Tatjana Doroško

Russian Diaspora Politics in the Context of Estonia: Diaspora Participation in the Policy-Making Process

Bachelor Thesis

Advisor: Taavi Annus, LLM

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Abstract

The aim of the current thesis is to analyse the possible role of the Russian-speakers in the policy-making process in the field of diaspora politics. The Russian-speaking diaspora in Estonia is potentially playing a decisive role in the policy-making process of the Russian state towards its compatriots abroad. Diaspora politics could be implemented on three different levels: the level of global international politics, the level of bilateral relations between the home and the host state, and the sphere of relations between the diaspora and the home state. The role of the diaspora as an actor in the policy formulation varies according to the level of politics. This conclusion is based on the analysis of three cases chosen from different levels of diaspora politics.
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Illustratively, Porter and Saivetz concluded that ‘you can take the republics away from
Russia, but you can’t get Russia out of the republics’. 1

Introduction

In the modern world it is hardly possible to find a mono-ethnic nation state. Because of
geopolitical and demographical changes that occurred after the World War II, almost all
Western European countries faced the challenges of multiethnic societies. The collapse
of the Soviet Union intensified the problem. According to the recent data,
approximately 27 million of people were separated from their motherland in 1991 (King
and Melvin, 1999: 50). As a result, the population of the present CIS and Baltic
countries consists of not only representatives of titular nations but also of the natives of
the former uniform state. In Estonia more than one third of population found themselves
belonging to the minority groups.

Since 1991 the issue of the Russian-speakers was widely debated in Estonia not only
among social scientists, but also by the politicians. However, the main focus of the
political debate and scientific research is on the Estonian domestic policy and on the
interaction of the minorities with the Estonian state. In the State Programme
“Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007” the Russian-speaking population is seen as
a factor of the internal policy… 2 But it is evident, that the Russian-speaking community
can be considered in a broader context of international relations. The Russian
Federation as a homeland for the Russian-speakers has its own relations with its
diaspora. Searching for the most optimum model of interaction with the compatriots
abroad, the Russian Federation creates institutional framework for communication with
the diaspora, formulates and implements the politics towards the diaspora.

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1 Simonsen, 771-772.
2 In the 2nd chapter „Background“ of the State Program „Integration in Estonian Society in 2000-2007”
(Government of the Republic of Estonia) there are no references to bilateral international agreements with
Russia or other homelands of diasporas living in Estonia. The chapter consists of the list of European
conventions and pacts ratified by Estonia, Estonian legislative acts, strategic development plans, and the
most important decisions in the sphere of integration.
The Russian diaspora in Estonia appears in a situation where there are two states motivated to influence the processes that take place in the Russian-speaking community (the construction of identities, loyalty, the preservation of cultural values, language policy etc). In such conditions diaspora as an institutionalised actor should develop its own strategy for the interaction with both sides. Russians in Estonia are involved in the processes of policy formulation not only from the side of the Estonian governmental structures (i.e. integration and language policy), but also within the framework of Russian political agencies (politics towards the compatriots abroad). Broadly speaking, the Russian diaspora has a potential to influence the political decision-making on the internal issues of both states, and to function as a “bridge” in the bilateral relations between Russia and Estonia, as well as to initiate and lobby the questions of the global foreign politics.

The aim of this work is to examine to which extent the Russian diaspora in Estonia is motivated and is capable of participating as an actor on the international political landscape. Due to the limited settings for the Bachelor thesis, I am restricting my work to cover the interaction of the diaspora with Russia on the topics related to the politics towards the diaspora. It is interesting to examine what are the main interests of the diaspora as an international lobby group, what is the “opportunity structure” created by Russia in order to guarantee the diaspora participation, and to which extent diaspora uses its potential to influence the Russian politics. Answering these questions could be helpful in predicting the possible role of the Russian diaspora not only as an actor on the political landscape of the Russian Federation, but also on the global arena of the international relations.

In order to answer the research question I have divided the broader concept of the Russian politics towards its diaspora into three levels: the macro level of the global international politics (the question of the NATO enlargement), the level of bilateral interstate relations (Russian – Estonian economic relations, the question of the Agreement on Trade-Economic Relations), and the micro level of the Russian diaspora.

3 The interaction of the Russian-speaking community with the Estonian state is widely researched and monitored by the European and Estonian scholars and institutions.
politics (Russian – diaspora relations and the development of the Strategic Plan for the support of the diaspora abroad).

During the qualitative interviews conducted with the representatives of seven diaspora organizations I have analysed the political interests of the diaspora in all three above-mentioned questions, the opportunity structure created by the Russian Federation, and the influence of the diaspora on the policy-making process. I have investigated the main participation strategies used by the diaspora and constrains for the diaspora participation created by Russia, by Estonia and by the diaspora institutional development.

The main hypothesis is that the diaspora is most active and the opportunity structure is most developed on the micro level. Diaspora participation is based on the two-side relations on the intermediate level. On the macro level the role of the diaspora is minimal and could be characterized as a one-side relation. The construction of the hypotheses has been influenced by the theoretical conclusions of King and Melvin and the OECD civil participation model.

The thesis consists of three main parts. The first part is devoted to the theoretical framework for the analysis of diaspora participation opportunities. The second part describes the context of the analysis, i.e. the position of the Russian-speaking diaspora in Estonia, the aims and the decision-making structure of the Russian politics towards the Russian-speakers abroad, and the three empirical cases to be analysed. The third part presents the results of the empirical research, gives an answer to the research question and controls the hypotheses.

I believe that the present thesis can contribute to the understanding of the diasporisation processes and of the influence of the diaspora as an actor in the international politics. The results of the conducted research could possibly help the planning and evaluation of the Estonian integration politics. The role of the Russian-speaking diaspora emerges as one of the critical issues shaping political development in Estonia. It could play an important role in the process of the EU accession and integration, and in improving relations between Russia and Estonia.
1. Terminology for Diaspora and Diaspora Politics

In the present section I define two concepts of diaspora and diaspora politics. First of all, I proceed with the definition of what diaspora is, and describe its basic functional features.

Diaspora is an object of a complex social-political discourse. Up to now there is no consensus among researches concerning the definition of diaspora. The word “diaspora” comes from the Greek language; the original meaning of the word is “dispersal or scattering”. Historically the term “diaspora” was reserved only for concrete ethnic groups, whose minority status resulted from migration. Some authors referred to those groups as “classical or archetypical diasporas”, i.e. Jewish, Armenian, Chinese, Korean and etc. (King and Melvin, 1999: 6-7)

The classical diasporas should correspond to the set of typical criteria, which allow distinguishing them from the migrant communities and national minority groups. The ancestors of the classical diasporas dispersed from the specific original centre, the territory of the motherland as a result of war or because of economic reasons. Living on the territory of a foreign state they retain a collective memory or “collective myth” about their original homeland; the conception of the motherland is often idealized. The members of the diaspora group continue to relate to that homeland, and feel ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity. Diaspora relations with the host state could be troubled; diaspora community lives relatively isolated from the host society. Diaspora is committed to the maintenance or restoration of its homeland and supports its safety and prosperity. (Laitin, 30-31; Smith, 502) In order to understand the mechanism of diasporisation it is possible to follow the history of the Jewish diaspora from Middle Ages till the 20th century, when diaspora had a decisive role in the restoration of Israel.5

4 Laitin, 30
5 See for example Elazari and Afek; Horovits and Lisak
In the present socio-political context the term diaspora could be applicable not only to the archetypical diasporas, but also to the newly dispersed ethnic groups. In the 20th century on the territory of Europe and the USA a number of border cases appeared. These were ethnic groups whose political loyalty, civil identity and economic interests were divided between two or more nation-states (Laitin, King and Melvin, Zevelev).

According to the recent theories of globalisation the ethnic identity is considered as a multidimensional phenomenon. A person could identify himself or herself with different cultures and feel loyal to different states simultaneously (i.e. Russian in Germany, or Estonian Jew). The identity pattern is not static; on the contrary, it is flexible and constantly developing (Laitin, 21-24). The diasporic identities are not given or genetically determined factors, “but arise as a result of the complex interaction between a particular ethnic population, the policy of the state in which it resides, and the existence of a homeland beyond the borders of the state of residence” (King and Melvin, 1999: 9). Thus, the diasporic identity could be cultivated, and states could be engaged in the construction of the diaspora.

