicity, one of the many social collective factors, has drawn attention from the sociological standpoint. Indeed, a considerable number of scholars identified the association between ethnicity and voting behaviour. When Wolfinger (1965) studied mass immigration in the United States, he discovered that national origins remain a prominent factor for individuals to understand social issues including politics. For example, it is found that voters would vote for a political party that shares the same ethnicity, and such a decision cannot be explained by other demographic features. Furthermore, in line with their social cleavage theory, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) suggested that social identities, including ethnic identities, influence voting decisions for individuals. Building upon the social cleavage theory, Horowitz (1985) also found that, in Sub-Saharan African politics, ethnic bonds which are rooted in kinship and family have a significant influence on individuals' voting decisions. Horowitz further argued that the bond of ethnicity has a stronger impact in ethnically segmented societies where voting becomes an expression of group identity.

The sociological school has proposed different theories to explain the linkage between ethnicity and voting. One draws on the concept of divided societies, viewing ethnicity as an essential element that motivates individuals to vote for co-ethnic parties, reducing elections to a simple "ethnic census" (Horowitz, 1985). Another theory, which is supported by a large volume of empirical data, develops on the idea that the voters are incapable and unlikely to receive complete information and conduct thorough evaluations of different political parties.

Ethnicity is, thus, considered an “informational shortcut” that offers voters credible indicators of the stands of the party and the likelihood of that party benefiting them (Adida et al., 2017). In particular, it argues that ethnic labels convey information about which groups of voters are likely to gain from the distribution of patronage. This kind of political-ethnic favouritism can be presented in different forms such as constituency service and the delivery of local public goods (Burgess et al. 2015; McClendon 2016). Chandra (2005) echoes that ethnicity serving as an information shortcut is prevalent among African political scholars but has also been seen in other regions.

Indeed, it is found that ethnic voting is prevalent in many countries, regardless of the motivations behind it. A voluminous body of research literature shows that voters in many parts of the world are more likely to vote for co-ethnic parties than for non-co-ethnic candidates. For instance, Adida (2015) found that co-ethnic appeals work in Benin, the same candidates can garner support from two different ethnic groups by utilising ethnic cues accordingly. Similarly, by analysing the British general election, Fisher et al (2014) discovered that Pakistani voters in Britain took the candidate’s ethnicity into consideration when casting their vote.

It appears that the post-communist CEE is not an exceptional case. Csörgő & Regelmann (2017) found that, in post-communist CEE, individuals do demonstrate a strong preference for collective voting along ethnic lines. In particular, it is found that, in the early 1990s, Hungarian minorities in Romania and Slovakia, and Poles in Lithuania, utilised the minority institutions (usually existed during the Soviet era) and rallied behind the political parties that represented their interest. Likewise, it is revealed that Russophones in Lithuania and Estonia are more likely to support parties that are perceived to be most capable of negotiating and representing their interests.

To conceptualise ethnic voting, Huber (2012) introduced a theoretical dimension, which contrasts a group-based perspective with a party-based perspective. The former concentrates on the degree of coherence of the voting pattern of an ethnic group at a time. It assumes that ethnic voting is prevalent when the voting behaviour among group members becomes more homogenous. In contrast, a party-based perspective emphasises the notion that ethnic conflicts are manifested through political parties. Hence, it presumes that ethnic voting is less prevalent when political parties receive support from diverse ethnic groups

proportionally. Put differently, if each party is supported by just one or a few ethnic groups, the prevalence of ethnic voting is high.

Since this thesis is more interested in the cohesion in the voting patterns of ethnic minority individuals, a group-based approach will be adopted. Thus, ethnic voting will be defined as *a form of group-based voting pattern in which individuals vote for ethnic parties primarily based on their shared ethnicity*.

2.2. What is an ethnic minority party?

Based on the group-based definition of ethnic voting mentioned above, this thesis shall then introduce the concept of the ethnic party. For Horowitz (2000), an ethnic party not only cater to co-ethnic voters' interest but also relies solely on the support of that group. To define an ethnic party, Van Cott (2005) emphasised the idea of perceptiveness and contends that the majority of the leadership of an ethnic party should be the co-ethnic members. Chandra (2005; 2011) offers a more detailed definition of ethnic parties. First and foremost, she believed that ethnic parties are those who leverage ethnic appeals to gain support. Some would, for example, promise ethnic privileges or patronage such as public employment. Secondly, she asserted that ethnic parties would rally around the co-ethnic feature of their party leaders, attributing to the common history and common memories. As a result, Chandra (2011) suggested that students of ethnic voting should consider three traits when conceptualising an ethnic party. They are particularity, centrality, and temporality. By particularity, an ethnic party should exclude certain groups, either explicitly or implicitly. Centrality refers that the interest of the co-ethnic members being at the centre of an ethnic party. Put simply, those parties that only make a peripheral reference to co-ethnic members' interest in their agenda should not be perceived as an ethnic party. Lastly, temporality denotes that the classification of a party as an ethnic party may vary over time.

However, in the Baltic context, ethnic parties for minorities have been gradually losing their influence in local politics and receiving less support in each election. For example, in Estonia, the Russian Party of Estonia were represented in two consecutive parliaments from 1995 to 2003, but it was excluded from the parliament since then. In fact, it is rather difficult, if not impossible, for an ethnic party which explicitly and solely advocates minority rights to cross the election threshold. In particular, the size of the ethnic minority electorate sets critical

boundaries for ethnic participation in elected entities. As such, it has usually been the case that minority-friendly parties that has a better chance of passing the electoral threshold represent minority interests in the parliament (Csörgő & Regelman, 2017). The prime example is the mainstream party, the Centre Party (EK), which received support from the majority of ethnic Russian voters in Estonia in multiple parliament elections.

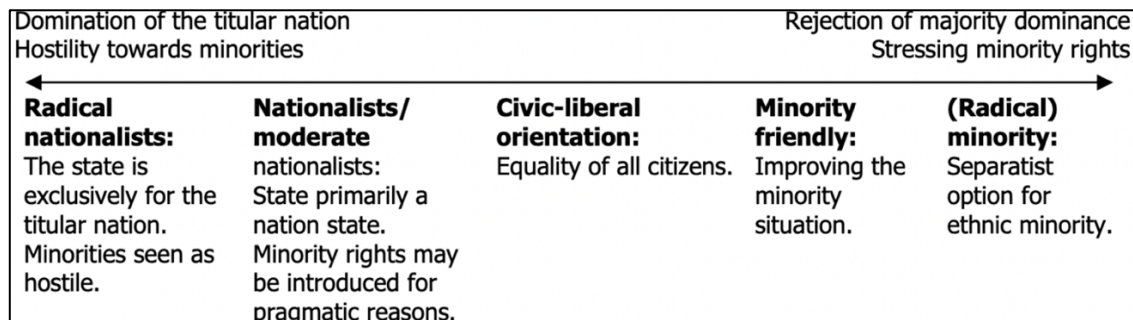


Figure 1 The Ethnic-nationalist Dimension of Party Systems

Note. This is the ethnic-nationalist dimension of party systems produced by Sikk and Bochler in 2008, summarising five types of ethnic parties. Form "Impact of ethnic heterogeneity on party nationalisation in the Baltic states" by Sikk and Bochler, 2008, ECPR Joint Sessions, 12-16, Copyright 2008 by Allan Sikk and Daniel Bochler.

The notion of a minority-friendly party is derived from a theoretical framework for evaluating the ethnic-nationalist dimension of party systems by Sikk and Bochler (2008), shown in Figure 1. It is posited that there is a range of distinctions among ethnic parties. On the minority side, it is contended that a minority party is a separatist option for an ethnic minority individual while a minority-friendly party refers to which aims to improve the minority situation. Thus, this thesis would treat the minority-friendly party as an ethnic minority party in order to fully capture the minorities' ethnic voting behaviour in Estonia and Lithuania. Taken together, I define an ethnic minority party as *a party which explicitly advocates for minority rights*.

2.3. Why should we expect there to be ethnic voting in the Baltics? The quadratic nexus model

To get a better understanding of ethnic issues in Estonia and Lithuania, and in particular ethnic voting, the quadratic nexus theoretical framework highlights four important aspects for one to look into. This framework is built on the foundation of the triadic model suggested by Brubaker (1996). Brubaker contends that 1) national minorities, 2) newly nationalising states,

and 3) external homelands should be taken into consideration when exploring the minority issues in post-communist CEE. Building on this triadic model, Smith (2002) and Kelley (2004) then included the international institution to increase the model's explanatory ability in post-soviet space in their studies. Indeed, this new approach has been employed in different Baltics studies (see Smith (2002); Kelley (2004); Galbreath (2005)). It helps with determining the interplay among international organisations including the EU, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the CoE, with the other three nodes. In this regard, I will introduce these four aspects and their implications on minority ethnic voting in Estonia and Lithuania in the following section.

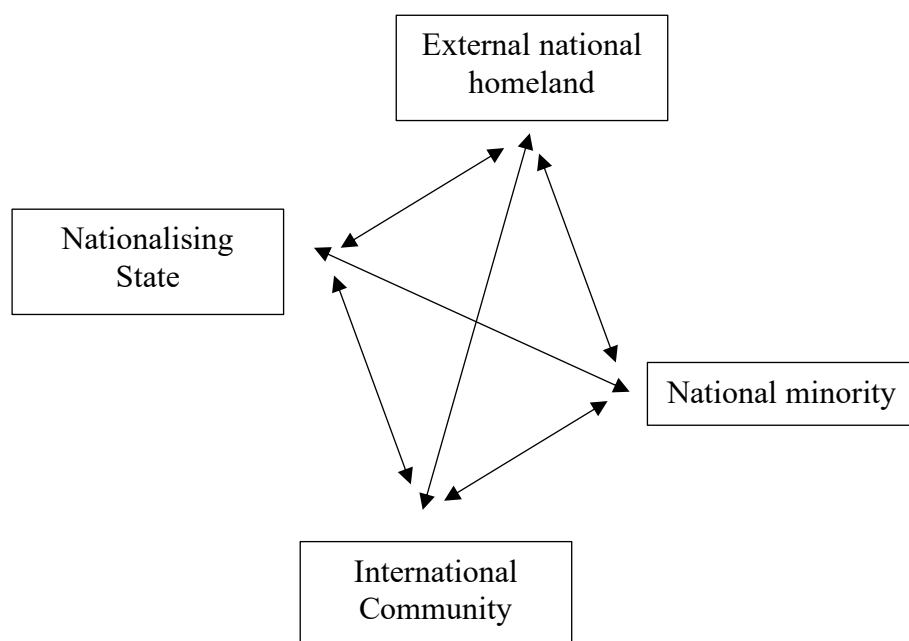


Figure 2 The Quadratic Nexus

Note: The quadratic Nexus developed by Judith G. Kelly in 2004.

2.3.1. Nationalising states

Upon the restoration of independence, Estonia faced the issue of how to treat the ethnic Russian minorities who migrated during the Soviet occupation, as well as their descendants. Throughout the early stage as well as the subsequent transitional period, the zero-sum game logic serves as the dominant political discourse (Agarin, 2017). Such a nationalist narrative led to a restrictive citizenship approach as well as other ethnic policies. For instance, non-citizens are required to apply for citizenship via naturalisation, a process that necessitates the successful completion of a language test. As a result, most of the Soviet-era immigrants are left without

citizenship until the naturalisation procedure was simplified in recent years (Carpinelli, 2019). Furthermore, it should be noted that these policies had further intensified the ethnic conflict in the country. For example, the 1993 “Alien Act” has spurred demands for territorial autonomy in the North-East region, where Russophones constitute the local majority (Sary, 2002).

Lithuania, on the contrary, is less nationalised in terms of citizenship policy. Lithuanian minority policy has experienced fewer challenges internally and externally. Although its approach benefited the traditional majority, namely Lithuanians, it is also compatible with European minority norms (Budrytė, 2005). In particular, the citizenship law granted the right to citizenship to all individuals who had worked and lived in the country at the time of its independence restoration. As a result, according to the 2021 census, 99.3%⁶ of residents possess Lithuanian citizenship.

2.3.2. International Community

Kelley (2004) outlines two levels of influence that the international community use to impact the local government. These are referred to as normative pressure and conditionality. Throughout the transitional period, it is observed that the European entities have imposed normative pressure to help to shape the ethnic policy in Estonia and Lithuania to varying degrees. For instance, the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM) convinced Estonian officials to ease the language prerequisites for naturalisation, and at the same time, to accelerate the expedite the implementation of resident laws (Kelley, 2006). Another prime example is the direct engagement of the European entities in 1993 on the matters of voting eligibility in municipal elections. On the conditionality front, the most prominent example is the EU enlargement. The “Copenhagen criteria” provided a valuable tool for conditionality. Both Estonia and Lithuania, as candidate states, are required to adopt the EU’s legal framework and demonstrate their capability to consolidate in all aspects, including the ethnic minority aspect.

