



# Results of the research of public opinion on discrimination and stereotypes

The research was carried out within the framework of the project  
“Breaking Stereotypes – Building Tolerance”

Supported by  
the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme  
of the European Union



**European Commission**  
Justice

Riga, Latvia, 2011

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# 1. Introduction

The research was conducted within the framework of the project „Breaking Stereotypes – Building Tolerance”.

The project is implemented by NGOs “Culture. Tolerance. Friendship.” (Latvia), “Klaipeda Multicultural Centre” (Lithuania) and “Vitatiim” (Estonia).

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## 1.1. Aims of the research

To gain insights into:

- the current situation regarding racism in the Baltic States.
- the consequences of racial prejudices – what kind of opinions and thinking on actual issues accompanies racial prejudices.
- to foster the awareness of the current situation among the young people in the Baltic States.

## 1.2. Technical data

- Survey time: 1-31 May, 2011.
- Survey method: internet survey in 4 languages (Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian and Russian).
- 935 responses were collected, of which 811 proved to be valid after the data consistency tests.
- Of them, 380 Latvians, 170 Lithuanians, 147 Estonians and 114 whose origin was impossible to identify.
- Of them 248 represented ethnic majority in respective states and 449 represented ethnic minorities.
- Average age of the respondents is 25,4 years.
- 350 are female and 304 are male, 150 refused to reveal their gender.
- Regarding ethnicity, 122 are Latvian, 76 Lithuanian, 84 Estonian, 281 Russian, 23 Ukrainian, 21 Belarus, 19 Pole, 25 Jew and 160 refused to reveal their ethnicity.

### 1.3. Content of the research

During the research the following issues were examined and analyzed:

- Ethnicity importance in communication, marriage, ethnically biased attitude (discrimination)
- Ethnicity importance in demographic groups (age, gender, education level, family background, ethnic groups, etc.)
- Respondents' beliefs about self and society: most determinant factors in life, threat perception, ethnic bias in working situation
- Ethnic minorities and their perspectives from respondents point of view as well as respondents' awareness of human rights and discrimination victims protecting organizations
- Immigration and immigrants, respondents' attitude to immigrants
- Ethnic stereotypes (traditional stereotypes depending of age, gender, education level, family background and ethnicity of respondents)

We tried to assess the importance of ethnicity and how this importance affects attitude towards immigrants, minorities, stereotypes, etc.

### 1.4. Notes

Though internet survey is a very convenient and relatively cheap method of research it has certain well known shortcomings:

- The sample is impossible to control
- The sample usually is constituted of respondents with higher than average motivation; obviously respondents with no access to internet are excluded.

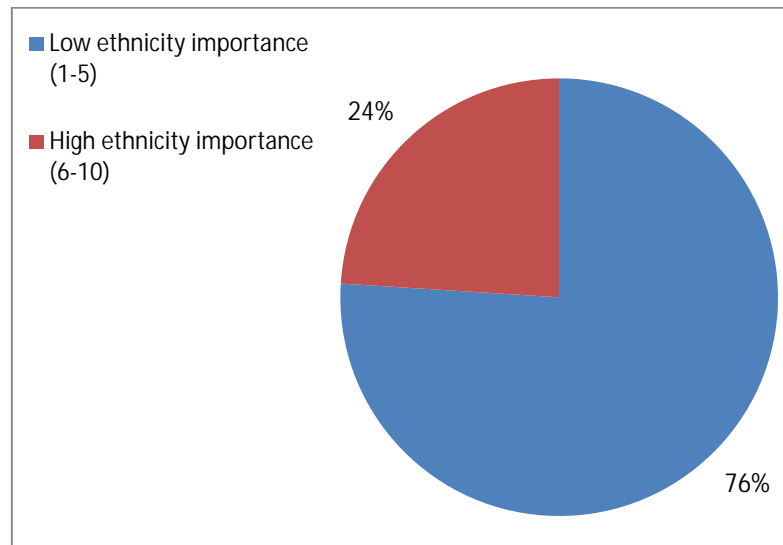
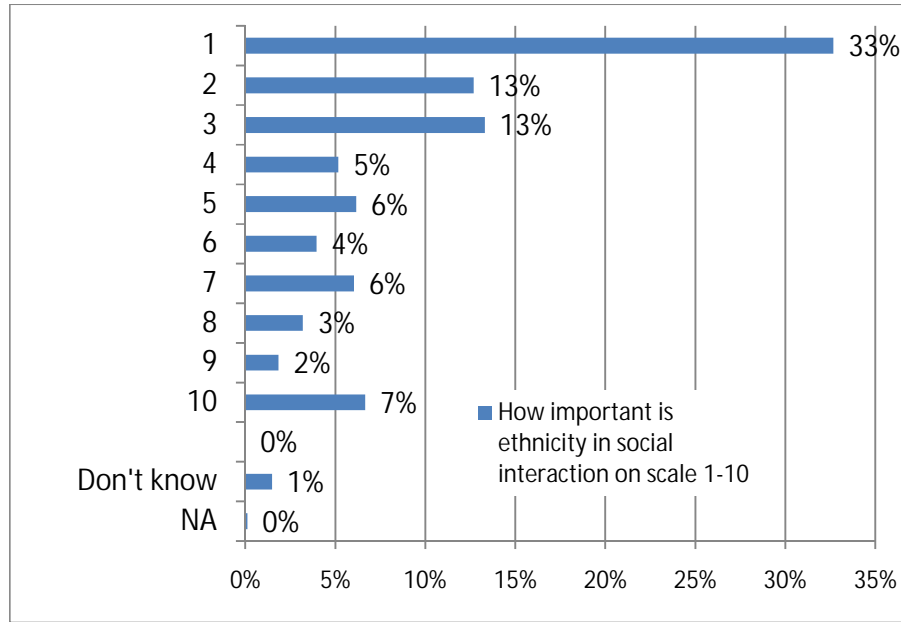
As a result, it is problematic to determine, to what extent the results of the survey reflect the actual split of opinions in society.