In sum, “a diaspora is a population living in a society distant from their homeland that its leaders claim as their own, and to which they expect one day to return” (Laitin, 31). Diaspora tries to preserve its cultural, historical, political, psychological etc. ties with its home state. Laitin’s definition of diaspora could characterize not only the archetypical diasporas, but also the “new diasporas“. Diaspora as an ethnopolitical category has cultural and political ties, which extend beyond the borders of one state. Diasporas should construct the strategies for interaction with the home state, the state of residence, international organizations, and, to some extent, with the co-ethnic groups which reside in other countries (Brubaker, 60-61). Diaspora participates in the policy-making process in both home and host states. This gives grounds for the extension of the diaspora concept by the following functional characters:

- multidimensional ethnic identity, which refers to the existence of close political and cultural ties with home state;
- existence of the institutions (regional and international) whose objective is to preserve the diasporic identity and cultural ties with home state;
- existence of the political strategy for the communication with institutional structures of host and home states (Poloskova, 38).
In the context of the Russian diaspora it is necessary to define the terminology used in the Russian official documents. The word “compatriot” (“sootechestvennik”) is an official term used in the legislative and administrative acts of the Russian Federation, i.e. in the Federal Law “About State Policy towards the Compatriots Abroad“⁶ and in the State strategic plan “Conception of the Russian Federation Support of the Compatriots Abroad at the Present Stage“⁷. The term “compatriots” includes all Russian-speaking population residing outside Russia. It unites both subjective and objective criteria. According to the Federal Law objective criteria presumes the formal relations with the Russian Federation or the Soviet Union through the present or past citizenship, place of residence or ethnic origin (Federal Law, paragraph 1). By subjective criteria the Conception implies the factor of self-identification with Russia, i.e. the spiritual demand for the preservation of cultural ties and for co-operation with the Russian institutions (Conception, article 1). Hereinafter I refer to the Russian-speaking population in Estonia as “diaspora” or “compatriots”.

The relations between diaspora and its home state could be described by the term diaspora politics. The definition of diaspora politics relates to the Brubaker triangle, where diaspora is considered to formulate political attitudes towards its home and host states. In the present thesis I use the following definition: “diaspora politics is understood to be the interactive process by which states, acting in the international arena, forge a conception of a co-ethnic community extending beyond the boundaries of the state itself, and by which bounded, self-conscious, ethnic communities abroad relate to the domestic politics and foreign policy of a state or other political entity conceived as coterminous with or representative of an ethnic homeland” (King and Melvin, 1999: 12). “Homeland” or “home state” refers to the real or symbolic land, which diaspora is associated with. In the present thesis the term “home state” is used in relation to the Russian Federation. The term “host state” is used in reference to the Estonian Republic. When talking about the diaspora participation in the policy-making process I specify the

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⁶ In original: Федеральный закон «О государственной политике Российской Федерации в отношении соотечественников за рубежом» (Hereinafter referred to as Federal Law)
⁷ In original: Концепция поддержки Российской Федерацией соотечественников за рубежом на современном этапе (Hereinafter referred to as Conception)
object and subject of the discussed political process, for example, “diaspora political strategy towards Russia”.
In the next section I will consider different research approaches to the diaspora politics in the Estonian and international literature.

2. Research approaches to Diasporas and Diaspora Politics

Ethnic groups and national minorities is a widely researched issue among students of nationalism, minority rights, and other fields of comparative politics. One of the recent paradigms is to research the questions of ethnicity in the international context. In the frames of this paradigm ethnic groups are considered in respect to the formation of supranational entities and the foreign policy of the particular nation states (for the ethnical issues in the European Union see Hansen and Waever). The studies of diasporas and diaspora politics relate also to these directions and topics of research. The vital questions for diaspora researchers are the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the “Russian question” in the post-Soviet era (in the CIS countries and the Baltic States) and the fate of the millions of ethnic Russians living in “foreign countries” – the newly independent nation states. These issues are also topical in the Estonia political and scientific circles, since the question of the status of national minorities has been under discussion for more than 10 years.

It is possible to identify two different paradigms in the research of the issues concerning the Russian-speaking minority. First, there is research about the conglomerate ethnic groups. This type of research emphasizes the ethnic groups’ distinctiveness from the titular nation (by concrete cultural, language, ethnic etc factors). There are Estonian authors who work in this contest and investigate the culture, traditions, history, linguistics etc. of national groups living in Estonia. The Estonian policy towards the national minorities is based on the same approach. The general goals are to preserve and respect the cultural heritage and the peculiarities of the national minorities (Estonian Integration policy). The second related topic is the problem of the non-Estonians’

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8 For Diaspora studies see Brubaker, Cohen, Sheffer.
9 For the studies of post-Soviet ethnic questions see Chinn, Kosltoe, Smith, Melvin, Sheffer.
10 For example Viikberg, Klõga, Matsulevitõ.
integration into Estonian society.\footnote{For example, Lauristin and Vetik; Vihalemm; Kirch.} The main focus of such research is on the Estonian domestic policy and on the interaction of the minorities with the Estonian state. The policy-making processes as well as respective research are based on the assumption that the process of integration belongs to the sphere of the Estonian domestic policy, and national minorities belong to the jurisdiction of the Estonian state.

The research of the human and minority rights takes place in the same conceptual paradigm. There are international (i.e. the United Nations, OSCE, European Union etc.) and domestic human rights institutions (i.e. Estonian Institute for Human Rights, Jaan Tõnisson Institute etc.) that address the issues of the protection of human and minority rights in Estonia.\footnote{For more information see Legal Information Center for Human Rights \url{http://www.lichr.ee/} and Jaan Tõnisson Institute \url{http://www.jti.ee/}.} Such research projects intend to analyse the Estonian legislation and administrative structure according to the international standards in the sphere of human and minority rights (i.e. Law of Cultural Autonomy, Laws on Language and Citizenship etc.).

The second type of research concerns diasporas and diaspora politics.\footnote{For example, Jeff and Kaiser; Kolstoe, Melvin; Smith; Zevelev.} The terms “minority group” and “diaspora” by their meanings are in some opposition to each other. The term “national minority” places the subject of the policy or research under the jurisdiction of the state of residence. On the other hand, the term diaspora reflects the international context of the research (Zevelev, 4).

The shift from the traditional “national minorities” research paradigm could contribute to the understandings of the role and position of ethnic groups in the following aspects of domestic and international politics:

- in the planning and implementation of the Estonian domestic politics towards different ethnic groups (in order to understand the processes which take place in the national communities);
Researchers usually focus on the question of the interaction of the Russian diaspora politics with the Estonian integration and citizenship policy,\textsuperscript{14} or on the aspects of the dual relations between Russia and its diaspora and the consequences of these relations on the domestic politics of Russia and on the general international situation (i.e. security issues).\textsuperscript{15} Diaspora is considered as a subject in the domestic or foreign policy, which could serve the interests of the home or host states. Unfortunately, the role of the diaspora as a potentially active actor in the international arena is often neglected in the research, although diasporas could participate in the decision-making process and contribute to the development of international relations. As a result, there is not enough case studies and developed theoretical frameworks for the studies of diaspora participation in the homeland policy-making process.

In the next section I will construct a theoretical framework, which allows testing the hypothesis according to the research plan.

\section*{3. Constructing the Theoretical Framework}

\subsection*{3.1 Policy-making Process in the Context of Modern Democracies}

The theoretical framework relevant to the question of the analysis should consist of the notions of policy-making process and general participation opportunities.

\textsuperscript{14} For example Kostoe; Stein; Kauppila; Zhuryari-Ossipova; Zevelev; Safran.

\textsuperscript{15} See Smith; Melvin; Zevelev; Zatulin; Poloskova.
Policy-making is a complex process of political decision-making, which results in the formulation of the state legislation or state action plan for regulation of a concrete sphere of public policy or for dealing with a public problem. In the classical policy process there are a number of stages that should be followed: policy agenda, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation (Andreson, 37).

In the contemporary theories of Public Administration and Public Policy the process of policy formulation is presented in a form of a complex matrix with lots of different actors from all sector of society (state, private, non-governmental). The responsibility for the policy-making is divided and dispersed between the interested actors. The key words describing the decision-making are interaction, compromise, and mutual agreements (Carlsson, Carroll and Carroll, Anderson). As a result of changes in the perception of the policy-making process the new topics appeared in the research agendas, i.e. the participation of the third sector and civil society organizations in the policy formulation and implementation, the role of the interest groups in the decision-making, the role of networks in policy-making etc. This indicates the growing role of the non-governmental structures in the state governing, and the changes in the lobbying strategies of such actors.