In addition, Brusis (2005) suggested that decentralisation pursued by the EU also has had a substantial impact on minority issues. In fact, it is reported that Estonia and Lithuania

⁶ Statistic Lithuania (n.d.). *Population by ethnicity*, Retrieved May 10, 2023, from <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/en/gyventoju-ir-bustu-surasymai>

had already placed decentralisation on their agenda during the 1990s to prepare themselves to adapt to the EU structure (Adam et al., 2014). The decentralisation process resulted in an expansion of the power of local governments, although minority territorial self-government was eliminated in all cases. More importantly, the decentralisation process empowers minority groups as they acquire local offices such as seats in local councils (ibid.).

2.3.3. National minority

It is also worth noting how ethnic minorities in Estonia and Lithuania perceived their minority identity. For ethnic Russian in these two states, it is suggested that their identity is complex. They do not perceive themselves as Russian or Estonian/Lithuanian, but rather as Baltic Russians (Cheskin, 2014). Likewise, Zbarauskaitė et al (2015) discovered that the mixed identity also applies to ethnic Polish in Lithuania. On the one hand, they perceived themselves as Polish, while on the other hand, they also identified as Lithuanians, resulting in a dual ethnic identity.

2.3.4. External homeland

Brubaker (1996) contends that an external homeland should not be interpreted as the nation where an individual's ancestor lived. Instead, it should be understood in relation to the political and cultural elites and how they define the ethnic kin. In the context of Lithuania and Estonia, Russia is considered the external national homeland that provides support to the ethnic Russian minority. Additionally, Lithuania has another external homeland within the EU, namely Poland, which relates to the ethnic Poles in Lithuania.

It is believed that the level of interference from the external homeland could be multidimensional (GalAllon et al., 2010). On the one side of the pole, it could be presented in the form of hard powers. For instance, the Russian Federation passed legislation, granting citizenship to Soviet migrants, especially former army personnel, who reside in the Baltic states. Apart from such overt interventions, the soft power used by the Russian government to influence the locals can be seen in every aspect of daily life, through Russian-language media and cultural events. Particularly, Russia has remarkably succeeded in expanding its media presence in the Baltic states: a range of Russian-speaking TV and radio channels broadcasting in the Baltics are popular among ethnic Russian minorities. However, they have always been

accused of spreading propaganda and disinformation, aiming to affect public opinion in the Baltic states. The prime example is the media outlet NTV Mir (including NTV Mir Baltic)⁷, which is banned in Estonia.

2.4. Hypothesis: The quadratic nexus

The quadric nexus reveals four distinct perspectives that should be considered when analysing the predominance of ethnic voting in Estonia and Lithuania. Each of these perspectives has resulted in a variety of factors that may encourage or discourage minority voters to vote along ethnic lines. Firstly, after regaining independence, Estonia and Lithuania had an entirely different approach toward ethnic minorities. Estonia took a more “nationalised” approach, adopting a more restrictive citizenship approach. Lithuania, on the other hand, is less nationalised. Second, the international community applies normative pressure and conditionality to these two nations, providing other political engagement opportunities such as running local offices to ethnic minorities in addition to voting, which in turn empowers the ethnic minorities. Thirdly, the identity of ethnic minorities in the Baltics is complex. Fourth, Russia, as one of the largest non-EU foreign homelands, has shown its multidimensional approaches in hopes of mobilising and manipulating ethnic Russian residing in Estonia and Lithuania. Apart from direct intervention, it has developed its soft power strategy to achieve its objectives.

Taking these four nodes as the point of departure, it is expected that ethnic minority member is more likely to vote for an ethnic minority party. In this regard, the first and second hypotheses tested in this thesis are formulated as *Ethnic minority voters in Estonia vote along ethnic lines (H1)*; *Ethnic minority voters in Lithuania vote along the ethnic line (H2)*. Additionally, the quadric model also shows that there is a notable difference in some respects, especially from the nationalising state perspective. It is thus hypothesized that *the prevalence of minority ethnic voting in Estonia is higher than in Lithuania (H3)*.

⁷ International Press Institute. (n.d.). *Four Russian and one Belarusian TV channel banned in Estonia*. <https://ipi.media/alerts/four-russian-and-one-belarusian-tv-channel-banned-in-estonia/#:~:text=The%20banned%20channels%20were%20RTR,propaganda%20of%20the%20Russian%20government.>

2.5. Which factors explain individual minority ethnic voting: a theoretical Model

This thesis then begs the question of whether ethnicity serves as a reliable predictor of voting behaviour among minority groups or whether such behaviour is driven by rational decision-making. As suggested above by the scholarship of electoral behaviour, an individual will vote along ethnic lines to 1) reaffirm their specific ethnic identity because voting becomes an expression of group identity or, what they called “ethnic census” and 2) expect co-ethnic candidates to favour them when delivering goods and services, which will benefit them in the society. Taking these two assumptions as the point of departure, this thesis then introduces two sets of theoretical frameworks, namely the social identity model and the rational choice model, to shed light on the ethnic minority voting behaviour in Estonia and Lithuania. The following subsections examine the social identity and rational choice variables in greater detail and derive testable hypotheses.

2.5.1. Social Identity Model

The social identity model built in this thesis is based on Tajfel’s and Turner’s social identity theory, which aims to explain intergroup behaviour. The premise for this model is that the majority of individuals vote based on their initial political predisposition. In other words, citizens’ vote choices cannot be completely isolated from their adherence to the socially formed collective identity, such as race and ethnicity.

Social identity theory is initially used to explain intergroup relations and describe the complexity of social identities in the social psychology field. It characterises social identity as a component of an individual’s self-concept that stems from their belonging to a social group, along with the emotional value ascribed to that identity (Tajfel, 1974). Further, it suggests that humans would inevitably classify themselves and the people around them, based on their social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). This classification entails the process by which individuals identify the similarities between themselves and their in-group members, as well as the difference between themselves and their out-group members. (Turner et al., 1987; Hogg & Turner 1987; Abrams and Hogg 1990;). After that, the social identity labels will be assigned by oneself or others to access various social groups (Tajfel, 1974).

With the social identity labels attached, people then develop group consciousness and, at the same time, distinguish themselves from others. The former is described as in-group

favouritism and the latter as out-group bias (Tajfel, 1974). While Karu and Valk (2001) further clarified the former as an identity category indicates a sense of belonging, as well as positive feelings and connection to that group, Tajfel et al (1979) emphasized the latter, suggesting group members desire to differentiate their groups from others to obtain a positive social identity. Laitin (1998) echoes that individuals tend to compare their group to other groups in society, seeking self-esteem and in turn a positive social identity from this identity comparison. Individuals belonging to the disadvantaged group may try to alter the nature of the comparison or simply modify the nature of the comparison to boost their self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). If the situation does not improve, collective action will be treated as the last resort, with the objective of transforming the existing social structure of society (Olzak 1983, as cited in Hansen, 2009).

In Estonia and Lithuania, ethnicity has always been an important factor in shaping social and political issues since they are home to a significant amount of ethnic minorities. Considering the transitional experience, it is expected that ethnic minorities are likely to engage in ethnic voting to improve their self-esteem as well as the disadvantaged position of their ethnic social identity group. Ethnic minorities were considered outsiders who might hamper the national building process. In particular, they were treated as a loyalty (Herd, 2001) as well as a geopolitical security concern (Clemens, 2001). Therefore, according to the social identity literature, this impoverished status, as being an outsider, may politicise ethnic identification and trigger minority members to improve the disadvantaged group status. As indicated by the social identity literature, collective action could be the last resort for changing the existing social structure, which in turn constructs a positive identity and boost one's self-esteem. Indeed, collective ethnic social movements encompass a wide spectrum of activities, ranging from the most costly options, such as participating in ethnic riots or violence, to the least costly forms, such as collective voting.

However, it should be also noted that the social identity identification process is fluid, as individuals gain new labels through daily social interaction (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). In other words, individuals belong to multiple social groups simultaneously. Hence, ethnicity is not the only social identity of an individual and, more importantly, the influence of ethnicity is subject to change when individuals process other types of social identities. As one step toward understanding the rationale of the overlapping social identities, Roccas and Brewer (2002) introduced the concept of social identity complexity which suggests a social identity comprises

multiple dimensions. Taking ethnic social identity as an example, there are a number of dimensions including language, religion, caste etc. that could be overlapped with ethnicity. Furthermore, it is found that those with highly aligned dimensions are generally more intolerant of outgroups (ibid.). As such, this thesis suggests, in Estonia and Lithuania, there are three dimensions (i.e., Language, Religion, and Education) that could provide a basis for overlapped identity that helps to reinforce (or reduce) one's ethnic identity, which in turn affect the likelihood of ethnic voting per se. The following subsections will explain these three dimensions in greater detail and derive testable hypotheses.

Language

Language, as a means of communication, is an essential aspect of people's daily life. Besides, it is believed that language acquires extralinguistic characteristics that have extra functions that go beyond the mere need for communication (Fishman & Garcia, 2011).

First and foremost, it is suggested that language could provide individuals with a sense of belonging which strengthens an individual group membership (Miller, 2000). Especially, language could serve as a link between the present and the past by means of oral traditions and other cultural forms (Fishman & Garcia, 2011). Individuals who lack proficiency in language ability would be unable to access those cultural resources. More important, it would set boundaries between the in-group, i.e., those who share the same cultural background and the out-group. In fact, when analysing the linguistic minority groups in America, scholars found substantial evidence that home language development can be an important aspect of identity formation and can help one preserve a strong feeling of ethnic identity whereas those who do not speak their parents' language may find it difficult to identify with their roots, as well as with their culture, identity, and values (see Rovira (2008) & Cho (2000) Cho & Tse (1997)). As such, language offers a unique dimension to ethnic identity and facilitates the differentiation of its members from those of other groups, leading to a stronger sense of belonging.

In addition, the use of language in Lithuania and Estonia has served as a means for the Russian government to connect with Russian-speaking individuals, thereby establishing a form of soft power that can be utilized for the spread of disinformation and in turn consolidate one's ethnic minority identity. Due to their limited language ability, many ethnic Russians in the region rely on Russian news outlets to make sense of the outside world. However, it is

suggested that this media outlet had further exacerbated an information gap between Balts and Russian-speaking compatriots (Zeleneva & Ageeva, 2017). Thus, these outlets are often viewed as tools of Moscow's foreign policy and vehicles for state-run propaganda. For instance, some Russian TV channels, such as RTR-Planet⁸, were banned by the Lithuania authority in an effort to prevent Russian media from affecting public opinion in the country.

Thus, it is expected that frequent home language usage will strengthen minorities' ethnic social identity in Lithuania and Estonia. The third hypothesis is structured as follows:

H4: Ethnic minority voters who speak the home language more frequently are more likely to vote along ethnic lines.

Religion

Religion, apart from language, can provide people with a sense of meaning, identity, and belonging (Kim, 2011). Participation or membership in a religion distinctive of one's ethnic group has been proven to be significantly connected with the degree of one's ethnic identification (see Oppong, 2013). On one end of the spectrum, religion equates to ethnicity, as is the case with certain groups like the Amish and Jews. On the contrary, for other ethnic groups, religion serves merely as a cultural anchor for ethnic groups, providing cultural information to the in-group members. Religious information encompasses believers, lifestyles, ideology etc (Cohen, 1989).

Apart from religion itself, ethnic-religious organisations also help people connect to their ethnic community, which further strengthens their ethnic identity. In particular, religious organisations such as churches and temples play a significant role in helping ethnic minorities to preserve their ethnic identity (Yang, 1999, as cited in Kim, 2011). These institutions provide opportunities for ethnic members to engage and interact with other in-group members, thereby maintaining social ties. Especially for the ethnic minority immigrants who are struggling in a new country, ethnic-religious organisations are always able to provide assistance in terms of jobs as well as other social services. For example, churches in New York's Chinatown give food, accommodation, and work to freshly arrived immigrants from Fuzhou, China (Guest,

⁸ DW News. (2015). *Lithuania to ban Russian TV channel for 'warmongering'*.
<https://www.dw.com/en/lithuania-to-ban-russian-tv-channel-for-warmongering/a-18370852>

2003). As a result, religious organisations play an important role in linking ethnic minorities to the ethnic community (Kim, 2011). Similarly, Rudolph Vecoli (1977) studied the Southern Italian immigrants in the United States, he discovered that immigrants rely on church and religion when coping with the unknown in the new country.

In the Baltic context, it is expected the role of the orthodox church might have a huge impact on the ethnic voting issue since ethnic Russian make up a significant population in both countries. Overall speaking, the Orthodox structure in the Baltic States is complex. There are two competing lines of orthodox authority within the Baltic States (Lamoreaux & Mabe, 2019). The first line of authority refers to the Moscow Patriarchate, while the second line of authority runs to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In short, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) has ecclesiastical jurisdiction throughout the Baltic States via the Estonian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), Latvian Orthodox Church, and Lithuanian Orthodox Church (Ibid.). Since three of the four primary Orthodox churches in the Baltic states have official ties to the ROC, orthodoxy has been viewed as a tool for the Kremlin stretching influence strategy in the Baltic state. Especially, the ROC, which is tied to the Kremlin, positions itself as the moral authority for ethnic Russians in the Baltic region, attempting to offer these ethnic minorities a distinct worldview and value system that aligns with the Russian narrative (Ekmanis, 2020). Hence, this thesis suggests that religion plays an essential role in strengthening one's ethnic identity, resulting in a higher chance to engage in ethnic voting. The hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H5: Ethnic minority voters who have the same religious affiliation as their ethnic group are more likely to vote along ethnic lines.