However, the goal of the current study is not to determine precisely the rate of racism and suchlike, but rather to understand the most problematic points and to confront the public with actual, if somewhat skewed picture of itself.

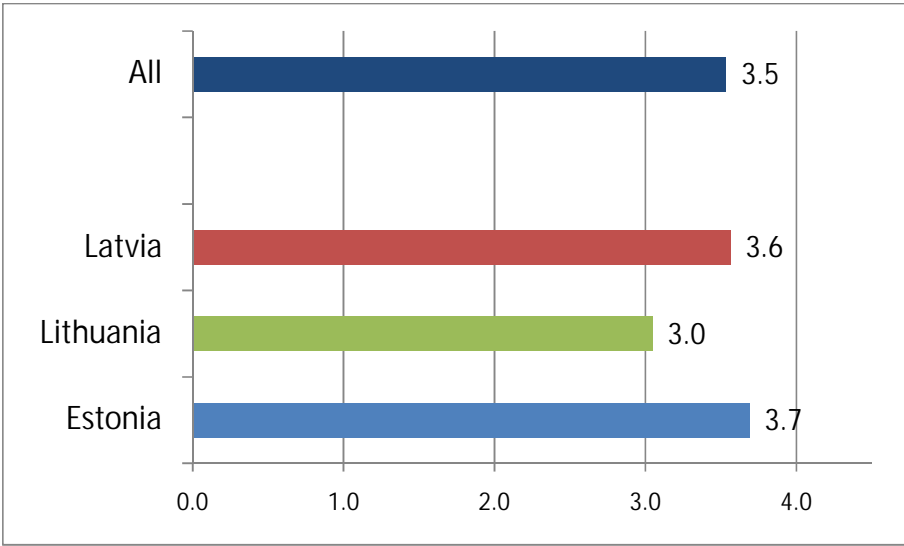
In between-group analysis the attention should be paid not to the items which are the most highly rated, but to those which most differ among the groups – for those precisely are the points on which the group identity is based.