3.2 Non-Governmental Actors in the Policy-Making Process

The individual citizen does not have many opportunities for direct participation in the policy-making process; as a rule, the direct participation via voting or referendum is required only for the most significant decisions (for example changes in the Constitution). In all other cases the policy-making task is assigned to public officials (Anderson, 69-71).

Different civil associations, such as research organizations, interest groups, political parties, and also mass media can influence policy-making indirectly. Various actors have different opportunities and strategies for participation. Non-governmental actors could perform an interest-articulation and expert function. They aggregate and present their vision of the situation and possible alternatives for resolving or ameliorating the
problem. Non-governmental actors could also supply public officials with information concerning the problem and the consequences of different policy proposals and alternatives (Anderson, 64-69).

In order to control and co-operate with non-governmental actors the governmental institutions create a so-called “opportunity structure”. The participants in the policy-making should follow the framework and general rules of this structure. Arnstein names three different models of the “opportunity structure”, which could be viewed in a continuum starting from the total exclusion of non-governmental actors and ending with the acceptance of the interest groups as fully-fledged actors in the decision-making and policy implementation processes. Depending on the state interest towards the engagement of the interest groups there are various institutionalised forms of interaction between state and non-state actors. For example, consultations (obligatory consultations), veto right in some kinds of decisions, participation in the commissions and committees, obligatory informing and provision with expert opinion, participation in negotiations, symbolic consultations etc. (Saare, 34-38).

For the theoretical framework of the present work I have chosen the OECD model of the citizen engagement in policy-making. This theory consists of three levels of citizen participation in the decision-making: information, consultation and public participation. On the level of information the relations between government and citizens are of one-way nature. The non-governmental actors have only an access to information delivered by the governmental structures. On the level of consultation a citizen or an organization has an opportunity to provide feedback and expert opinion to the government by way of a two-sided relationship. Active participation implies relations based on partnership and active engagement of citizens to the policy-making process: “It acknowledges a role for citizens in proposing policy options and shaping the policy dialogue” (OECD).

The OECD model is quite universal to suite the peculiarities of diaspora politics as a part of the foreign policy. The fact that the object of diaspora politics is an ethnic group, which resides beyond the boundaries of the state and belongs to the jurisdiction of a foreign state, narrows the set of appropriate policy methods. Home states should act in the concrete framework of international arena and respecting the rights of the sovereign
state they should not intervene into domestic issues of the host states (King and Melvin, 1999/2000).

In general the effectiveness of diaspora participation depends on different factors defined by the diaspora itself and the opportunity structure of the host- and home states. These include:

- The diaspora’s level of communal organization and material recourses available (King and Melvin, 1999: 13; Smith, 517). In order to be effective on international stage, diaspora should be economically independent, and institutionally developed (Poloskova, 167-168).

- The willingness of the diaspora to maintain solidarity and participate in the home state policy. In this context the kin-state may try to cultivate the diasporic identity and to evoke the process of diasporisation (King and Melvin, 1999: 12). This kind of political process is to some extent distinctive of the contemporary Russian politics towards its diaspora (Doroško, 25).

- The home state financial and structural opportunities to support its diaspora (Smith, 517). This factor could be treated in relation to the previous point: at the beginning of the diasporisation process the home state should “invest” in its diaspora in order to achieve a level of political mobilization needed for effective participation in the future.

- The opportunity structure of the political systems in both the home state and the host-state (King and Melvin, 1999: 13). The opportunity structure of the host state is important in respect to the process of institutionalisation and political mobilization of diaspora (for example, possibilities for NGOs registration and the maintenance of international contacts). The home state “opportunity structure” is determined by the accessibility to the policy development structures and processes.

The Russian diaspora politics is influenced by all above-mentioned factors. In general, the Russian diaspora in Estonia can be characterized by low political mobilisation and institutionalisation levels, as well as by strong identification with the Soviet Russia and the Russian nation (Smith, 502). In this context it is the home state that plays the definitive role in the development of the diaspora identity and willingness to maintain solidarity with Russia.
Returning to the topic of the current research, it can be assumed, that diaspora participation patterns depend to a large extent on the form of the political discourse that the diaspora is involved in, rather than on the diaspora’s own potential. In the next section I would try to build up a theoretical model, which can be helpful in explaining the relation between the form of the host state politics towards its diaspora and the diaspora political participation model.


In order to analyse the foreign policy of the state it is important to build a comprehensive structure of the policy, which can describe both the interaction of the political actors and their position vis-à-vis each other (Art and Jerviz, 9). There are three different levels that can be distinguished in home state’s diaspora politics. The role of diaspora and the opportunity structure provided by the home state varies in accordance with these models.

Global international politics. The first diaspora politics model involves the home state and other international actors, who are deciding the international questions of great political importance. In this model diaspora is present as a source of “political capital” for the home state (King and Melvin, 1999: 13). Diaspora issues are discussed on the international arena in order to achieve the home state’s political aspirations that are different from diaspora’s direct interests. In this model diaspora participation opportunities are insignificant. The first OECD model (information – one-side relations) suits to describe the diaspora participation in such a situation. Access to the information is the only possible way of political involvement for diaspora, because all decisions are taken without regarding the diaspora political claims and positions on the issue. The model can be labelled as “symbolic or speculative”. In the context of the Russian diaspora in Estonia this model is expressed in terms of the “defence of compatriots” and involves such Russian foreign policy issues as NATO, the EU enlargement etc.
Dual international relations. In the second policy model diaspora may become an issue in the relations between the home state and the host state. The home state builds its relations using the diaspora as an object of its policy and tries, by way of different sanctions and political measures, to influence the host state’s policy towards the diaspora. The aim of this policy is to improve the position of the diaspora in the host state. The participation of diaspora in the policy-making process of the home state is wider than in the first model. It is possible to speak about two-side relationships, where diaspora community provides information about the problems and feedback to the home state, but has little direct influence in the planning and implementing processes. A good example of such a relationship is the double customs tariffs sanctions imposed from the Russian side or the case of the OCSE mission withdrawal from Estonia.

Dual relations between ethnic group and home state. The third model involves the relations between the home state and diaspora. In this model diaspora is a direct object of the home state policy, which includes the variety of political measures in economical, cultural, social and other spheres. This model presupposes the active involvement of the diaspora in all stages of the policy-making process. The model of diaspora community participation is close to the third OECD model: active participation and relations based on partnership. The diaspora participation opportunities are wide including the possibility to propose policy options, shaping the political dialog and certain role in the implementation process. A good example of such policy is the approval of the strategic plan “Basic Directions for the Protection of Compatriots Abroad for 2002-2005”,16 aimed to support the compatriots abroad.

The main hypothesis states that the diaspora politics could be formulated and implemented on all three levels, but the participation opportunities for diaspora could vary depending on the type of the policy. Diaspora participation is most active in the third model and almost impossible in the first, - when the home state actors decide the direction of the foreign policy on the macro level and leave no space for diaspora community interests or political attitudes. The effectiveness of diaspora participation on each level can be different, because of a number of subjective, non-static factors

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16 In original: “Основные направления поддержки Российской Федерацией соотечественников за рубежом на 2002 – 2005 годы” (Hereinafter referred to as Strategic Plan).
mentioned in the previous section (i.e. the opportunity structure of the political systems of the host and home states, the level of diaspora political mobilization etc.), but the main patterns of participation remain stable as described above. In the empirical part of this work I would like to test this hypothesis presented.

The section that follows focuses on the main methodological aspects aimed to check the validity of the theoretical model in the context of the Russian diaspora in Estonia.

4. Research methods

The current research uses the approach of qualitative investigation (Daymon and Holloway, 4).

The study of the diaspora participation in the Russian diaspora politics has a number of specific features, which determine the method of research. First, there are no reliable research data (both quantitative and qualitative) on the topic. In order to understand the details of the policy-making process it is essential not only to gather all possible descriptive information, but also to find out the reasons of the decisions taken and the nature of the interconnections between the actors. This is why a qualitative research design is preferred to a quantitative data analysis. Second, the topic is new and there is a possibility that some new and surprising directions can emerge during the research process. It is important to be flexible enough, and explore the new circumstances. It is generally recognized that qualitative research helps to not only test the existing theoretical frameworks but also adjust them generate new ones (Peters). Third, the process of decision-making in such sphere as Russian diaspora politics is not static and it is impossible to get a stable portrait. Yet in order to capture processes and tendencies, qualitative analysis proves a fruitful research tool.