Education

One then begs the question of how education might counteract the collective identity and the subsequent ethnic voting behaviour brought on by ethnic social identification, making more educated individuals less inclined to vote along the ethnic line. Milligan et al (2004) education enhances people's interest and knowledge of political issues as well as their involvement in the political process. There is also a large body of literature, primarily from richer and more democratic countries, that supports the fact that education is indeed able to equip individual democratic values thereby promoting a more rational approach when dealing

with the election (Dee, 2004; Inglehart & Welzel, 2010; Campbell, 2019). Moreover, Scheepers et al. (1989) discovered that more educated individuals are less ethnocentric. School, as one of the socialisation institutions, offers diverse social experience and address issues of racial and ethnic diversity. Therefore, it aids in the development of a cosmopolitan identity (Stevens et al., 2008). Taken together, greater education is thought to diminish prejudice and unfavourable sentiments.

Moreover, education is related to the construction of social belongings. In Lithuania and Estonia, education plays an important role in counteracting the collective identity by equipping ethnic minorities with language ability to further integrate into society culturally and economically. In Lithuania, ethnic minorities who are enrolled in minority schools will be offered extra hours and classes in the Lithuanian language. It is to ensure those pupils would acquire sufficient language proficiency for future job opportunities or pursue higher education (Gulajeva & Hogan-Grun, 2008). Likewise, in Estonia, the state language is compulsory in the primary curriculum. Moreover, the government also have several policies to improve the Estonian-language skills among ethnic minority students. The prime example is the Language Immersion Programme⁹, launched in 2000, ensuring at least 50% of the curriculum in minority schools including childhood education and care centres are in Estonian

As a result, it is expected that having better education will downplay the importance of one's ethnic identity when minorities make a voting choice, resulting in a lower chance of engaging in ethnic voting. Hence, the third hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H6: Ethnic minority voters who are better educated are less likely to vote along ethnic lines.

2.6. Rational Choice Model

Proponents of rational choice theory, on the other hand, suggest that minority voters might indeed very well be “just ordinary voters”. Ethnic origin or migratory history may have no extra explanatory power. The following model, taking the rational choice lens, proposes that minority voters in Estonia and Lithuania could simply be rational voters. They vote for

⁹ OECD (2012). *Estonia: Education policy outlook*. <https://www.oecd.org/education/policy-outlook/country-profile-Estonia-2020.pdf>

ethnic minority parties because they believe they will be better represented and advocated for in parliament. As a result, they are expected to support the party as long as it advances their interests but to leave as soon as they perceive other parties better serve their interests. Simply put, minority votes are directed by a cost-benefit calculation: the lesser the party's capacity to execute the voter's interests, the higher the costs incurred by the voter.

Left-right position

Downs (1957) presented a rational calculus of voting that inspired much of the later work on voting and turnout. Downs started with the assumption that voters would evaluate the anticipated benefits of having different political in power when casting their vote. He further argues that voters not only take the anticipated benefits into account but also consider whether they are better off compared to the past. However, perfect knowledge will never be obtained easily. Voters might have to put a lot of effort to gather sufficient information to make a vote choice. Also, Down highlighted that, in general, voters lack the motivation to gather information solely for the purpose of making a better voting decision. As such, voters would use information shortcuts to help them make a decision. It is believed that the left-right dimension is one of the most prominent information shortcuts in an election (see Lupia and McCubbins, 1998; Popkin, 1991; Slothuus 2008). For instance, left-right ideologies provide a brief summary of the political parties attitudes and stand over various policy issues, such as health care and taxes.

Therefore, this thesis will hypothesise ethnic minorities are rational voters who treated the left-right position as merely an information shortcut when making the voting decision. Indeed, minority parties in Estonia and Lithuania usually carry the communist root. Also, even for minority-friendly parties, the political agenda of advocating minority rights falls under the left-wing ideology which emphasises social and economic equality. Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows:

H7: Ethnic minority voters who place themselves on the left wing are more likely to vote along ethnic lines.

Economy

Indeed, Downs' rational choice model and the concept of information short cut has indeed inspired the subsequent research. Along the rational choice line, the classic economic theory of democracy argues that voters reward the incumbent in good economic times whereas punishing the incumbent in bad economic times (Campbell et al. 1960; Key 1966; Kramer 1971; Fiorina 1981; Lewis-Beck 1988). The relationship between the economy and voting was first addressed in *The American Voter* (1960). In this book, Campbell et al. (1960) beg the question of whether an individual's economic viewpoint correlates with their choice in the American presidential elections. Stokes (1963) follows it up and associates "valence difficulties" with "economic well-being issues". Butler and Stokes (1969) then suggested that individuals react differently according to their economic condition. To be precise, individuals tend to punish the government for unfavourable economic conditions and reward them for favourable economic conditions. More broadly, as Key (1966) remarked, the electorate would react to incumbents' past performance as well as actions. Put simply, Key suggested that individuals are retrospective voters who examine the actual policy outcome.

Therefore, this thesis will hypothesise ethnic minorities, as rational voters, would also see the economy as a valence problem, rewarding or penalising the incumbent based on how well the economy is doing. There are several methods for voters to penalise the incumbent in an election. In some cases, to show their dissatisfaction, citizens would vote for extreme parties such as anti-establishment and ideologically radical parties or simply vote for any opposition party at the time which has no responsibility for the economic failure. Since most of the minority parties in Lithuania and Estonia have usually been in opposition and have often been presented as eternal opponents, therefore, voting for these minority parties can be viewed as a punishment for the incumbent. Even though some of the minority-friendly parties, for example, the Centre Party in Estonia, were in office and form a coalition government with other parties, they were stay in opposition for most of the time within this designated research timeframe. Thus, the hypothesis is structured as followed:

H8: Ethnic minority voters who are less satisfied with their country's economic situation are more likely to vote along the ethnic line.

Institutional trust

According to Secor and O'Loughlin (2005), institutional trust is the level of confidence individuals have in an institution. Take parliament as an example, a high level of institutional trust refers to the fact that individuals will trust the parliament would not misuse its power, even in situations of uncertainty or limited information. Indeed, having a high degree of trust among voters can make makes policy execution easier (Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017). In contrast, a low level of trust in parliament suggests that voter process a negative perception towards how the parliament works ((Pharr et al., 2000). If this negative image is not handled properly, it will gradually escalate to widespread scepticism and cynicism (Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017). Furthermore, it is suggested that distrust individual is more likely to participate in political activities and hold elected officials responsible (Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017). More importantly, distrust will have an impact on how individuals behave when given the option to express their political choices. In particular, it is suggested that distrustful people will express their dissatisfaction by voting for an anti-establishment, unusual, ideologically radical party (Bélanger, 2017). Furthermore, as empirical evidence suggests, political distrust may result either in voting for non-mainstream parties such as populist parties or in abstention from voting (ibid.). Similarly, Hooghe et al (2011) discovered that in the United States, a significant factor contributing to voting for extreme and populist parties is a decline in institutional trust.

Therefore, this thesis will hypothesise ethnic minorities, as rational voters, would also act accordingly when they have low institutional trust. Since most of the ethnic parties in Lithuania and Estonia have usually been in opposition and have often been presented as eternal opponents, therefore, it is expected distrustful ethnic minorities will vote along the ethnic line. Hence, the final hypothesis is constructed as follows. Table 1 sums up all the hypotheses discussed in this chapter.

H9: Ethnic minority voters who have lower institutional trust are more likely to vote along ethnic lines.

Table 1 Research Hypotheses

Prevalence of Minority Ethnic Voting	H1	Ethnic minority voters in Estonia vote along ethnic lines
	H2	Ethnic minorities voters in Lithuania vote along the ethnic line
	H3	the prevalence of minority ethnic voting in Estonia is higher than in Lithuania
Ethnic Voting: Social identity Model	H4	Ethnic minority voters who speak the home language more frequently are more likely to vote along ethnic lines.
	H5	Ethnic minority voters who have the same religious affiliation as their ethnic group are more likely to vote along ethnic lines.
	H6	Ethnic minority voters who are better educated are less likely to vote along ethnic lines
Ethnic Voting: Rational Choice Model	H7	Ethnic minority voters who place themselves on the left wing are more likely to vote along ethnic lines.
	H8	Ethnic minority voters who are less satisfied with their country's economic situation are more likely to vote along the ethnic line.
	H9	Ethnic minority voters who have lower institutional trust are more likely to vote along ethnic lines.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data

The current thesis provides a quantitative larger-N analysis of Estonia and Lithuania, examining the voting behaviour of ethnic minorities. The primary data source employed in this thesis is the ESS dataset, spanning the period from 2002 (Wave 1) to 2020 (Wave 10). ESS established in 2001, is a collection of cross-national social surveys on different themes such as media and social trust, politics, and welfare views. The sample size of each wave contains roughly 2,000 interviewees, who are chosen using random probability sampling¹⁰. Appendix 2 shows the response rate and the data collection period of each wave in each country. In general, Estonia has a relatively high response rate, compared to Lithuania. The data collection for each wave of the European Social Survey is conducted after the national-wide election of the year, which ensures that the responses obtained are relevant to the research interest of this thesis¹¹.

In this thesis, only the parliamentary election in Estonia and Lithuania will be analysed. In Estonia, the parliamentary election employs a proportional representation (PR) system. Lithuanians, on the other hand, adopt a mixed system for their Seimas. Half of the members of parliament are chosen in single-member constituencies using a two-round system, while the remaining members are elected by PR through a single countrywide constituency. To maximise their resource and chances to win, minority parties often focus on those constituencies that have a higher minority population, leaving minority members who do not belong to those selected constituencies have few or no choices. Thus, only the PR aspect of the electoral system in Lithuania will be considered, as the countrywide constituency guarantees that every voter, regardless of their place of residence, is presented with the same options in the election.

Weight, provided by the ESS, is applied to adjust the sample to the empirical reality. Tables 2 and 3 illustrate the weighted sample size of each wave in Estonia and Lithuania accordingly. Although the weight has been applied, there is a notable discrepancy between the share of minority groups in ESS and in the official census, where the latter is higher than the former. It is important to note that the classification of ethnic minority status in this study is based on the survey question "Do you belong to a minority ethnic group in the country?"

¹⁰ European Social Survey (n.d.). *Sampling*.
https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/ess_methodology/sampling.html

¹¹ See Appendix 2

Hence, the observed discrepancy may be attributed to the subjective nature of the survey questions used to measure ethnicity.

Furthermore, the descriptive data indicate a significant decrease in the proportions of minority ethnic group members in Estonia and Lithuania, with only 6.7% and 3.1% respectively. It is also noteworthy that in ESS wave 10 (2020), the original survey question was modified. The new survey question is as follows: "Do you feel you are part of the same race or ethnic group as most people in [country]?" As a result, to ensure data quality, this study includes only four ESS waves (2, 4, 6, 8) in Estonia and three ESS waves (5, 6, 8, 10) in Lithuania.

Table 2 ESS Sample Size in Estonia

Estonia	Minority ethnic Group	%	Non-Minority ethnic Group	%
ESS 2 2004	401	20.8%	1531	79.2%
ESS 4 2008	319	20.9%	1207	79.1%
ESS 6 2012	468	20.3%	1843	79.7%
ESS 8 2016	335	16.7%	1673	83.3%
ESS 10 2020	102	6.7%	1438	93.3%
TOTAL	1625	17.5%	7692	82.5%

Table 3 ESS Sample Size in Lithuania

Lithuania	Minority ethnic Group	%	Non-Minority ethnic Group	%
ESS 5 2010	141	7.8%	1687	92.2%
ESS 6 2012	155	7.6%	1898	92.4%
ESS 8 2016	176	8.5%	1896	91.5%
ESS 10 2020	51	3.1%	1592	96.9%
TOTAL	523	6.8%	7073	93.2%

To illustrate the level of ethnic voting, I shall first delineate the sample that votes in the election. As shown in Table 4, these two countries have once again demonstrated their significant differences. More than a third of Estonia's ethnic minority respondents are not entitled to vote, compared to only 2% in Lithuania. As a result, the sample size of ethnic minorities has been further reduced. The ultimate sample consists of 1067 and 505 individuals from Estonia and Lithuania, respectively.

Table 4 Voters and Eligible minority Voters in Estonia and Lithuania

Estonia	Voted	Did not vote	Not eligible to vote
ESS 2	115 28.7%	149 37.2%	137 34.2%
ESS 4	88 27.8%	132 41.8%	96 30.4%
ESS 6	154 33.0%	146 31.3%	166 35.6%
ESS 8	126 37.5%	72 21.4%	138 41.1%
Total	499 32.9%	537 35.4%	499 32.9%
People who are eligible to vote			Not eligible to vote
982			537

Lithuania	Voted	Did not vote	Not eligible to vote
ESS 5	87 63.5%	50 36.5%	0 0
ESS 6	93 60%	62 40%	0 0
ESS 8	94 53.7%	71 40.6%	10 5.7%
Total	274 58.7%	183 39.2%	10 2.1%
People who are eligible to vote			Not eligible to vote
457			10

3.2. Measurement

This section will first explain how the binary dependent variable, namely ethnic voting, is operationalised. The measurement of the independent variables will then be introduced, as well as how they are coded.

3.2.1. Dependent Variable: Measuring Ethnic Voting

As defined in Chapter 2, ethnic voting is a form of group-based voting pattern in which individuals vote for a political party based primarily on their shared ethnicity. To measure ethnic voting, a relevant question was asked in each wave: “For which party did you vote in the last national elections?”. Respondents received a 1 if they stated that they voted for an ethnic minority party; they received a 0 if they stated that they voted for a non-ethnic minority party. As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are two types of ethnic minority parties, namely ethnic minority parties and minority-friendly parties. As such, I shall provide a simple classification of ethnic minority parties and ethnic minority-friendly parties in Estonia and Lithuania.

Table 5 presents the classification of minority and minority-friendly parties in Estonia and Lithuania. Some ethnic minority parties are more explicit in their position than others. For instance, the Lithuanian political party 'Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania' can be easily identified just by looking at its name. Similarly, the Russian party in Estonia explicitly shows who their audiences are. Yet, there are just a few of the parties that ran in the elections under consideration are unambiguous examples of minority parties. Others, especially minority-friendly, are rather hard to be identified. Hence, the following sections will briefly discuss the major ethnic minority and ethnic minority-friendly parties in Estonia and Lithuania.

Table 5 Classification of Major minority party and minority friendly party.

	Estonia	Lithuania
Minority Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estonian United People Party (2003) • Estonian Social- Democratic Labour Party (2003) • Russian Party in Estonia (2003, 2007) • Estonia United Left Party (2007, 2011, 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union of Russians of Lithuania (2008) • Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (2008, 2012, 2016) • Lithuanian People's Party (2012, 2016)
Minority Friendly Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Democratic Party (2003, 2007, 2011, 2015) • Centre Party (2003, 2007, 2011, 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (2008,2012,2016) • Party 'Front' (2008) • Socialist People's Front (2012) • The Coalition Labour Party + Youth (2008) • Labour Party (2012, 2016) • Democratic Labour and Unity Party (2012)

Note: The year in the bracket denotes the year of parliamentary election the party participated in.

3.2.1.1. Ethnic minority and minority friendly party in Estonia

In the 1992 Riigikogu election, right after the restoration of Estonian statehood, there is no minority parties. Until the 1995 general elections, the Russian Party in Estonia formed an alliance with the Estonian United People's Party named "Our Home is Estonia," which won six in the parliament. They continued to compete in the subsequent 1999's general election. It is reported that the United People's Party of Estonia won 6.1% of the total vote while the Russian Party in Estonia won 2 % of the total vote (Fitzmaurice, 2001). However, they have not received enough votes to enter parliament since then, as they did not cross the 5 % threshold. Likewise, in the 2007 parliamentary elections, two minority parties, the Constitutional Party (formerly ONPE) and the Russian Party in Estonia, did not pass the 5% electoral threshold, altogether having won only 1.2% of the total votes. Without winning any seats in the parliament, minority parties lack bargaining strength. The inability of these minority parties to access the

parliament posed frustration and disappointment to the ethnic minorities (Csergö & Regelmann, 2017). Despite the emergence of other minority parties, such as the Estonia United Left party, which was founded in 2008, the aforementioned situation persisted, as these parties have been unable to secure any seats in the parliament. As a consequence, the ethnic minorities demonstrated a gradual alienation from these minority parties. For instance, in the 2003 parliamentary elections, the electoral support for all the minority parties decreased three times in terms of the vote, compared to 1999 (Tolvaišis, 2011). Moreover, in the same election, Russian minority parties even had an unprecedentedly weak performance in the predominantly Russian-populated Narva (ibid.).

On the contrary, the EK was the first Estonian major party to include a minority-related element in its manifesto, which eventually drove many ethnic Russian parties off the political scene (ibid.). It specifically targets several problems faced by the minority such as underrepresentation in the public institution. As a result, EK branded itself as an advocate of Russophone minority interests, and at the same time positioned itself as a better negotiator for minority issues. The ethnic-friendly nature of the party is also reflected in the composition of the party's parliamentary group and its board. In 2003, the party elected four Russians as deputies. In the following 2007 parliamentary elections, the party elected four Russians as deputies, and the number of Russian factions in EK grew to 8 people in 2011. In addition, Tolvaišis (2011) suggested that the EK's approach of allowing Russophones to dictate policies in local politics in Tallinn and Ida Virumaa, where the majority of Russian speakers are concentrated, further contributed to the party's success in retaining Russophone support. As a result, the Estonian Centre Party (EK) has gradually gained the support of the Russian electorate (ibid.).

Russophone voters who were hesitant to support the EK turned to another mainstream party with potential negotiation strength, the Social Democratic Party (SDE), as an alternative (Savisaar, 2011). Furthermore, on the eve of the 2011 legislative elections, the SDP incorporated minority interest into its language policy in the manifesto, signalling a significant shift in the party's policy toward the Russian voters (Tolvaišis, 2011). To be precise, SDE brought up a several ethnic issues including economic inequalities and social exclusion of non-Estonian groups (ibid.). Moreover, in 2012, the Russian Party in Estonia, an ethnic political party, merged with the SDE, which pledged to safeguard the rights of the Russian-speaking

minority in the country¹². The SDE's decision to elect the leader of the Russian Party as their deputy further reinforces the party's stance as being supportive of minority interests.

3.2.1.2. Ethnic minority and minority friendly party in Lithuania

Having two substantial minority groups, the party landscape in Lithuania is much more complicated than Estonia's. The Russian minority, which had been the biggest ethnic minority group in Soviet-occupied Lithuania for decades, declined dramatically following the dissolution of the USSR. Meanwhile, according to the latest census in 2021, the Polish minority gradually grew to be the largest minority group in Lithuania, accounting for 6.53 %¹³ of the total population, while Russia accounted for just 5.02%¹⁴. And in general, it is found that the latter is rather passive in terms of expressing their preferences through parliamentary elections (Berglund, 2013).

Similar to Estonia, there are only a few parties that ran in the Lithuanian elections are unambiguous examples of minority parties, with a reference to a minority group contained in the party's name. For example, the Lithuanian Russian Union (LRU), founded in 1995, competed in the 1996 parliamentary elections. The subsequent minority parties include the Union of Russians of Lithuania and Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (LLRA). Another prime example is the Lithuanian People's Party, which struck a collaboration deal with Russia's largest party, United Russia, soon after its formation and has remained in partnership ever since. However, for ethnic minority parties to keep their seats in the parliament, they must maintain strict vote discipline and minority solidarity, which is not always achievable. As a result, ethnic Russian voters would rather vote for mainstream leftist parties, such as the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, which includes Russophone interests in its policy and manifesto.

On the contrary, the Polish minority in Lithuania is more proactive in terms of political participation. The peculiarity of the Polish national minority in Lithuania is that it is concentrated in a small area surrounding the capital Vilnius in south-eastern Lithuania, rather

¹² Ummelas, O. (2012, January 12), *Estonian Social Democrats Agrees to Merge With the Russian Party*. Bloomberg. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-01-12/estonian-social-democrats-agrees-to-merge-with-the-russian-party#xj4y7vzkg>

¹³ Statistic Lithuania (n.d.). *Population by ethnicity*, Retrieved May 10, 2023, from <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/en/gvyentoju-ir-bustu-surasymai>

¹⁴ Ibid.

than over the entire country (Janusauskiene, 2015). Hence, they have at least been able to win certain seats in single-seat constituencies, maintaining their influence in the parliament. On the proportional representation front, demographic disadvantages led to the formation of an interethnic minority alliance between the Polish and Russian communities in hopes of generating more support and passing the election threshold. For instance, in 2008, the LLRA seek to form an interethnic electoral coalition with the Russian Alliance. However, they had difficulties in reaching the 5% parliamentary threshold, winning only 4.8 per cent¹⁵ of the vote. Notwithstanding its defeat, LLRA did not give up its efforts to mobilise common minority concerns. Instead, it continued to collaborate with the Russian Alliance. In 2012, it gained substantial success in the general election, receiving 6.1 %¹⁶ of the vote and became a member of the Lithuanian ruling coalition from 2012 to 2014. Another example is that in the 2015 municipal elections, the LLRA launched a joint campaign with the Russian Alliance and received 60.8%¹⁷ of the vote in the Vilnius District Municipality.

3.2.2. Independent Variable

3.2.2.1. Language

It will use the question “What language or languages do you speak most often at home?” as the proxy to measure the language variable. Home language use reflects daily language use to a large extent. Besides, home language usage is a relatively stable and consistent measurement. A dummy variable, language, is used with a value of 1 for respondents who indicated they speak a non-titular language (Estonian or Lithuanian) most often at home.

3.2.2.2. Religion

Religion is measured by the religious denomination with which the respondent identifies. Respondents have been asked, “Do you consider yourself as belonging to any

¹⁵ The Central Election Commission of the Republic of Lithuania (2008). *Voting results in the Multi-member Constituency*,

https://www.vrk.lt/statiniai/puslapiai/2008_seimo_rinkimai/output_en/rezultatai_daugiamand_apygardose/rezultatai_daugiamand_apygardose1turas.html

¹⁶ The Central Election Commission of the Republic of Lithuania (2012). *Voting results in the Multi-member Constituency*,

https://www.vrk.lt/statiniai/puslapiai/2012_seimo_rinkimai/output_lt/rezultatai_daugiamand_apygardose/rezultatai_daugiamand_apygardose1turas.html

¹⁷ The Central Election Commission of the Republic of Lithuania (2015). *Elections to Municipal Councils on 1st of March 2015*,

https://www.vrk.lt/statiniai/puslapiai/2015_savivaldybiu_tarybu_rinkimai/output_en/rezultatai_daugiamand_apygardose/apylinkes241332_rezultatai.html

particular religion or denomination? Which one do you belong to at present?”. As mentioned, in Estonia, the major minority groups, namely ethnic Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, are historically Eastern Orthodox believers. Hence, only the difference between Eastern Orthodox and non-Eastern Orthodox is considered in the statistical models. A dummy variable is assigned with a value of 1 for respondents who indicated they alleviate with the Eastern Orthodox, while a value of 0 for respondents who are atheistic or do not claim any religious affiliation with the Eastern Orthodox.

The coding process is different in the case of Lithuania. Considering the minority population composition in Lithuania, Poles and Russian make up the largest minority population. Similar to Estonia, the Russian minority in Lithuania follows Eastern Orthodox. Poles, like Lithuanians, have a rather lengthy history of religious association with the Roman Catholic Church in the region. As a result, in the statistical models, a dummy variable is used with a value of 1 for respondents who indicated they follow the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Church while a value of 0 for respondents who do not claim any religious affiliation with those two religious beliefs or are atheism.

Given the importance of religious diversity in Lithuania, an additional religious variable will be tested in the Lithuania case. To mitigate potential confounding effects, the alternative religion variable will be recorded as a binary variable. Specifically, respondents who identify their affiliation with Eastern Orthodox will be assigned a value of 1, while those who do not affiliate with those religions will be assigned a value of 0.

3.2.2.3. Education

Education is measured by the years of full-time education completed. Respondents have been asked, “About how many years of education have you completed, whether full-time or part-time? Please report these in full-time equivalents and include compulsory years of schooling.”. Since the answers are measured on a continuous variable, the higher the number, the more educated the interviewee is.

3.2.2.4. *Left-right position*

The left-right position is measured with a scale from 0 (Left) to 10 (Right). Respondents were asked "In politics people sometimes talk of “left” and “right”. Using this card, where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?"

3.2.2.5. *Economy*

Satisfaction with the economy is measured by the question “On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy? Rating from 0 to 10, 0 means you are extremely dissatisfied), and 10 means you are extremely satisfied.”.

3.2.2.6. *Institutional trust*

This study focused on institutional trust in a specific political entity, namely the parliament, as it represents a crucial political institution both in Estonia and Lithuania. It not only oversees government actions but also holds the government accountable for its decisions. With the following question "Using this card, please rate your personal trust in each of the institutions listed on a scale of 0 to 10. "A score of 0 indicates that you have no faith in an institution, while a score of 10 indicates that you have total trust." In other words, the higher the score, the more trusting the respondent is of the parliament.

3.2.3. Control Variables

Age and gender were the primary control variables in the regression model. Age is measured as a continuous variable. Interviewees were asked to report their age at the time. Meanwhile, gender is treated as a dichotomy variable, which is coded 0 for males and 1 for females. Table 8 depicts all the variables and the corresponding measurement.