For the current research I used the semi-structured or focused interview method, which allows to follow an interview schedule, and at the same time, to react on the emerging issues during the interview. The current research topic is very complicated and involves different spheres of politics, sociology and public administration. Semi-structured
interview concentrates on each respondent’s sphere of interests and understanding of the problem. In the present socio-political circumstances the topic of Russian diaspora politics is quite delicate for the representatives of the diaspora organizations. It requires the establishment of trustful and confidential relations between the interviewer and respondent. In the focused interview the sequencing of questions is not the same for every respondent as it depends on the process of each interview (Daymon and Holloway, 171).

To guarantee the validity of the research the main criterion for sampling is the experience a respondent regarding the research problem (Lindlof, 125). I tried to insure that:

- all possible non-governmental diaspora actors were present (non-governmental organizations and interest groups, research organizations, and media structures);
- only active organizations with strong Russian ties were chosen (long and trustworthy partnership with Russian governmental and non-governmental structures, references and political statements in Estonian and Russian mass-media etc.);
- old and numerous organizations were preferred (with more than 100-150 members and long-time experience).\(^{17}\)

For the interviews I have selected three cases, which represent different types of the diaspora politics:

- the North Atlantic Treaty Organization enlargement and the Russian position towards the issue;
- the double customs tariffs regime between Russia and Estonia;
- the formulation of the Strategic Plan aimed to support the compatriots abroad

In addition to the interviews I used legislative acts and press releases.

Investigating the cases I concentrated on the aspects relevant to the diaspora participation process. All interviews consisted of four major blocks: background questions, behaviour/experience questions, knowledge and opinion/value questions

\(^{17}\) For the descriptions of the respondents’ organizations see Appendix 1. Hereinafter I refer to the interviewers as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3 etc.
The topics of the interviews could be summarized under seven categories:

- Short description of organization (history, activities, aims and objectives, Russianness as ideological platform etc.).
- Description of the three policies (the most important is the position and insight of the respondent).
- The main actors in the decision-making process (in each three cases), their main interests in the diaspora politics, and their understanding of the diaspora role in the policy formulation.
- The respondent’s organization interests and position towards the three policies.
- The participation opportunities available for the respondent and his/her organization. Respondent’s evaluation of the opportunity structure.
- The possibilities to influence the decision-making process in the frame of the existing possibility structure and the results of diaspora participation.
- Evaluation and comparative analysis of each three cases using the following paradigm: interests – opportunity structure – participation results.

For the interpretation of the received data I used the analytic coding method, which allows classifying the data according to the topics (interests, opportunity structure, participation results) and the type of information (descriptive, evaluative, opinions, knowledge) (Lindlof, 219).

5. Context of Analysis

5.1. Russian Diaspora in Estonia: Demographics and Civic Participation

I have chosen two main aspects relevant to the topic of the current research. The description of the demographics and civic participation of the Russian diaspora could contribute to the understanding of the context of analysis.

The linguistic and ethnic aspects could clarify the potential members of the Russian diaspora in Estonia. According to the Soviet Population census of 1989 there were 34,9% Russophones and 30,3% of ethnic Russians living on the territory of Estonia.
(Zevelev, 96-97). The data provided by the Estonian Population census of 2000 shows that there were 28.7% of ethnic Russians and 6.66% of people from other nationalities (potentially Russophones) (Estonian Department of Statistics). These numbers indicate that nearly one third of the Estonian population could belong to the category of Russian-speaking diaspora. The proportion of the ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers has not decreased significantly since 1989.

According to the data provided by the Russian Embassy in Estonia there are approximately 100 000 – 120 000 Russian citizens who are permanent residents of Estonia (Provalov). It constitutes one fourth of all Russian-speakers and approximately 8% of the whole population of Estonia. It is possible to divide the diaspora into two different parts:

- citizens of the Russian Federation who live on the territory of Estonia;
- citizens of Estonia, citizens of other states or persons without citizenship.

The opportunity structure for those two categories is formed on different legislative and administrative basis. Being a citizen of Russia implies the political identity associated with Russia. The Russian citizens have the right to vote in the elections of the President and the members of the State Duma. The leaders of the co-citizens’ organizations usually have more opportunities for the political participation and access to the Russian mass media. Members of the co-citizens organization have even represented the Russian Government or the State Duma of the Russian Federation on international seminars (Respondent 1, 5). Talking to the representative of co-citizens organization I had an impression that this person has had very close cultural and political ties with Russia. He referred to Russia as “we” or “our country”, and to the Estonian state as “they” (Respondent 1). On the other hand, persons with other categories of the political status (could be named compatriots) have more opportunities in the communication with the Estonian or European structures. They consider themselves being the permanent inhabitants or in some cases citizens of Estonia (Respondents 3, 5, 7).

As for the non-governmental actors, all types of organizations listed in section 3.2 are present in Estonia. In the year 2002 there were 5 Russian political parties (Institute of
Despite that, the Russian diaspora is not well developed and consolidated enough to become an important actor in the international and domestic arena (Smith, 502). It is the Russian Federation who has an opportunity to support the diaspora and promote the development of the common identity and consciousness (Zevelev, 128-129). The next section is devoted to the analysis of the general traits of the Russian foreign policy towards its compatriots abroad.

5.2 Russian Politics towards Compatriots Abroad: Aims, Directions, Basic actors, and Policy-Making Structure

The Federal Law and Conception on the protection of compatriots abroad determine the basic framework for the policy-making in the sphere of diaspora politics by Russia.

The aims of the Russian policy stated in the Federal Law are the following: “to provide support for the compatriots living abroad in the realization of their human and civil rights in accordance with the norms of international law, international agreements concluded by the Russian Federation, the legislative acts of the Russian Federation, taking into the consideration the legislation of other foreign states”. The most important “human and civil rights” protected by the Russian federation are the rights to preserve, develop and express the cultural peculiarities, to support and develop spiritual and intellectual potential, to establish and shape the connections between the compatriots and the Russian Federation, and to participate in the work of the non-governmental organizations on the local and international levels (Federal Law, paragraph 5).

Additionally to the Federal Law the Conception implies that the Russian Federation should support the diaspora and its organizations in order to guarantee the diaspora participation in the development of the Russian state. Diaspora politics should enable

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18 In original: Институт стран СНГ.
19 MOLES (newspaper Delovyye vedomosti, Molodezhj Estonii, OÜ Zeromark (newspaper Denj za Dnem), Izdateljskij dom Vesti (newspaper Estonia ja Vesti, Vesti nedelja plus).
Russia to establish the mutually beneficial contacts with the foreign states, to defend the Russian international interests, and to guarantee justice, stability, and security in the region (Conception, chapter II).

On the basis of the Russian legislative acts and interviews with the representatives of the diaspora organizations in Estonia, it is clear that the main target groups of the diaspora politics are students, persons connected to the education system (teachers in Russian schools, school-children, university students), and socially deprived individuals and families. The largest amount of resources is devoted to the provision of social aid for the compatriots (Doroško, 18). Economical and cultural support requires the initiative and participation of the diaspora itself, and a certain level of civil mobilization and institutional development. Russia creates a framework for cooperation, and the diaspora should possess enough resources to participate in the programs or projects proposed. Additionally, the Russian politics towards the compatriots abroad is formulated and implemented in special settings: Russia should take into consideration the principles of non-intervention in the domestic issues of a sovereign state. Under such conditions non-governmental structures are the only bodies capable to act in the framework of diaspora politics.

The Russian policy-making is not homogenous and centralized; there are lots of different governmental and non-governmental actors that in their turn try to establish contacts with different Estonian organizations and lobby their interests (in the questions of culture, economics or politics). The formulation of the Russian politics towards its diaspora can be best described by the “network system”. Stein names the following actors in the diaspora policy-making process: governmental institutions, political parties, media agencies, religious and charitable organizations, business sector organizations, NGOs, and research institutions (Stein, 14). All these participants have their vision of the diaspora politics and of the role of diaspora in the Russian foreign and domestic policy. In the current research work I consider only governmental institutions as the partners for the Russian diaspora in the policy formulation process.
On the Federal level of the executive power it is the Government Commission for the Issues of Compatriots Living Abroad\textsuperscript{21} that is responsible for the general coordination and control of the policy formulation and implementation. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Department of Compatriots and Human Rights\textsuperscript{22} is responsible for the development of the Action Plan and other strategic documents (Institute of the CIS States. 1.10.2002, 125). The analogous structure was founded in the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation – Department for Work with Compatriots Abroad\textsuperscript{23} (Institute of the CIS States, 1.08.2002, 96). Respective structures and commissions can be founded on the regional level (Federal Law, paragraph 26). A positive example of the cooperation with the compatriots’ organizations is the Moscow Government. There are special committees and commissions competent in the issues of the diaspora politics in the city council. The Moscow Government supports a number of public foundations that deal with financing the diaspora projects. One of the biggest funds is “Rossijane” that has its agencies in several regional centres of the Russian Federation (Institute of the CIS States, 1.04.2003).

With regard to the legislative branch the most authoritative organ is the State Duma Compatriots’ Council,\textsuperscript{24} which consists of the compatriots organizations’ representatives. The Committee for the Questions of CIS Countries and Compatriots\textsuperscript{25} was also created in order to coordinate the legislative process in the field of the diaspora politics (Zatulin, 14).

The matrix of the governmental structures responsible for the formulation of the diaspora politics is extremely complex. The non-governmental structures could contact all the above-mentioned actors and participate in the decision-making processes on both legislative and executive levels.

\textsuperscript{21} In original: Правительственная комиссия по делам соотечественников за рубежом.
\textsuperscript{22} In original: Департамент по делам соотечественников и правам человека
\textsuperscript{23} In original: Отдел по работе с соотечественниками за рубежом
\textsuperscript{24} In original: Совет соотечественников при Государственной Думе.
\textsuperscript{25} In original: Комитет по делам стран СНГ и соотечественников.
5.3 General Context of Diaspora Participation

There is a discrepancy between the diaspora interests in the participation in the policy-making process and the existent opportunity structure. There are three main aspects that influence the diaspora participation in the policy-making process: 1) the influence exercised by political actors in Estonia, 2) the level of diaspora political mobilization, 3) the functioning of the possibilities structure created by Russia.

The role of Estonia

The policy of Estonia has no direct influence on the political dialogue between Russia and its diaspora in Estonia. Estonia could influence the development of civil society and the development of diaspora political and cultural identity indirectly (through the cultural and integration politics, and Russian-Estonian international relations) (Respondents 1, 2, 4). Estonia stimulated the development of the national Russian non-governmental organizations and their participation in the Russian diaspora politics due to its policy for the protection of national culture and language. Illustratively, “Estonia doesn’t care about the Soviet military veterans; Russia is the only source of support for us” (Respondent 5). From the other hand Estonia has contributed to the estrangement of the diaspora. In 1995-97 in the course of its cultural policy Estonia started to support the cultural societies of different national minority groups, thus, disintegrating and dividing the Russian-speaking community (Respondent 2).

The Estonian - diaspora relations have an impact on the cases of economic sanction and NATO enlargement. Estonia is not ready to approve the diaspora as a “bridge or assistant” in the dialog with Russia, because it excludes the diaspora from the participation in bilateral and international questions (Respondent 1). The recent tendencies indicate that Estonia has become interested in the diaspora potential in the dialog with Russia. Diaspora representatives were invited to participate in the economic forums held in Russia, during these meetings the Ambassador of Estonia in Moscow gave a reception to the representatives of the diaspora organizations (Respondent 6).
The role of diaspora

All respondents mentioned the estrangement of the diaspora, lack of consolidation and lack of systematic approach towards the problems, as well as “egoism” of the diaspora leaders. “They don’t accept young people into the system, and they are not ready for cooperation” (Respondent 5). According to Respondent 2 the sources of these problems lie in the fact that the governmental and non-governmental structures in Russia are disaggregated. There are too many actors in Russia, all with their own political ideology and interests towards the diaspora. As a result the diaspora community is also separated. The diaspora and its organizations are not static they are always in motion, developing and changing. Since 1991 lots of organizations, aimed to protect the diaspora and cooperate with Russia in the questions of diaspora politics have been registered. However, only few of them have been capable to survive and continue their work (Respondent 5).

The role of Russia

The diaspora participation is determined, most of all, by the opportunity structures created by Russia. Respondent 5 summarizes the Russian political and administrative framework as following: “Everything in the diaspora politics comes either from mind, heart, or slyness”. That means that there is no common understanding of the goals and objectives of the diaspora politics. There is no common ideological background in dealing with the diasporas abroad.

Historically, the understanding of the diaspora importance came to Russia only after the collapse of the USSR, before this time (during the USSR era, and in the Tsarist Russia) the members of diaspora were considered as betrayers of their motherland and the attitude to diaspora was mostly negative (Respondent 2). Since 1991 the Russian politics towards its diasporas was quite moderate and in some fields ineffective. For example, the Federal Law about the governmental policy towards the compatriots abroad is of declarative nature and has no legal framework and by-laws to implement it. All the programmes and political decisions are “chaotic and ill-considered” (Respondent 2).

26 In original: Все в диаспоральной политике исходит либо от ума, сердца или хитрости.
2). Till nowadays Russia has no consolidated and centralized approach to the diaspora politics. The main constrain in the dialogue between Russia and the Russian-speaking diaspora in Estonia is “misunderstanding”. Russia considers the diaspora as a force that could contribute to the development of Russia in economic and cultural sense, but diaspora expects to get support from Russia (Respondent 1). In some questions of the diaspora politics (i.e. cultural programmes) Russia has a tendency even to dictate the conditions of the common projects, as it was in a case with the Baltic Division of the Russian Cultural Foundation. The Russian side does not realize the demands and interests of the Estonian audience (Respondent 5). Russia considers the diaspora as a “political capital or policy object”. Before both sides come to the consensus about the role of diaspora for Russia, it is impossible to speak about any trustworthy relations and about diaspora as an “active policy actor”.

The obstacles for the diaspora participation in the policy-making (lack of consolidation among the diaspora, lack of systematic policy from the Russian side, lack of appreciation of the diaspora potential as an international actor in Estonia etc.) are connected to the main peculiarity of the diaspora politics: the object of the politics and the potentially active policy-making actor situates abroad. The diaspora participation mechanisms differ from those in other spheres of public policy. They are more similar to the lobbying of the international interest groups and organizations. The participation opportunities depend on the difficult matrix, which consist of different governmental and non-governmental actors of the two countries (the host state and home state), and diaspora organizations.

5.3 The Three Cases of the Russian Politics towards Diaspora in Estonia

NATO Enlargement and Compatriots Abroad

Since 1994 when Estonia applied for the partnership in NATO, the position of Russia towards the enlargement of the alliance has been negative. “The further NATO enlargement… would propound the question about the restoration of our relations with the alliance, would cause new problems in the Baltic region fraught with the increase in
mistrust and tension between the neighbour states”\(^\text{27}\) (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15.11.2000). One of the arguments against the accession of the Baltic States into NATO was the question of compatriots and protection of their rights in the Baltic region (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5.03.2002).

Since 2002 the position of Russia towards the NATO enlargement has changed. The Russia acknowledged the right of the sovereign states for decision-making in the questions of international security politics. The dialog between NATO and Russia also turned to be more constructive (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12.03.2002).

In November 2002 Estonia and six other Central and Eastern European countries have received an invitation to start accession negotiations with NATO. Estonia finished accession negotiations with NATO in March 2003, and it can become full-fledged members of NATO after the ratification procedures are completed in spring 2004 (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 11.12.2002).

The Russian reaction to the invitation of Estonia and other Central and Eastern European countries was not in general radical or aggressive. Nevertheless Russia does not see any objective reason for the Baltic States accession to NATO in the current geopolitical situation. The Russian Federation predicts the destabilization of the security situation in the region, at the same time Russia is ready to build its relations with NATO block on the basis of cooperation (Provalov).

Annotating the accession process the representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs mentioned the problem of the compatriots: “Taking the responsibility for the

\(^{27}\) In original: „Дальнейшая экспансия NATO, в том числе реализация планов приема в ее ряды стран Балтии, поставила бы под вопрос процесс восстановления наших отношений с Североатлантическим альянсом, вызвала бы новые проблемы для безопасности в балтийском регионе, чреватые ростом недоверия и напряженности в отношениях между странами-соседями.“ (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15.11.2000)
enlargement, NATO simultaneously takes a part of the responsibility for the positive settlements of these problems”
(Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 21.11.2002).

Russian-Estonian Bilateral Agreement on Trade-Economic Relations

The problem in the Estonian-Russian economic relations raised in 1995, when Russia imposed the double customs tariffs on Estonian goods. In addition to that the development of the Russian-Estonian trade relations has been influenced by the fact that basic economic agreements have not been conducted (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12.02.2002).

Three Baltic States belong to the sphere of the special economic interests of Russia, and the importance of the economic relations with these states will grow with their membership in the EU. Nevertheless, Russia intends to connect the economic relations with the issue of human rights of compatriots living in these countries (concerning issues such as social guarantees, opportunities for education, the preservation of the Russian language, and employment) (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 20.11.2002).