Table 6 List of variables and the corresponding measurement

	Variables	Description
1.	Ethnic Voting	No (0); Yes (1)
2.	Gender	Male (0); Female (1)
3.	Age	Age of respondents (continuous variable)
4.	Language	Estonian or Lithuanian (0); Foreign Language (1)
5.	Religion	Estonia: Non-Eastern orthodox or atheistic (0); Eastern Orthodox (1) Lithuania: Non-Eastern orthodox or Non-Roman Catholic or atheistic (0); Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox (1)
6.	Education	Year of full-time education completed
7.	Placement on Left-Right	Left (0); Right (10)
8.	Economy	Dissatisfied with the economy in the country (0); Satisfied with the economy in the country (10)
9.	Institutional trust	Distrust in parliament (0); Trust in parliament (10)
10.	Alternative religion	Lithuania: Non-Eastern orthodox or atheistic (0); Eastern Orthodox (1)

3.3. Methods

To address the first research question, I will start by examining the prevalence of ethnic voting. A descriptive analysis alongside two charts will be presented to illustrate the minority ethnic voting prevalence in Estonia and Lithuania. After that, it will take a closer look into the minorities' ethnic voting behaviour in each wave. A Chi-square test for independence, as one of the most effective statistics for testing hypotheses with nominal or ordinal variables, were performed for all study waves in both nations to determine whether ethnic minorities are more prone to vote for ethnic minority parties, compared with the ethnic majority counterparts. The chi-square coefficients show the strength of the association between ethnicity and ethnic voting. The null hypothesis (H0) of the chi-square test, in these two case studies, is that there is no relationship between ethnicity and ethnic voting, while the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is that there is a relationship between ethnicity and ethnic voting. Thus, the Chi-square Analysis Hypotheses are structured as follows:

H0: Ethnicity and voting for minority ethnic parties are independent

Ha: Ethnicity and voting for minority ethnic parties are not independent

Moving to the second research puzzle, a binary logistic regression is employed to examine which factors are associated with minorities' ethnic voting behaviour. It should be noted that the total sample size is reduced significantly after eliminating the majority. Due to the modest sample size (if we only consider the ethnic minorities) in both countries, I shall combine data from different research waves into a single dataset so that the logistic regression analyses can be run on that newly pooled dataset. In the logistic regression model, ethnic voting is the dependent variable, while the key independent variables are related to the six hypotheses outlined above under two theoretical frameworks, namely the social identity model and the rational choice model. The former consists of language (H4), religion (H5) and education (H6) and the latter consists of Left-right ideology (H7), economic satisfaction (H8), and institutional trust (H9). In addition, the ESS round will be included in the regression to indicate the difference in the prevalence of ethnic voting between the reference wave (the initial wave) and the subsequent waves. The model also controls for other social factors, namely age and gender. The odds ratio is used to demonstrate the effect that each variable has on the likelihood of ethnic voting.

3.4. Descriptive statistics and correlation between variables

To provide an overview of the relationships among different independent variables, two tables of descriptive statistics of all variables are presented. Table 7 and Table 8 illustrate the distribution of the variables in Estonia and Lithuania respectively. It is important to note that, in both countries, ethnic minorities speak non-national languages more often at home.

Table 7 Estonia: Distribution of testing Variables

	Variables	Mean	S.D.
1	Ethnic Voting (0=No; 1=Yes)	0.827	0.379
2	Gender (0= Male; 1= Female)	0.588	0.493
3	Age	49.56	17.253
4	Language (0 = Estonian; 1= non-Estonian)	0.817	0.387
5	Religion Non-Eastern orthodox/atheistic (0); Eastern Orthodox (1)	0.490	0.501
6	Education	13.75	3.072
7	Placement on Left-Right Left (0); Right (10)	4.65	1.842
8	Economy Dissatisfied (0); Satisfied (10)	3.7	2.202
9	Institutional trust Distrust (0); Trust (10)	3.98	2.48

Note: N= 359

Table 8 Lithuania: Distribution of testing Variables

	Variables	Mean	S.D.
1	Ethnic Voting (0=No; 1=Yes)	0.732	0.444
2	Gender (0= Male; 1= Female)	1.5	0.501
3	Age	54.63	15.369
4	Language (0 = Lithuanian; 1= non-Lithuania)	0.697	0.461
5	Religion non-Eastern orthodox/non-Roman Catholic/atheistic (0); Roman Catholic/Eastern Orthodox (1)	0.840	0.368
6	Education	12.83	3.026
7	Placement on Left-Right Left (0); Right (10)	4.77	1.909
8	Economy Dissatisfied (0); Satisfied (10)	3.72	1.927
9	Institutional trust Distrust (0); Trust (10)	3.71	2.288
10	Alternative religion Non-Eastern orthodox/atheistic (0); Eastern Orthodox (1)	0.243	0.430

Note: N= 194

A correlation analysis for the testing variable is also conducted and the results are shown in Table 9 and Table 10 respectively. On a bivariate basis, the strongest predictor of ethnic voting in these two nations is language. It is also worth mentioning the relationship between institutional trust and economic satisfaction. As indicated in Tables 9 and Table 10, the correlation coefficient in Estonia and Lithuania is 0.534 and 0.542 accordingly, showing a moderately significant association. Such a high level of correlation between these two predictor variables may lead to multicollinearity, which in turn makes it difficult to estimate the individual effects of each of these two variables on ethnic voting. To ensure the interpretability of the regression model, and perhaps draw a meaningful conclusion, I shall run an additional model and drop either one of these two variables.

Table 9 Estonia: Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Ethnic Voting (0=No; 1=Yes)	-								
2 Gender (0= Male; 1= Female)	0.021	-							
3 Age	.121*	.165**	-						
4 Language (0) Estonian; (1) non-Estonian	.308**	-.122*	-0.038	-					
5 Religion Non-Eastern orthodox/atheistic (0); Eastern Orthodox (1)	.167**	.144**	0.071	.284**	-				
6 Education	-0.037	-0.05	-0.085	-0.021	-0.001	-			
7 Placement on Left-Right Left (0); Right (10)	-.224**	-0.013	-0.059	-0.068	-0.062	-0.065	-		
8 Economy Dissatisfied (0); Satisfied (10)	-.169**	-0.071	0.054	-0.082	-.146**	0.045	.202**	-	
9 Institutional trust Distrust (0); Trust (10)	-.159**	0.006	0.058	-0.091	-0.099	0.054	.215**	.534**	-

Note: N= 359; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Table 10 Lithuania: Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Ethnic Voting (0=No; 1=Yes)	-									
2 Gender (0= Male; 1= Female)	-0.13	-								
3 Age	-0.07	0.139	-							
4 Language (0)Lithuanian; (1) non-Lithuania	.424**	0.089	-.218**	-						
5 Religion non-Eastern orthodox/non-Roman Catholic/atheistic (0); Roman Catholic/Eastern Orthodox (1)	-0.059	0.014	0.094	0.074	-					
6 Education	-0.024	0.059	-.387**	0.024	-0.049	-				
7 Placement on Left-Right Left (0); Right (10)	-.284**	0.14	-0.061	-.243**	.204**	-0.044	-			
8 Economy Dissatisfied (0); Satisfied (10)	0.006	-0.112	-.328**	.147*	0.108	.234**	0.112	-		
9 Institutional trust Distrust (0); Trust (10)	-0.04	0.081	-0.116	.188**	0.085	0.021	.183*	.542**	-	
10 Alternative religion Non-Eastern orthodox/atheistic (0); Eastern Orthodox (1)	0.079	0.08	.144*	.149*	.248**	-0.05	-0.033	-0.008	0.059	

Note: N= 194; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

4. Empirical results

The first section of the empirical analysis will devote to the prevalence of ethnic voting in Estonia and Lithuania. It will first exhibit the patterns of ethnic minorities' voting behaviour over time by using the ESS data. To test hypotheses 1 to 3, I will conduct a descriptive analysis to show the difference between the observed and expected frequencies of ethnic minorities who voted for an ethnic minority party. After that, chi-square tests for independence, as one of the most effective statistics for testing hypotheses with nominal or ordinal variables, will be undertaken across all study waves in both nations to determine the significance of the associations observed in the descriptive analysis.

The second section will seek to answer the question of what the predictors of ethnic voting are. A binary logistic regression analysis is employed to examine the association between the six proposed variables and minorities' ethnic voting behaviour.

4.1. Prevalence of minority ethnic voting in Estonia and Lithuania

4.1.1. Estonia

In all survey waves, according to the survey data, there are over 70% of ethnic minority respondents voted for a minority/minority-friendly party. To shed more light on the over-represented expected count, Figure 3 shows the patterns of ethnic minorities' voting behaviour over time. In 2004, it registered the lowest amount of ethnic voting, with around 70% of respondents. Since then, the level of ethnic voting had been increasing and reached 94% in 2018.

As mentioned, the inability of the minority parties to access the parliament has driven the ethnic minorities to demonstrate a gradual alienation from these minority parties. Minority-friendly parties, especially the EK, become the alternative for the ethnic minority. In each wave, more than 60%¹⁸ of the minority respondents said that they voted for EK in the last election. Interestingly, the survey results¹⁹ reveal that some non-ethnic parties, namely Estonian Reform Party (ER), had been able to secure a considerable number of votes from ethnic minorities. In

¹⁸ Appendix 3

¹⁹ Ibid.

certain years, they even performed better than minority-friendly parties. For example, in 2008 (wave 4), nearly 15% ²⁰ of the respondents reported that they voted for ER, while only 7% ²¹ of the respondents said they voted for the SDE.

To gain a deeper understanding of the changes, the quadric nexus could provide valuable insights. Specifically, examining the involvement of the external homeland, it seems that the engagement of the kin-state, namely Russia, may have played a significant role in the substantial increase in ethnic voting prevalence observed in 2008 (Wave 4). In April 2007, the Estonian government transported the Bronze Soldier to the Defence Forces Cemetery in Tallinn. The interpretation of the war events symbolized by the monument sparked a political dispute among Estonia's Russophone immigrants and Estonians, as well as between Russia and Estonia. The conflict surrounding the relocation peaked with two nights of rioting in Tallinn, along with a week-long siege of the Estonian embassy in Moscow and cyberattacks on Estonian institutions. This very political event undoubtedly intensified the ethnic tension in the country.

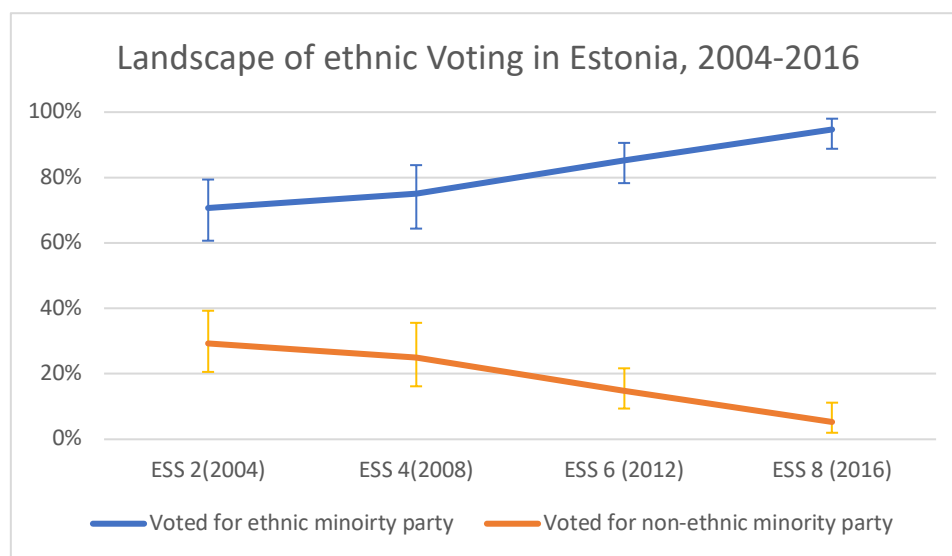


Figure 3 Landscape of ethnic voting in Estonia, 2004-2016

Note: Error bar with 95% CI

Source: Source: European Social Survey (ESS); Author's calculations

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

Although this study excludes the ESS 10 survey in the following empirical analysis, the vote choice of ethnic minorities (see Appendix 3) provides valuable insights and enhances our understanding of the behaviours of ethnic minorities. Indeed, the situation in the 2019 parliamentary election is much more complex, unlike the previous elections, there was no single party receiving a majority of minority vote, according to the survey result. Although EK was still the most popular option for ethnic minorities, there were only 27% of respondents said they voted for EK. Instead, the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE), which has long been positioned as a nationalist-conservative party, received almost 18% of the vote from ethnic minorities. Indeed, it is reported that the support for the Estonian Conservative People's Party (EKRE) had increased among the Russian community, particularly in Ida-Viru County, since 2019 ²². It is then suggested that this trend could be linked to the party's socially conservative position on issues related to social policy, such as its opposition to same-sex marriage.

To determine the prevalence of ethnic voting, the following part will look into the association between ethnicity and the likelihood of voting for a minority/minority-friendly party. In brief, the chi-square test shows that the prevalence of ethnic voting is relatively high among ethnic minority members. In other words, ethnic minorities in Estonia are more likely to vote along ethnic lines compared to their majority counterparts.