In every draft of the Agreement on the economic trade relations, Russia has made a statement concerning the protection of human rights of the compatriots. Estonia considers such conditions unacceptable. To the present date there is no signed agreement on economic trade relations. According to the prognosis of the Ambassador of the Russian Federation in Estonia, Russia is awaiting Estonia to become the member state of the European Union, so that the economic relations between the two states could be built in the general framework of economic agreements between Russia and the EU. The economic sanctions should be rescinded with the Russian accession to the World Trade Organisation (Provalov).

28 In original: „Принимая на себя ответственность за решение по расширению, НАТО одновременно берет себя и часть ответственности за позитивное урегулирование этих проблем”.
(Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 21.11.2002)
Strategic Plan for the Basic Directions for the Protection of Compatriots Abroad for 2002-2005

The Russian politics towards the compatriots abroad is pursued on the basis of the Federal Law and respective strategic plans. One of the most important documents adopted by the Federal Government in November 2002 is the Strategic Plan for the Basic Directions for the Protection of Compatriots Abroad for the years 2002-2005.

The preparations for the adoption of the plan have continued for one and a half years (Institute of the CIS State, 1.01.2003, 81). The Ministry of Federation, Nationality and Migration Policy developed the project of the Strategic Plan in 2001. The political negotiations concerning the Strategic Plan started in 2001 as a part of the preparation phase for the Compatriots’ Congress, which took place in Moscow (Institute of the CIS States, 1.03.2003, 80). The Governmental Commission,²⁹ responsible for the issues of the compatriots abroad, coordinated the development of the document. Additionally, the following ministries were involved in the process of implementation and development: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finances, Ministry of Culture (Institute of the CIS States, 1.10.2002, 125). An important role in the policy-making process belonged to the compatriots’ organizations that worked as consultants, experts, and policy initiators (Respondent 1).

The main directions of the government policy stated in the strategic plan are:

- the protection of human rights of compatriots abroad;
- the financial and economic support of compatriots;
- the development of humanitarian, cultural, educational, scientific, informational and business contacts and ties with compatriots;
- the support of non-governmental compatriots’ organizations;
- the support of socially deprived strata of society (Institute of the CIS States, 1.01.2003, 80-83).

During the interviews all the Respondents were well informed about the described cases.

²⁹ In original: Правительственная комиссия по делам соотечественников за рубежом.
In the next section I proceed with the comparative analysis of the diaspora organizations’ participation in the policy-making process of the three policies. First, I will examine the diaspora political interests to participate in the policy formulation process. After that I will investigate the opportunity structure and participation methods available for the diaspora. Then I will discuss the main constrains for the Russian diaspora participation and explore a possible role of the Russian diaspora in the system of international relations.

6. Diaspora Participation in Policy-Making Process on Three Levels of Diaspora Politics: The Comparative Analysis

6.1 Political Interests of the Diaspora

NATO Enlargement

The diaspora attitudes towards the NATO enlargement are quite homogeneous - all representatives of the compatriots’ organizations are against the enlargement. The main argument is that “NATO as a military block is aggressive”. Six (out of seven) respondents mentioned the possibility of confrontation between Estonia (as the member of the NATO) and Russia and suggested possible conflict scenarios. In this hypothetical situation, Russia is seen as a strong country which “could solve the problem of Estonia by military invasion in 40 minutes” (Respondent 4). The NATO block is supposed to acting differently: “NATO wouldn’t start the military actions with Russia in order to defend the interests of Estonia” (Respondent 4). Such a position could be considered as a typical diaspora “myth” about its home state.

Diaspora representatives believe that the Russian official position towards the NATO enlargement coincided with their own (that Russia is against the enlargement), and that
the change in the diplomatic tone concerning the enlargement²⁰ could be easily explained by the military strategy. “NATO enlargement would produce difficulties in the administration of the block, that will cause inflexibility in the decision-making process” (Respondents 1, 4). Only one respondent argued that “from the economical perspective the accession to the NATO block is essential for Estonia in order to guarantee the stability in the region and as a result the stability of its economic development” (Respondent 3). Neutrality was proclaimed to be the optimal solution and the best way to ensure the security of Estonia (Respondents 1, 2, 4).

*Russian-Estonian Bilateral Agreement on Trade-Economic Relations*

On the issue of double customs tariffs the diaspora has two opposite opinions. Approximately half of the respondents were against the measures; the other half supported the economic pressure. The argumentation of the first group of respondents can be summarized as follows. The double customs tariffs and the absence of the most favoured nation treatment is supposed to negatively influence the business relations of the diaspora with Russia, and as a result is thought to play a destructive role in the creation of powerful and consolidated diaspora” (Respondents 3, 4, 6, 7). Their opponents consider the Russian economic policies towards Estonia as positive, because in their opinion “mixing the politics with economics is a well-known world practice; at the same time it is the only way to pressurize Estonia and to defend the rights of the Russian-speakers” (Respondents 1, 2).

All of the respondents actively express their opinion not only in Estonia among other compatriots’ organizations and Estonian governmental structures, but also in the

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²⁰ Выступление Президента России В.В.Путина и ответы на вопросы в ходе совместного подхода к прессе после встречи с Дж.Робертсоном, Брюссель, 11 ноября 2002 года

Russian governmental bodies. The diaspora organizations have a chance to participate in the policy-making process as the providers of information and of expert opinion, which corresponds to the second participation model.

*Strategic Plan for the Basic directions for the protection of compatriots abroad for 2002-2005*

There were different interests present among the diaspora organizations as regards to the Russian strategic plan aimed to support diasporas abroad. For some of the organizations Russia was the only source of financial and administrative support for the organization (i.e. Veterans’ Organization, Narva Russian Citizens’ Union). Other organizations considered the Russian programmes as a supplementary source of financing of their activities.

Most of the organizations were looking for a partnership with Russian governmental and non-governmental structures. The diaspora representatives are mainly interested in the Russian support for the development of the strong and socially mobilized diaspora. “We don’t ask to give us fish, but we ask for a fishing rod” (Respondent 7). This position generally corresponds to the objectives of the Russian Federation, and to the third model of political participation, which presumes the active diaspora role not only in the formulation of the policy but also during the implementation and evaluation stages.

The diaspora political interests in respect to the above-mentioned three cases are different. The position concerning the NATO enlargement is more of a declarative nature, and is based on the personal attitudes of the respondents, whereas there is no well-articulated and concerted opinion on the level of organizations (as institutionalised bodies). On the other hand, the issues of Russian-Estonian economic relations and Russian policy towards the compatriots abroad are widely discussed on the organizational level. The respondents presented their positions on those issues on clear foundation and factual basis. In the next section, it will be shown what kind of opportunities exist for the diaspora to express those opinions on the policy-making level.
6.2 Opportunity Structure for Participation

According to the respondents the possibilities to lobby the question of NATO enlargement do not exist or are very small. This is true for both the citizens of the Russian Federation as well as other diaspora representatives. The diaspora opinion is not taken into consideration neither in the Russian Federation nor in Estonia. The only available channel for participation is mass media: newspapers and magazines in Russia and Estonia (i.e. “Sootechestvenny,” the supplement to the newspaper Molodezj Estonii, or the magazines of the Veterans’ Organizations published in Russia) (Respondent 1, 4). The other respondents considered their participation in the decision-making process involving major world actors as impossible and unnecessary for their organizations (“We don’t have any rights to vote; we just have our position” (Respondent 1)).

The respondents tried to demarcate the precise sphere of their organizations’ interests and activities, and to delegate the global political questions to the umbrella organization in Estonia (Respondent 3) or to the international compatriots’ structures. However, the umbrella organization has never been ready to take this kind of responsibility and proclaims itself to be far from global politics (Respondent, 6). This passivity corresponds with the hypothesis previously in this thesis. The Russian diaspora possesses information and may have its own position regarding the question of NATO enlargement, but it has little interest and opportunities to interfere in the process of foreign policy-making on the global level.