Table 12 illustrates the ethnicity appearing down the left side of the table and “voted for minority/minority-friendly party” appearing across the tops. In each of the tables, there are two figures: first, the observed count, which indicates the number of respondents that voted (either for an ethnic/ethnic-friendly party or not) in the respective election; second, the expected count, which is the statistically expected number of responses in each category determined by the chi-square equation. The results displayed in the table clearly show that, in Estonia, ethnic minorities are prone to vote for ethnic minority parties. As can be observed, ethnic minorities who voted for minority/minority-friendly parties were recorded more frequently than statistically predicted, whilst ethnic majorities display an expected number of votes in both categories. Especially, in 2016 (Wave 8), ethnic minorities who voted for a

²² ERR News. (2021). ERR News broadcast: Greening of Ida-Viru County costing Center support. <https://news.err.ee/1608089029/err-news-broadcast-greening-of-ida-viru-county-costing-center-support>

minority/minority-friendly party were heavily over-represented, whereas those who voted for a non-minority/minority-friendly party were severely under-represented.

Table 11 Crosstabulation Table of Ethnicity and Voting for ethnic/ ethnic friendly party in Estonia

EE			Voted for minority/minority-friendly party	
			No	Yes
2004 ESS2	Ethnic Minority	Count	30	68
		Expected count	62	36
	Ethnic Majority	Count	524	257
		Expected count	492	289
2008 ESS4	Ethnic Minority	Count	22	62
		Expected count	55	30
	Ethnic Majority	Count	497	219
		Expected count	465	252
2012 ESS6	Ethnic Minority	Count	21	120
		Expected count	80	61
	Ethnic Majority	Count	691	417
		Expected count	632	476
2016 ESS8	Ethnic Minority	Count	7	109
		Expected count	33	83
	Ethnic Majority	Count	325	735
		Expected count	299	761
Total	Ethnic Minority	Count	80	359
		Expected count	227	213
	Ethnic Majority	Count	2037	1628
		Expected count	1891	1775

Source: Source: European Social Survey (ESS); Author's calculations, Rounded number

Table 11 reveals that in four waves (2004, 2008, 2012, 2016), ethnic minorities who voted for a minority/minority-friendly party were heavily over-represented, whereas those who voted for a non-minority party were severely under-represented, suggesting ethnic minorities indeed engaged in ethnic voting in the corresponding parliamentary election. The question is whether these differences are significant enough to suggest that voting behaviour and ethnicity are related. By using the Chi-square test, this thesis confirms that ethnic minorities are indeed more likely to vote for minority/minority-friendly parties.

The Key result of the Chi-square tests is presented in Table 12. It suggests that there is a significant association ($p < 0.05$, $df = 1$) between ethnicity and the likelihood of voting for ethnic minority parties in four waves (2004, 2008, 2012, 2016). Furthermore, the Pearson Chi-square score also suggests that the discrepancy between the observed and expected frequencies reached the highest point in 2012 (ESS6), with a chi-square score of 115.

Table 12 Estonia: Pearson Chi-Square and the effect size measurement by Phi (ϕ)

		Pearson square(χ^2)	Chi- Df	Phi (ϕ)	N
Estonia	2004 (ESS2)	49.7***	1	0.238***	879
	2008 (ESS4)	61.6***	1	0.278***	800
	2012 (ESS6)	115.0***	1	0.303***	1249
	2016 (ESS8)	31.3***	1	0.163***	1176

Note: * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

Source: Source: European Social Survey (ESS); Author's calculations

In addition, Table 12 depicts the Phi (ϕ) coefficient which indicates the strength of association in each wave. Phi (ϕ) coefficient is an effect size measurement for the chi-square test of independence. It ranges from -1 to 1, where -1 indicates a perfect negative association, 0 indicates no association, and 1 indicates a perfect positive association between the variables. Also, it is suggested that a value of 0.1 is considered to be a small effect, 0.3 a medium effect, and 0.5 a large effect (Allen, 2017). Based on the effect size, the results revealed that ethnicity and the likelihood of voting for ethnic minority parties in those four waves had a positive as well as small to medium association, indicating ethnic minorities are more likely the voted for ethnic minority parties. In particular, it is shown that in 2012 (ESS 6), the association between those tested variables is the strongest (Phi (ϕ) = 0.303).

In conclusion, this section first illustrates the prevalence of ethnic voting in Estonia. The survey result reveals that most of the minority respondents are voting along the ethnic line. Further, The Chi-square result confirms that ethnic minorities are more likely to vote for ethnic minority parties, compared to their ethnic majority counterparts. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1) is confirmed.

4.1.2. Lithuania

Similarly, in Lithuania, the degree of ethnic voting does not remain static throughout the research timeframe. Nevertheless, it exhibits a divergent trajectory when contrasted with that of Estonia. Taking the survey results, the following part first presents descriptive analysis along with a line chart which demonstrates the ethnic voting movement across the research timeframe. The results show that Lithuania records a moderate level of ethnic voting. It starts with a fair amount of ethnic voting, with just half of the respondents saying they voted for ethnic minority parties. It reached its highest point in 2012, with around 80% of respondents saying they engage in ethnic voting. In the subsequent wave, the prevalence of ethnic voting is relatively stagnant and even shows a slight decrease.

In Lithuania, it is observed that ethnic minorities are also prone to vote for minority-friendly parties. In particular, Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) and Labour Party (DP) have received most of the support from the ethnic minority. 22.7% of the respondents said that they voted for LSDP in 2010 (ESS5) while 34.2% of the respondents said they voted for DP in 2012 (ESS6). In contrast, the minority party, LLRA, was falling behind in these two waves. Only 10.5% and 22.7% of the respondents said they voted for LLRA in ESS5 and ESS6 accordingly. In fact, since 2008, due to the demographic disadvantages, the LLRA seek to form an interethnic electoral coalition with the Russian Alliance in hopes of generating support and passing the election threshold. However, they had difficulties in reaching the 5% parliamentary threshold, winning only 4.8%²³ of the vote. Notwithstanding its defeat, LLRA did not give up its efforts to mobilise common minority concerns. Instead, it continued to collaborate with the Russian Alliance. In 2012, it gained substantial success in the general election, receiving 6.1%²⁴ of the vote and became a member of the Lithuanian ruling coalition from 2012 to 2014. According to the survey result, in 2016 (ESS8) around 49%²⁵ of the respondents said they voted for the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania-Christian Families Alliance (LLRA-KSS), the former LLRA, resulting as the most popular party among ethnic minorities in Lithuania.

²³ The Central Election Commission of the Republic of Lithuania (2008). *Voting results in the Multi-member Constituency*, https://www.vrk.lt/statiniai/puslapiai/2008_seimo_rinkimai/output_en/rezultatai_daugiamand_apygardose/rezultatai_daugiamand_apygardose1turas.html

²⁴ The Central Election Commission of the Republic of Lithuania (2012). *Voting results in the Multi-member Constituency*, https://www.vrk.lt/statiniai/puslapiai/2012_seimo_rinkimai/output_lt/rezultatai_daugiamand_apygardose/rezultatai_daugiamand_apygardose1turas.html

²⁵ Appendix 4

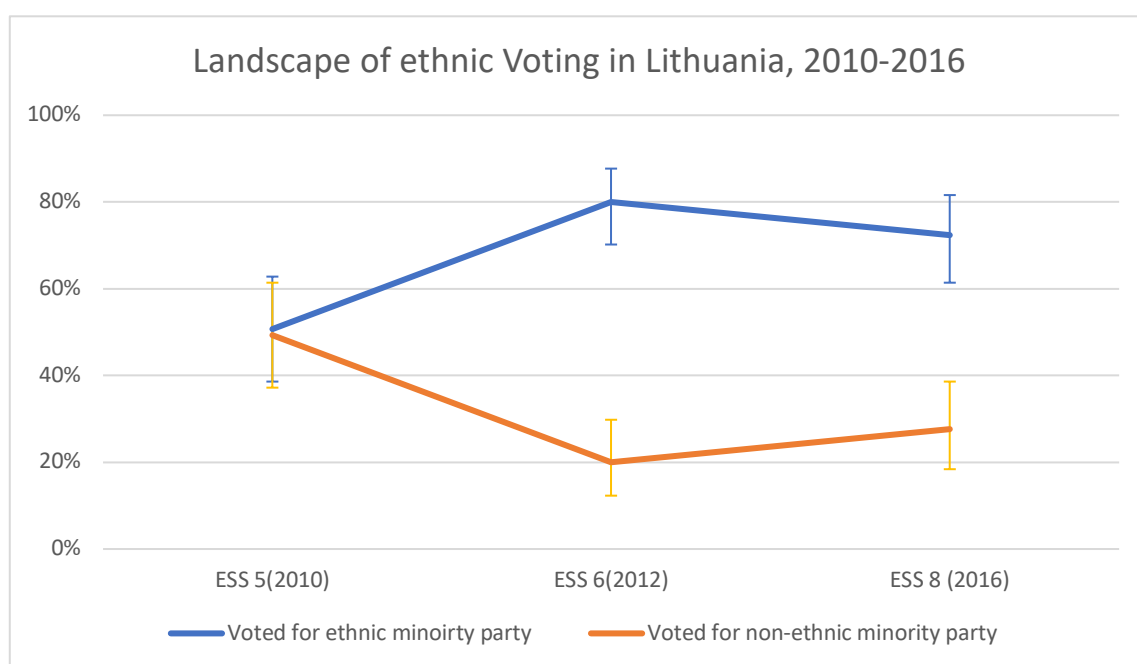


Figure 4 Landscape of ethnic Voting in Lithuania, 2010-2016

Note: Error bars: 95% CI

Source: Source: European Social Survey (ESS); Author's calculations

Similar to Estonian, the result of ESS 10 (2020) would not be included in the subsequent empirical analysis. However, coincidentally, the survey results reported an unprecedented voting pattern among the ethnic minorities. The situation in the 2020 parliamentary election is much more complex, unlike the previous elections, ethnic parties did not receive a majority of minority vote. On the contrary, the Lithuanian Peasant and Greens Union (LVZS) become the most popular choice among respondents. About 26.2 % of the respondents said they voted for LVZS in the 2020 parliamentary election whereas only 2.4% of the respondents said they voted for LLDA-KSS. Furthermore, the second most popular party is also a non-ethnic party. Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD), 16.2% of the respondents said they voted for TS-LKD in 2020.

To determine the prevalence of ethnic voting, the following part will look into the association between ethnicity and the likelihood of a minority/minority-friendly party. In brief, Table 13 reveals that, in Lithuania, ethnic minorities are also prone to vote for ethnic minority parties, albeit to a lesser degree. As can be observed, ethnic minorities who voted for a minority/minority-friendly party were recorded more frequently than statistically predicted. Conversely, ethnic majority voters did not display such a pattern. Especially, in 2016 (Wave

8), ethnic minorities who voted for minority/minority-friendly parties were heavily over-represented, whereas those who voted for a non-minority party were severely under-represented.

Table 13 Crosstabulation Table of Ethnicity and Voting for ethnic/ ethnic friendly party in Lithuania

LT			Voted for a minority/minority-friendly party	
			No	Yes
2010 ESS5	Ethnic Minority	Count	35	36
		Expected count	44	27
	Ethnic Majority	Count	462	264
		Expected count	453	273
2012 ESS6	Ethnic Minority	Count	18	70
		Expected count	34	54
	Ethnic Majority	Count	363	541
		Expected count	347	557
2016 ESS8	Ethnic Minority	Count	23	60
		Expected count	57	26
	Ethnic Majority	Count	659	253
		Expected count	625	287
Total	Ethnic Minority	Count	76	166
		Expected count	146	106
	Ethnic Majority	Count	1484	1058
		Expected count	1424	1118

Source: Source: European Social Survey (ESS); Author's calculations

Table 13 reveals that in three waves (2010, 2012, 2016), ethnic minorities who voted for a minority/minority-friendly party were heavily over-represented, whereas those who voted for a non-minority party were severely under-represented, suggesting ethnic minorities indeed engaged in ethnic voting in the corresponding parliamentary election. To determine the significance of the association observed in Table 13, the Chi-square test will be used. The results shown in Table 14 confirm that ethnic minorities are indeed more likely to vote for a minority/minority-friendly party.

Table 14 Lithuania Pearson Chi-Square and the effect size measurement by Phi (ϕ)

		Pearson Chi-square(χ^2)	Df	Phi (ϕ)	N
Lithuania	2010 (ESS5)	5.7***	1	0.084**	797
	2012 (ESS6)	13.2***	1	0.115***	992
	2016 (ESS8)	70.0***	1	0.265***	995

*Note: * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$*

Source: Source: European Social Survey (ESS); Author's calculations

The Key result of the Chi-square tests is presented in Table 14. It suggests that there is a significant association ($p < 0.05$, $df = 1$) between ethnicity and the likelihood of voting for ethnic minority parties in three waves (2010, 2012, 2016). Moreover, the Pearson Chi-square score also suggests that in 2016 (ESS8), the discrepancy between the observed and expected frequencies reached the highest point, with a chi-square score of 70. In addition, Table 14 depicts the Phi (ϕ) coefficient, providing the strength of association in each wave. Based on the effect size, the results revealed that ethnicity and the likelihood of voting for ethnic minority parties in those three waves had a positive as well as small to medium association, indicating ethnic minorities are more likely the voted for ethnic minority parties. In particular, it is shown that in 20116 (ESS 8), the association between those tested variables is the strongest (Phi (ϕ) = 0.265).

In conclusion, the survey data reveals that there were a significant proportion of ethnic minorities vote along the ethnic line. Additionally, the Chi-square result confirms that, compared with the ethnic majority counterparts, ethnic minorities are more likely to vote for ethnic minority parties. Thus, the first hypothesis (H2) is confirmed.

Regarding the third hypothesis, that the prevalence of minority ethnic voting in Estonia is higher than in Lithuania, it has been partially confirmed. The Phi (ϕ) coefficient shows that the association between ethnicity and voting for ethnic parties is in general higher in Estonia. However, in 2018, In Lithuania, the association between ethnicity and voting for ethnic parties become more substantial, which exceed Estonia in the same period. As a result, the second hypothesis is partially confirmed.

4.2. Logistic Regression Analysis

In order to determine the extent to which ethnicity can be deemed a predictor of voting behaviour within minority groups, or whether such behaviour is motivated by rational decision-making, the logistic regression results of Estonia and Lithuania will be presented in Table 15 and Table 16, respectively. The first model combines control variables and pooled data variables. The latter offers a clear picture of the heterogeneity of the data in each wave. Models 2 and 3 investigate the impact of the identity model and the rational choice model, respectively. Model 4 is a comprehensive model in which all variables are included at the same time.

Furthermore, given the fact that most of the ethnic minorities in these two countries speak their home language more often at home, an additional model (Model 5) will be conducted without the language variable. In order to address the issue of multicollinearity, it is proposed to conduct two additional logistic regression models (Model 6 & Model 7), wherein the two highly correlated variables, namely Economy and Institutional trust, will be tested individually in the corresponding model. In consideration of the religious landscape of Lithuania, an additional statistical model (Model 8) will be implemented to account for any potential confounding effects. Throughout the testing of these models, age and gender will be consistently controlled for.

In the logistic regression analysis, the odd ratio (OR) will be used to demonstrate the strength of association between those six tested variables and ethnic voting. The OR represents the odds that an outcome will occur given a particular event, compared to the odds of the outcome occurring in the absence of that event. If the OR is greater than 1, then the variable is associated with higher odds of voting along the ethnic line. Conversely, if the odds ratio is less than one, then the variable is associated with lower odds of voting along the ethnic line.

4.2.1. Estonia

First of all, Model 1 reveals the OR of the control variables, suggesting that age has a positive association with ethnic voting. In particular, it is shown that an ethnic minority individual who is 1 year older, has 1.8% ($p < 0.05$) times more likely to vote along the ethnic lines. To investigate the possible heterogeneity of ethnic voting behaviour in different waves. Taking the ESS 2 (2004) as a reference year, the results show that when time passed, ethnic minorities are more likely to vote along the ethnic line. For instance, ethnicity minorities, compared to 2004 (ESS2), the odds of engaging in ethnic voting increased by 2.2 times ($p < 0.05$) and 6.4 times ($p < 0.01$) in 2012 (ESS6) and 2016 (ESS8) respectively. Indeed, the empirical results are closely in line with the survey data, confirming that the prevalence of ethnic voting is increasing gradually during the review period from 2004 to 2016.

Moreover, the regression results suggest that the explanatory power of the identity model (Model 2) is relatively strong, explaining 22.1% of the variance in ethnic voting. The results confirm the hypothesis (H4) that ethnic minorities voters who speak the home language

more frequently are more likely to vote along ethnic lines. In the social identity model, language and ethnic voting are positively and significantly correlated ($OR = 4.626, p < 0.01$). If an ethnic minority individual speaks their mother language at home more often than in Estonia, the odds of engaging in ethnic voting increase by 4.6 times. As mentioned, in Estonia, the frequent usage of the mother language for ethnic minorities can strengthen one's ethnic identity. According to the above-mentioned theory, it is suggested that language could provide individuals with a sense of belonging which strengthens an individual group membership (Miller, 2000). Also, it offers a unique dimension to ethnic identity and facilitates the differentiation of its members from those of other groups, leading to a stronger sense of belonging. More importantly, in Estonia, it is observed that language has been used by the Russian government to connect with the Russian speakers which in turn serves as a soft power capital that can be utilised for misinformation campaigns and strengthening one's ethnic identity. Within the social identity model, religion and education do match our expectations and are in line with the association suggested above. However, the result suggests that there is no evidence of a statistically significant relationship between ethnic voting and education nor between ethnic voting and religion.

Turning to the rational choice model, the results reveal that the explanatory power of the rational choice model (Model 3) has somewhat higher than the social identity one, explaining only 22.5% of the variance in ethnic voting in Estonia. The hypothesis that Ethnic Minorities who place themselves on the left wing are more likely to vote along ethnic lines (H7), finds considerable support. Regressing ethnic voting on left-right placement reveals that individuals who are on the left side of the political spectrum (i.e., have a lower "left-right position" value) are more likely to vote along the ethnic line than those who are on the right side of the spectrum (i.e., have a higher "left-right position" value). Individuals have every one-unit increase in "left-right position" (i.e., moving from left to right on the political spectrum), and the odds of ethnic voting decrease by a factor of 0.746.

Moreover, as hypothesized, satisfaction with the economy is negatively associated with ethnic voting: ethnic minorities voters who are more satisfied with their country's economic situation are less likely to vote along the ethnic line (H8). When an individual's satisfaction with national economic conditions improves by 1 point on a 10-point scale (i.e., moving from dissatisfied to satisfied), the odds of the individual engaging in ethnic voting is 14% lower ($p <$

0.01). In contrast, institutional trust has a relatively weak negative and insignificant association (OR = 0.917) with ethnic voting in Estonia.

In fact, the result of model 3 is well in line with the rational choice theory, as ethnic voters do act rationally when casting their votes. Left-right positions appear to be the strongest predictors. As Downs (1957) argued, ethnic minorities are rational voters who treated the left-right position as merely an information shortcut when making the voting decision. Likewise, it is suggested that ethnic minorities would also see the economy as a valence problem, rewarding or penalising the incumbent based on how well the economy is doing. To penalise the incumbent, citizens would vote for opposition such as those ethnic parties in Estonia that have usually been in opposition and have often been presented as eternal opponents.

The combined model (Model 4) has the strongest explanatory power (Nagelkerke R² = 0.370). Although language is the single best predictor of ethnic voting in the second model, the results also reveal that adding rational choice variables increases the explanatory power of the model by 15% (Nagelkerke R² increases from 0.221 to 0.370). In this model, the OR for language has the largest value, suggesting that it is the strongest predictor of ethnic voting behaviour. Nevertheless, regarding the rational choice variables, the association between placement on the left-right and ethnic voting is slightly weaker. As such, the result suggests that the left-right effect seems to be quite independent of language, despite such a dominant variable as language being added to the model. In contrast, the odd ratio of the economy variable is reduced and has lost its statistical significance in this combined model, suggesting the association between economy and ethnic voting could be indirect.

Table 15 Estonia Logistic Regression

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5 (Without Language)	Model 6 (Without Economy)	Model 7 (Without Institutional trust)
Odds ratio							
<i>Constant</i>							
Gender	1.087	1.303	1.073	1.341	0.991	1.289	1.305
Age	1.018**	1.022* *	1.021**	1.025**	1.019**	1.022**	1.023**
<i>Pooled dataset</i>							
ESS round 4 2008	1.437	1.678	1.217	1.56	1.229	1.993	1.422
ESS round 6 2012	2.184**	2.051*	1.57	1.56	1.426	1.84	1.592
ESS round 8 2016	6.411** *	5.309** *	6.775** *	6.565** *	7.151** *	6.781** *	6.735** *
<i>Identity model</i>							
(0) Estonian; (1) non-Estonian		4.626** *		4.385** *		4.243** *	4.715** *
Religion Non-Eastern orthodox/atheisti c (0); Eastern Orthodox (1)		1.453		1.277	1.845*	1.397	1.281
Education		0.959		0.935	0.919	0.931	0.93
<i>Rational choice Model</i>							
Placement on Left-Right Left (0); Right (10)			0.746** *	0.754** *	0.743** *	0.738** *	0.753** *
Economy Dissatisfied (0); Satisfied (10)			0.851*	0.871	0.861*		0.832**
Institutional trust Distrust (0); Trust (10)			0.917	0.932	0.918	0.88**	
N	359	359	359	359	359	361	364
Nagelkerke R Square	0.110	0.221	0.225	0.370	0.249	0.298	0.314

Note: Post-stratification weight is applied; Dependent variable: Ethnic Voting; 1 = Voted for minority/ minority-friendly party; 0 = did not vote for minority/ minority-friendly party; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Source: Source: European Social Survey (ESS); Author's calculations

As mentioned, an additional model without the language variable is conducted to reduce the bias. In Model 5, the language variable is dropped. The explanatory power of the model decreases by 12.1%, explaining only 24.9% of the variance in ethnic voting. It is observed that religion becomes a significant predictor of ethnic voting, suggesting language and religion are dependent. In this model, religion and ethnic voting are positively and significantly correlated ($OR = 1.845$, $p < 0.1$). In other words, if an ethnic minority individual speaks their mother language at home more often than in Estonia, the odds of engaging in ethnic voting increase by 1.8 times. The result is in line with our expectation that there is an association between religion and ethnic voting. The Orthodox Church has the potential to reinforce an individual's ethnic identity, resulting in a higher probability of engaging in ethnic voting. In particular, it is suggested that the ROC, which is tied to the Kremlin, positions itself as the moral authority for ethnic Russians in the Baltic region, attempting to offer the ethnic minorities a distinct worldview and value system that aligns with the Russian narrative (Ekmanis, 2020).

To address the issue of multicollinearity, those two highly correlated variables, namely institutional trust, and economy, will be tested individually in Model 6 and Model 7. The former, dropping the economy variable, is able to explain only 29.8% of the variance in ethnic voting in Estonia. When the economy variable is dropped, the OR of political trust decreases from 0.932 to 0.880 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a more robust and statically significant association between institutional trust and ethnic voting. In contrast, Model 7 is able to explain 31.4% of the variance in ethnic voting in Estonian, without the variable of institutional trust. the results in Model 7 reveal that the OR of the economy has decreased from 0.871 to 0.832 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a robust and statically significant association between economy and ethnic voting. As such, the result of these models confirms that these two variables are fairly dependent in relation to predicting ethnic voting in Estonia.

4.2.2. Lithuania

Table 15 reveals the empirical results of eight different logistic regression models tested in Lithuania. To begin with, Model 1 reveals the OR of the control variables, suggesting there is no evidence that neither gender nor age has a statistically significant association with ethnic voting in Lithuania. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the association between the reference wave ESS 5 (2010) and other tested waves is statistically significant.

The results reveal that the explanatory power of the identity model (Model 2) is relatively strong, explaining 30% of the variance in ethnic voting. As hypothesised, ethnic minorities voters who speak the home language more frequently are more likely to vote along ethnic lines (H4). The results show that language and ethnic voting are positively and significantly correlated ($OR = 11.115$, $p < 0.01$). If an ethnic minority individual speaks non-Estonian at home more often than in Estonia, the odds of engaging in ethnic voting increase by 11 times. On the contrary, within the social identity model, both education and religion are negatively and statically insignificant associated with ethnic voting. According to the above-mentioned theory, the frequent usage of the mother language for ethnic minorities can strengthen one's ethnic identity. It is suggested that language could provide individuals with a sense of belonging which strengthens an individual group membership (Miller, 2000). Likewise, in Lithuania, it is observed that language has been used by the Russian government to connect with the Russian-speakers which in turn serves as a soft power capital that can be utilised for misinformation campaigns and strengthening one's ethnic identity.

Moving to the rational choice model, the results illustrate that the explanatory power of the rational choice model (Model 3) has a weaker explanatory power than the social identity one, explaining 15.2% of the variance in ethnic voting in Lithuania. The hypothesis that ethnic minorities voters who place themselves on the left wing are more likely to vote along ethnic lines (H6), finds considerable support. Regressing ethnic voting on left-right placement reveals that individuals who are on the left side of the political spectrum (i.e., have a lower "left-right position" value) are more likely to vote along the ethnic line than those who are on the right side of the spectrum (i.e., have a higher "left-right position" value). Individuals have every one-unit increase in "left-right position" (i.e., moving from left to right on the political spectrum), and the odds of ethnic voting decrease by a factor of 0.694 ($p < 0.01$). On the contrary, there is

no evidence that the association between ethnic voting and other tested variables in the model, namely economy and institution trust is statically significant.

The combined model (Model 4) has the strongest explanatory power (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.329$). Although language is the single best predictor of ethnic voting in the second model, the results also reveal that adding rational choice variables increases the explanatory power of the model by 2.9% (Nagelkerke R^2 increases from 0.3 to 0.329). In this combined model, the odd ratio for language has the largest value ($OR = 9.919$), suggesting that its effect is greater than that of any other single variable. The confirmed hypothesis is in line with the social identity theory and identity complexity theory that see language as a significant predictor of ethnic voting. Nevertheless, regarding the rational choice variable, placement on left-right has lost its effect and statistical significance in the combined model, suggesting the association between left-right and ethnic voting could be indirect. Interestingly, it is reported that gender has a statistical signification association ($OR = 0.391$; $p < 0.01$) with ethnic voting in the combined model. The results suggest that a Female is 60% less likely to engage in ethnic voting.