The opinion pattern regarding the absence of the most favoured nation treatment between Russia and Estonia is not homogenous. Some of the answers about the participation structure were contradictory; i.e. one of the respondents contended that the bilateral relations between two independent states couldn’t belong to the competence of the diaspora organizations; at the same time she suggested that the dialogue between Russia and Estonia is impossible without the involvement of diaspora representatives. The role of the diaspora was described with the following words: “expert”, “conductor”, “co-participant”, “initiator”, “lobbyist”, and “partner”. All these terms indicate that the diaspora does not possess a stable role in the decision-making process.
The issue of the economic cooperation is one of the most important items in the agendas of almost all interviewed organizations. The diaspora organizations are motivated to contribute to the process of negotiations, and claim to be the initiators of the questions discussed by the policy-makers. Although the diaspora organizations are in the process of establishing trustworthy relations with the Russian government organizations, they don’t have permanent lobby and participation channels in order to influence economic policies. The main channels for political participation are mass media, meetings with the representatives of the governmental structures and research institutions, and participation in the conferences. The diaspora representatives participate in the work of several committees and take part in seminars, but this participation is not obligatory and is sometimes of a symbolic nature. The ambitions of the diaspora correspond more to the role of “active partner” than to the “policy object”, but the opportunity structure doesn’t provide space for the realisation of the intentions. This model of participation is clearly close to the second OECD model.

The strategic plan aimed to protect the rights of the compatriots abroad was the most controversial topic for the interviews. All organizations claimed to have contacts with the representatives of the Russian governmental and non-governmental bodies. The variety of the interests and activities of various organizations causes the plurality of the possible partners in Russia. Respondents named different institutions they had worked together with, i.e. Moscow city government, different ministries of the Federal Government, committees and departments in the legislative branch of the government and in the President’s administration, federal and non-governmental foundations etc. Some of the respondents acknowledged that they prefer to represent their interests through the Estonian umbrella organization (Respondents 6, SORSE31), while others preferred to communicate directly on the personal level. The role of the diaspora was described as following:

- “Evaluators that can see the problems on the grass root level, consultants, experts, and representatives of the diaspora interests” (Respondent 1)
- “Participants in the creation of the structures dealing with diaspora politics, i.e. the Coordination Union in Moscow; developers of the programmes and projects; initiators from the bottom up; and experts” (Respondent 2)

31 For the full name see Appendix 1, Respondent 6.
- “Economic experts and participants in the conferences” (Respondent 3)
- “receivers of the social aid; lobbyists” (Respondent 4)
- “Initiators of and partners in projects” (Respondent 6)
- “Initiators and lobbyists” (Respondent 7).

The role of the compatriots organizations is diverse and can involve all possible scenarios mentioned in the section 3.2 (interest-articulation and expert function, aggregation and presentation of possible alternatives, provision of information and feedback). The respondents suggested that the formulation and implementation of the Russian politics towards the compatriots abroad is not possible without diaspora active participation (Respondents 6, 1). The model of participation corresponds to the third OECD model.

6.4 Evaluating Participation Strategies: Intentions and Results

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the diaspora participation in the policy formulation is difficult because of the subjective nature of the question and the plurality of actors involved in the process. However, some conclusions warrant mentioning.

The role of diaspora in the decision-making related to the NATO enlargement is quite insignificant. All respondents asserted that this question was not in the competence of their organization. The NATO issue is a good demonstration of the “speculative and symbolic” model of the Russian diaspora politics, which is typical for the issues of global international politics. The main constrains for the participation are:

- The lack of appropriate opportunities structures, both in Estonia and Russia;
- The lack of resources;
- The lack of cooperation between the diaspora entities not only in Estonia, but also between diaspora organizations in different countries.

The Russian Federation does not seem to be interested in the expert opinion or feedback from the diaspora. Such relations are close to the first OECD model, which implies one-sided relations between the government and the citizens. Diaspora has a role of “political capital”, which could be used as “an argument” in relation building with other actors on the international arena.
The effectiveness of the participation of the Russian-speaking diaspora in the creation of the double tariffs policy is evaluated as negative by those organizations that are against the policy, and as positive and progressing by those that share the official Russian position. However, the diaspora does participate rather actively, especially as providers of analytical information to the Russian political actors. The diaspora participation pattern coincides with the OECD second model, where the non-governmental actor is seen as the “policy object”. The Russian diaspora even extends the boundaries of this role; the diaspora often appears as an initiator of the political issues to be discussed on the level of bilateral negotiations.

In the case of the Strategic Plan, the diaspora had a strong and influential position in the decision-making and policy implementation processes. All respondents named several issues where their organizations were capable to express and defend their interests. The Russian diaspora is an active policy actor, the diaspora representatives are actively engaged in the policy-making process, and they contribute to the shaping of the political dialogue. This corresponds to the OECD third model of public participation. Moreover, The diaspora has an important role in the implementation process. Russia uses the administrative capacity of the diaspora organizations in order to maintain and implement the programmes. For example, the Estonian compatriots’ organizations have received the second-highest amount of financial support from Russia, right after the Latvian organizations.

6.5 The Russian Diaspora in the System of International Relations

The process of globalisation have changed the conditions of creating international policies. First, international non-governmental actors started to play an important role in the decision-making process. Second, all international actors are more and more interconnected with each other. Third, the spheres of the human activities and interests have widened, causing the nation states to become more of international nature.

(Poloskova, 8-9)
It is evident that in such conditions diasporas have potentially played an important role in international relations. There are examples of the world diasporas (e.g. Jewish, Armenian, Chinese, and Korean) that participate not only in the bilateral policy-making processes between their host and home states, but also in the global international politics (e.g. the foundation of the Israeli state in 1948; King and Melvin, 1999).

According to some researchers diaspora is becoming a form “of post-national ethnicity”. As diasporas are dispersed in different countries and continents, they could form a kind of supranational entity. The diasporic groups contribute to the formation of global and unified world with its abundance interconnections and interrelations. (Poloskova, 53-56)

In this context the Russian diaspora in Estonia could become a part of the world Russian diaspora. The Russian diaspora in its present form is young and therefore weakly institutionalized. The Russian diaspora in Estonia has just started to build institutionalized relationships with its home and kin states, but remains still unconsolidated, and has few political and social ties with the diaspora organizations from other post-Soviet and Western European countries. Estonia is the first country with the functioning compatriots’ umbrella organization, which unites 27 local and regional member organizations. The International Union of Compatriots Organizations (founded in autumn 2002 in Moscow) incorporates the Russian compatriots organizations from all over the world and plans to apply for a membership in the UN (analogous with the World Jewish Congress) (Respondent 6).

The Russian diaspora in Estonia functions at the moment more on the level of diaspora – home state policies, but as a part of the world Russian diaspora has a potential to influence the regional politics (e.g. Estonia-Russian bilateral agreements), and even global world politics. It is possible to develop and use the participation opportunities available for the diaspora both in the home as well the host states. (Poloskova, 59)

In order to develop the civil society and promote the processes of integration of the Russian-speakers into the Estonian society and the EU, it is essential to acknowledge that the Russian diaspora in its present form could contribute to the bilateral Russian-Estonian relations and in the future to the questions of global international politics (e.g. in the context of the Estonian membership in the European Union).
Conclusion

In the context of cultural and economic globalisation people start to search for their national roots and ethnic identities. Most of the present day states are multiethnic. The traditional approach towards the representatives of the minority groups doesn’t extend beyond the boundaries of the nation state. Ordinarily the national minority is considered to be an object of the internal policies. However, the changing geopolitical situation (the break-up of the Soviet Union, the formation of the new security concepts) dictates the necessity to broaden the traditional meaning of national minority and to include the concept of diaspora into the political discourse. The political interests and cultural ties of the diasporas are connected not only with the host society, but also with their lost motherland and with the diaspora groups from other countries. Such approach incorporates diasporas into the system of international and interstate relations. When both the host and home states are ready to accept the political participation of the diaspora it could play it’s a role in the policy-making process and contribute to the development of the interstate bilateral and multilateral relations.

In Estonia the Russian diaspora has the potential to participate in the policy-making process outside the boundaries of the host society. The present research has tried to contribute to the understanding of the processes of diaspora participation in the policy-making by creating and testing a hypothetical model of participation in policy-making. According to the hypothesis the Russian policy for the defence of the compatriots abroad includes three different levels: global international (macro) level, intermediate (metho) level of bilateral interstate relations and micro level of diaspora and home state’s relations. It was hypothesized that the most opportunities for participation exist on the micro level, and that the opportunities decrease as the level of policies becomes more global. The hypothesis was tested on three different Russian policies involving its diaspora in Estonia. The evidence was based on interviews conducted with several representatives of diaspora organizations. Based on this qualitative research, the hypothesis found significant support.
The Russian diaspora has the most opportunities to participate in the politics of the micro level (i.e. the development of the State Action plan, individual programmes and projects). Though the process of consolidation and unification of the diaspora interests is still underway, it is motivated to interfere also on the intermediate level. The analysis of the case concerning Russian economic sanctions towards Estonia shows that the diaspora is interested in the issue, but that both the Estonian and the Russian governments only partially recognize the political potential of the diaspora. This prevents diaspora from active and successful participation. On the macro level (i.e. the question of NATO enlargement), the diaspora doesn’t have enough opportunities to participate and its leaders are not interested in the active involvement.