Table 16 Lithuania Logistic Regression

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5 (Without Language)	Model 6 (Without Economy)	Model 7 (Without Institutional trust)	Model 8 (Alternative Religion)
Odds ratio								
<i>Constant</i>								
Gender	0.585	0.334***	0.668	0.391**	0.731	0.393*	0.38	0.393**
Age	0.993	1.012	0.99	1.007	0.985	1.007	1.005	1.005
<i>Pooled dataset</i>								
ESS round 6 (2012)	1.847	1.139	1.786	1.211	1.691	1.209	1.161	1.121
ESS round 8 (2016)	1.029	0.65	1.079	0.747	0.98	0.745	0.687	0.673
<i>Identity model</i>								
Language (0)Lithuanian; (1) non-Lithuania		11.115***		9.919***		9.908***	8.928***	9.514***
Religion non-Eastern orthodox/non- Roman Catholic/atheistic (0); Roman Catholic/Eastern Orthodox (1)		0.509		0.695	1.009	0.693	0.752	
Education Non-Eastern orthodox/atheistic (0); Eastern Orthodox (1)		0.993		0.968	0.933	0.968	0.976	0.969
								1.032
<i>Instrumental Model</i>								
Placement on Left-Right Left (0); Right (10)			0.694***	0.834	0.682***	0.834	0.813*	0.816*
Economy Dissatisfied (0); Satisfied (10)			0.993	0.993	1.004		0.944	0.986
Institutional trust Distrust (0); Trust (10)			1.029	0.906	1.011	0.904		0.915
N	194	194	194	194	196	194	195	194
Nagelkerke Square	R 0.05	0.3	0.152	0.329	0.16	0.329	0.324	0.327

Note: Dependent variable: Ethnic Voting; 1 = Voted for minority/ minority friendly party; 0 = did not vote for minority/ minority friendly party; * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Source: Source: European Social Survey (ESS); Author's calculations

As mentioned, an additional model without the language variable is conducted to reduce the bias. In Model 5, the language variable is dropped. The explanatory power of the model decreased by 16.9%, explaining only 16 % of the variance in ethnic voting. It is observed that left-right placement becomes a strong and statistically significant ($OR = 0.682$; $p < 0.01$) predictor of ethnic voting. It further suggests that language and left-right placement are dependent. To address the issue of multicollinearity, those two highly correlated variables, namely institutional trust, and economy, will be tested individually in Model 6 and Model 7. The former, dropping the economy variable, is able to explain only 32.9% of the variance in ethnic voting in Estonia. However, there is no evidence that the association between institutional trust and ethnic voting is statistically significant. Meanwhile, Model 7 is able to explain 32.4% of the variance in ethnic voting in Estonian, without the variable of institutional trust. Likewise, the results suggested that there is no evidence that association between economy and ethnic voting is statistically significant. As such, the result of these two models reveals the effects of economy and political trust are not a significant predictor of ethnic voting, given that the language variable is still the dominant variable.

Last but not least, Model 8 replaces the religion variable with the alternative religion variable. Such changes have led to a positive association between religion and ethnic voting, albeit the result is statistically insignificant. Language continues to serve as the strongest predictor in the model.

4.2.3. Summary

To sum up the logistic regression analysis, in Estonia, language (H4) and left-right placement (H7) are the statically significant contributions to the likelihood of voting along the ethnic line, in which the latter is the strongest predictor amongst all tested variables. Likewise, in Lithuania, Language (H4) and left-right placement (H7) show their significant contributions to the likelihood of voting along the ethnic line. However, the combined Model suggests that these two variables are very much dependent, in which language continued to serve as a dominant predictor of ethnic voting in Lithonia. While there is no evidence of the association between Other tested variables and ethnic voting as such. Based on this association, a government that seeks to reduce the level of ethnic voting should consider further promoting the national language among the ethnic minorities and equip them with basic communication skills to receive information, not limited to Russian media.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, this thesis has contributed to an understanding of minority voting behaviour in Estonia and Lithuania. It first investigates the prevalence of ethnic voting in Estonia and Lithuania. The ESS data suggests that a lot of ethnic minorities in these two countries were indeed engaged in ethnic voting. Especially, it is reported that in each of these four waves (2004, 2008, 2012, 2016), there were more than 70% of respondents voted for minority/minority-friendly parties, making a relatively high prevalence of ethnic voting. Likewise, as expected, there is a big proportion of ethnic minorities in Lithuania also vote along ethnic lines. Yet, the voting pattern of the ethnic shows a more dynamic movement. A chi-square test is then undertaken and supports the fact that ethnic minorities in Estonia and Lithuania are more likely to vote for a minority/minority-friendly party, compared to their ethnic majority counterparts. The empirical results also revealed that the strength of such an association varied in different years. For instance, in Estonia, 2012 (ESS6) experienced the strongest association while in Lithuania, 2016 (ESS8) has the stronger association.

Even though the survey result of 2020 (ESS 10) has been excluded from the empirical analysis, it provides invaluable insight into ethnic minority voting behaviour and perhaps for further study. In particular, in 2020 (ESS 10), it seems that ethnic minorities in both countries were less likely to engage in ethnic voting, compare with the previous election. The survey results demonstrate that mainstream parties were also able to gain support from the ethnic minorities, through addressing minorities' concerns. The prime example is the performance of the EKRE in the 2019 Estonian parliamentary election. As positioned as a nationalist-conservative party, it received considerable support from ethnic minorities.

In the second part of the empirical analysis, a logistic regression analysis is presented, aiming to find out the predictors of ethnic voting. In both countries, the empirical results show that within the social identity model, language is the strongest predictor. It thus confirms the H4 that ethnic minorities voters who speak the home language more frequently are more likely to vote along ethnic lines. Regarding the rational choice model, left-right placement is the strongest predictor in both of the countries. It thus confirms the H6 that ethnic minorities voters who place themselves on the left wing are more likely to vote along ethnic lines. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the language and left-right placement variable in Lithuania is very much

dependent. Additionally, in Estonia, the results also suggest that there is a negative association between the economy and ethnic voting. Hence, the H7, ethnic minorities voters who are more satisfied with their country's economic situation are less likely to vote along the ethnic line, is confirmed.

While this thesis has cast light on the prevalence of ethnic minority ethnic voting and the predictors of such behaviour. It did not dive into the complex question of how to reduce the level of ethnic voting. Even though the survey data suggest, in the latest election, the prevalence of ethnic voting among ethnic minorities has severally dropped, the recent development in the region visa-vi the Russia-Ukraine war has undoubtedly reignited the ethnic tension. Given the fact that a high degree of ethnic voting could produce harm to democracy in three different ways, the issues of minority ethnic voting are crucial to be addressed in further research.

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Appendix 1: ESS Demographic Data (Latvia)

Table 17 Latvia census 2011 and 2018

	2011		2018	
	Number	%	Number	%
Latvians	1,285,136	62.1	1,202,781	62.2
Russians	557,119	26.9	487,250	25.2
Others	26,640	1.3	61,795	3.2
Belarusians	68,202	3.3	62,713	3.2
Ukrainians	45,898	2.2	43,128	2.2
Poles	44,772	2.2	39,687	2.1
Lithuanians	24,479	1.2	22,831	1.2
Roma	6489	0.3	5082	0.3
Jews	6,437	0.3	4,721	0.2
Germans	3,042	0.1	2,554	0.1
Estonians	2,007	0.1	1,676	0.09
Livonians	250	0.01	161	0.01

Source: [Population Census 2011 – Key Indicators – Latvijas statistika](#)". *Csb.gov.lv*. Retrieved 7 November 2017

Table 18 ESS Latvia sample size

	Minority ethnic Group	%	Non-Minority ethnic Group	%
ESS 4 (2008)	152	7.9%	101	92.1%
ESS 9 (2018)	101	11.1%	881	88.9%
TOTAL	253	8.9%	1487	91.1%

Appendix 2: Date of data collection and response rate

	Response rate	Data collection period	Response rate	Data collection period
	Estonia		Lithuania	
ESS 2 2004	79.1	30-09-2004 - 19-01-2005	-	-
ESS 4 2008	57.4	05-11-2008 - 11-03-2009	-	-
ESS 5 2010	-	-	39.4	21-04-2011 - 20-08-2011
ESS 6 2012	67.8	01-09-2012 - 28-01-2013	49.6	21-05-2013 - 25-08-2013
ESS 8 2016	68.4	01-10-2016 - 31-01-2017	49.7	04-10-2017 - 28-12-2017
ESS 10 2020	47.2	07-06-2021 - 31-12-2021	35.6	01-07-2021 - 15-12-2021

Source: ESS; <https://ess-search.nsd.no/CDW/RoundCountry>

Appendix 3: Estonia Vote choice (ESS2-ESS10)

Table 19 Vote Choice in Estonia Wave 2

ESS 2 (2004)	Frequency	Valid Percent
Party Res Publica	16	16.6
Estonian Centre Party	59	60.7
Estonian Reform Party	8	8
Pro Patria Union	3	2.9
Estonian Social Democratic Party	6	5.6
Estonian People's Union	2	2
Estonian United People's Party	3	2.9
Independent candidates	1	1.1
Total	98	

Table 20 Vote Choice in Estonia Wave 4

ESS 4 (2008)	Frequency	Valid Percent
Pro Patria and Res Publica Union	5	5.5
The Estonian Centre Party	56	66.9
Estonian Reform Party	12	14.9
The People's Union of Estonia	1	1.1
The Social Democratic Party	6	7.2
Estonian Greens	3	3.3
Party of Estonian Christian Democrats	1	1.1

Table 21 Vote Choice in Estonia Wave 6

ESS 6 (2012)	Frequency	Valid Percent
Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit	1	0.4
Eesti Keskerakond	112	78.9
Eesti Reformierakond	13	9.1
Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond	9	6.2
Erakond Eestimaa Rohelised	3	1.9
Üksikkandidaadi poolt	5	3.6

Table 22 Vote Choice in Estonia Wave 8

ESS 8	Frequency	Valid Percent
Eesti Reformierakond	5	4.5
Eesti Keskerakond	89	77.6
Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit	4	3.8
Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond	12	10.4
Erakond Eestimaa Rohelised	2	1.9
Üksikkandidaadid või muud	2	1.9

Table 23 Vote Choice in Estonia Wave 10

ESS 10	Frequency	Valid Percent
Eesti Reformierakond	9	15.7
Eesti Keskerakond	15	27.3
Isamaa Erakond	8	15.2
Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond	9	17
Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond	10	18.2
Eesti 200	4	6.6

Appendix 4: Lithuania Vote Choice (ESS5-ESS10)

Table 24 Vote choice in Lithuania Wave 5

ESS 5 2010	Frequency	Valid Percent
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP)	16	22.7
Union of Russians of Lithuania (LRS)	2	2.6
Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD)	8	11.1
Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (LLRA)	7	10.5
National Resurrection Party (TPP)	5	7.2
The Coalition Labour Party + Youth	11	14.9
Liberals' Movement of the Republic of Lithuania (LRLS)	1	1.6
Lithuanian Peasant Popular Union (LVLS)	5	6.5
Party Order and Justice (TT)	5	7.4
Party 'Young Lithuania' (JL)	0	0.7

Table 25 Vote choice in Lithuania Wave 6

ESS6 2012	Frequency	Valid Percent
Liberals' Movement of the Republic of Lithuania (LRLS)	3	3.7
Labour Party (DP)	30	34.2
Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD)	2	2
Political Party 'The Way of Courage' (DK)	1	1.2
Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (LLRA)	20	22.7
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP)	19	21.8
Party Order and Justice (TT)	9	10
Socialist People's Front (SLF)	1	0.7

Party 'Young Lithuania' (JL)	1	1.3
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Table 26 Vote choice in Lithuania Wave 8

ESS 8	Frequency	Valid Percent
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP)	12	14.2
Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD)	3	3.3
Lithuanian Freedom Union (Liberals) (LLSL)	1	1.4
Party Order and Justice (TT)	6	6.7
Lithuanian Peasant and Greens Union (LVZS)	9	11.3
Liberals' Movement of the Republic of Lithuania (LRLS)	2	2.8
Labour Party (DP)	7	8.4
Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania-Christian Families Alliance (LLRA-KSS)	41	49.4
Lithuanian Greens Party (LZP)	1	1.5

Table 27 Vote choice in Lithuania Wave 10

ESS 10	Frequency	Valid Percent
Party 'Freedom and Justice' (LT)	2	7.4
Freedom Party (LP)	4	15.2
Lithuanian People's Party (LLP)	2	6.3
Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD)	4	16.2
Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania-Christian Families Alliance (LLRA-KSS)	1	2.4
Social Democratic Labour Party of Lithuania (LSDDP)	1	2.2
Lithuanian Peasant and Greens Union (LVZS)	7	26.2
Lithuanian Greens Party (LZP)	1	5.2
Labour Party (DP)	5	19