The research also pointed out differences in the diaspora participation compared with traditional decision-making processes. The international context of the diaspora politics implies different relations between the government and the participants in the policy-making process. Russia can’t oblige the diaspora to fulfil its directives and political decisions. In the creation of the participation structure it is difficult to implement obligatory institutionalised forms of interaction between Russia and the diaspora (e.g. obligatory consultations, veto rights). Secondly, the process of “diasporisation” and the activeness of the diaspora participation on the mentioned three levels seem to be interconnected. The diaspora resources are limited and the diaspora is dependent on the financial and ideological support provided by the Russian Federation. Currently, diaspora associations are characterized as under developed and unconsolidated. However, during the last ten years the Russian Federation has been supporting the process of “diasporisation” (e.g. dealing with the defence of compatriots abroad, supporting the non-governmental compatriots’ organizations). Russia has created a framework for participation and started to involve the diaspora organizations in the decision-making process at least on the third level of the diaspora politics model.

The most intriguing questions for further research are the problems of the formation of ethnic and political identities among the representatives of the diaspora organizations and the process of the “diasporisation” and diaspora consolidation in Estonia and in other countries of the former Soviet area. There is no evidence that the model presented in this paper would function in the context of other world diasporas. Regarding the participation in the policy-making process it is very interesting to compare the
participation strategies and results of political participation of the Russian diasporas in
different countries, not only in the post-Soviet block, but also in the Western countries.
One could also analyse the participation of the other diasporas (e.g. Jewish, Armenian)
on the macro and intermediate levels of international policies. In this context
the fate and the role of the Russian diaspora (as one of the youngest world diasporas)
in the international policy-making could become more predictable.
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**Legislative Acts**

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**Lühikokkuvõte**

Kaasaegses rahvusvahelises kontekstis on rahvusriigid enamasti kaotamas oma monoetnilisust. Vähemusrahvuste integratsiooniga seotud probleemid on paljudes Euroopa riikides (s.h. ka endistes NSVL riikides) tõusnud aktuaalsuseks. Peale Nõukogude Liidu lagunemist on endiste Liidu Vabariikide territooriumidele asunud palju venekeelset elanikkonda.


toimub poliitiline dialoog ning millised on selle dialoogi tulemused ja mõju poliitika formuleerimisele.


Venemaa diasporaal (mis hõlmab üle 27 miljoni inimese maailmas) on olemas potentsiaalne võimalus mängida tulevikus suurt rolli nii Venemaa – kodumaade vaheliste suhete kujundamises, kui ka laiemate rahvusvaheliste katuses otsustamises, sarnaselt kaasaegsete maailma diasporaadega (juudi, hiina, korea, armeenia jne).

Venemaa diaspora toetuse poliitika rakendamine ja diaspora institusionaalne tugevdamine ja konsolideerumine tähendab Eesti integratsiooni kontekstis seda, et nii integratsioonipoliitikas kui ka välisvaheliste suhete katuses otsustamises on kasutatav suuri osalemist Vene ja Eesti poliitikas. Rahvusvaheliste institutsioonide ja ühiskondade koostöö on oluline Venemaa ja Eesti välispoliitika strateegiat kujundamisel.

Vaamata sellele, et praegu ei oma Venemaa diasporaajal Eestis suurt mõju Venemaa toimuvatele poliitikaprotsessidele, on diasporaal olemas nii motivatsioon kui ka institusionaalsed eeldused oma potentsiaali realiseerimiseks. Venemaa diaspora tunnistamine üheks osalejaks rahvusvahelisel areenil võiks kergendada nii Eesti sisiste
integratsiooniprotsesside planeerimist kui ka Venemaa – Eesti vaheliste bilateraalsete kokkulepete saavutamist.

Loodan, et käesolev diasporaapoliitika analüüs võib anda uusi teadmisi ja uurimissuundi kogu Venemaa diasporaas toimuvate protsesside mõistmiseks.
Description of the Respondents’ organizations

Respondent 1 represents the Narva Union of Russian Citizens (Нарвский союз российских граждан), and the State Duma Compatriots Council (Совет соотечественников при Государственной Думе). The Narva Union of Russian Citizens was founded 10 years ago. The aim of the Union is to support Russian citizens living in Estonia. For this purpose the Union offers legal aid, organizes of political events and demonstrations.

The Compatriots Council is an expert body created in order to consult the members of the Russian State Duma about the issues of compatriots abroad. The members of the Compatriots Council have an official opportunity to participate in the legislative process, as they give expert opinions on the proposed Federal Laws. The members of the Council also have a representative function. They can participate in international and domestic events representing the State Duma.

Respondent 2 represents the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (Центр информации по правам человека).

Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (LICHR) was created as a public non-profit organization on the initiative of a group of private individuals. The LICHR, which launched its activities in the beginning of 1995, was founded to promote a constructive dialogue and to enhance the awareness about human rights in the Estonian society. The basic activities of the LICHR are free legal aid, and the collection, analysis and dissemination of information regarding human rights. Associates of the LICHR possess expert knowledge in the area of international law, jurisprudence, sociology, political science etc. The LICHR operates in close contact and tight cooperation with the Government and Parliament of Estonia, the political parties, NGO-s, educational and research institutions and the international public.

(http://www.lichr.ee/eng/centre/default.htm)
Respondent 3 represents the Estonian - Russian Chamber of Businessmen. The Estonian - Russian Chamber of Businessmen was established in 1992 as a non-political non-profit organization. The Estonian - Russian Chamber of Businessmen is working to create favourable conditions for the development of all types of business activities. The Chamber coordinates and represents the interests of its members, entrepreneurs and their associations. The Estonian- Russian Chamber of Businessmen assists Estonian, Russian and international enterprises in carrying out their economic activities inside and outside Estonia and Russia, promotes the export and import of Estonian, Russian and international products, establishes and develops links with foreign business and public communities, gives assistance in the organization of international exhibitions and promotes the arrangement and holding of exhibitions of Estonian, Russian and international products in other countries. (http://www.erpp.ee/)

Respondent 4 represents the Union of the Veterans’ Organizations (Союз ветеранских организаций Эстонии). The organization was established on the basis of the analogous Union, which functioned in the Soviet Republic of Estonia before the restoration of independence. There are approximately 10 000 members (the veterans and the participants of the World War II) in the Union. The majority of the members are Russian citizens. The main goal of the organization is to protect the social, legal, civil, political and economic rights of the Soviet veterans. The organization is active in the promotion of the social security services for its members. It operates in close cooperation with the respective structures of the Russian government.

Respondent 5 represents the Baltic Branch of the Russian Cultural Foundation (Балтийское отделение Фонда российской культуры), registered in 1998. During the 4 years of its existence, the organization prepared and carried out more than 40 concerts, exhibitions, festivals, contests, and other projects. The Baltic Branch of the Russian Cultural Foundation works in cooperation with state structures, NGOs and business organizations in Russia and Estonia.

Respondent 6 represents the Estonian Union of the Russian Compatriots’ Organizations (SORSE) (Союз объединений российских соотечественников в Эстонии (COPCЭ)). SORSE, an umbrella organization, was founded in 2002. currently there are
27 member organizations (mostly state and regional). The aim of SORSE is to represent
the interests of the Russian-speaking population and to defend the “special needs” of the
Russian diaspora (cultural and linguistic). SORSE strives to play the role of a bridge
between the Russian and Estonian governmental structures and lobby the interests of the
diaspora in both countries. Until now SORSE has acquired the political acceptance of
the Russian government. The ties with the Estonian executive and legislative authorities
are weak and underdeveloped. The leaders believe in the ideas of the “people’s
democracy” (“народная демократия”) and in the ability of the third sector
organizations to influence the decision-making process.

Respondent 7 represents the newspaper “Molodezh Estonii”, a major Russian-speaking
newspaper issued in Estonia. One of the projects of “Molodezh Estonii” is the
supplement “Sootechestvennik” (“Compatriot”), issued every Friday. The “Compatriot”
distributes information concerning the position of the Russian diaspora in Estonia. The
articles issued in the “Compatriot” are often republished in the Russian newspapers and
magazines and are used as a source of adequate information by the governmental and
non-governmental structures in Russia. For example, the Institute of the CIS States
publishes the materials of the “Compatriot” in its monthly bulletin.

(http://www.moles.ee)