## 2. Ethnicity importance

### 2.1. Importance of ethnicity

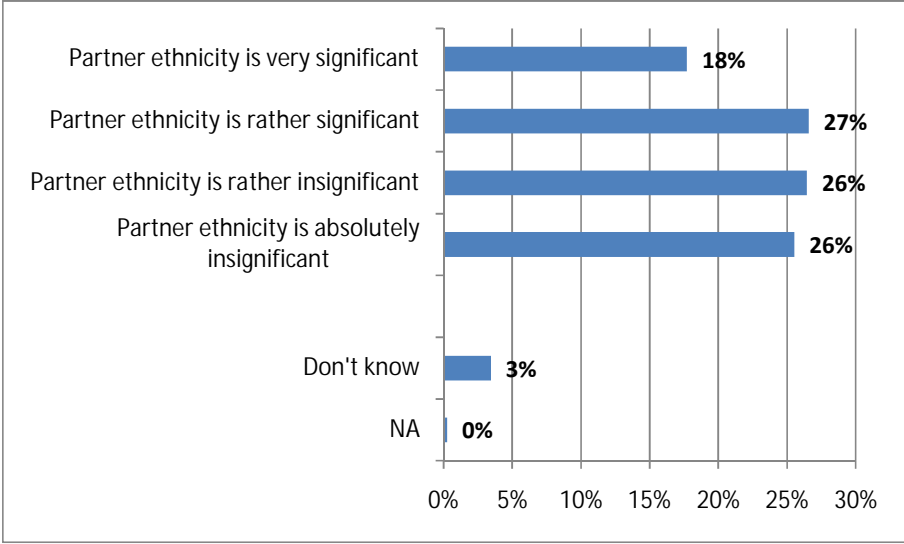


## 2.2. Importance of ethnicity in the Baltic States

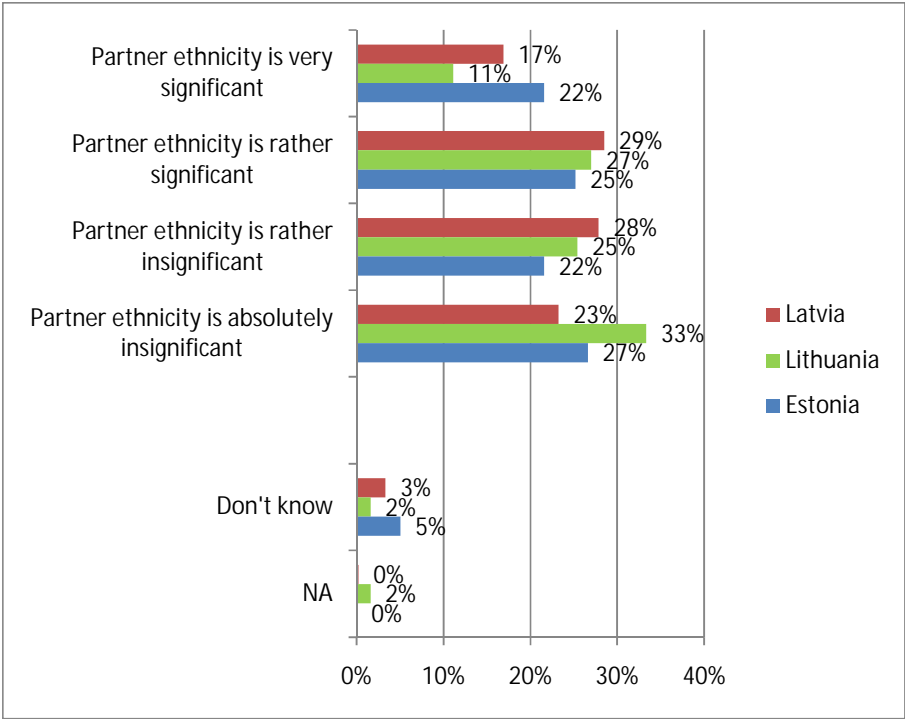


## 2.3. Significance of marriage partner ethnicity

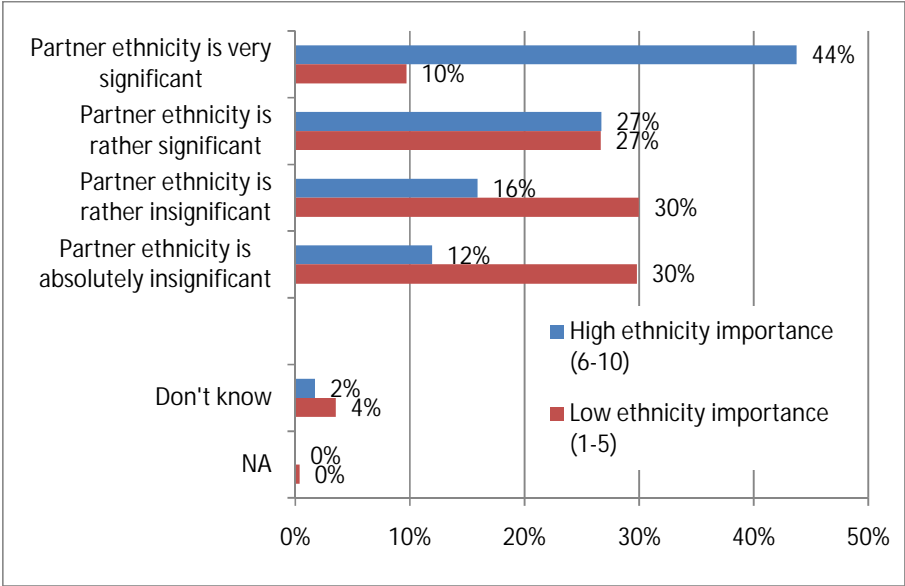
The question: How significant for you is the ethnicity of a marriage partner?



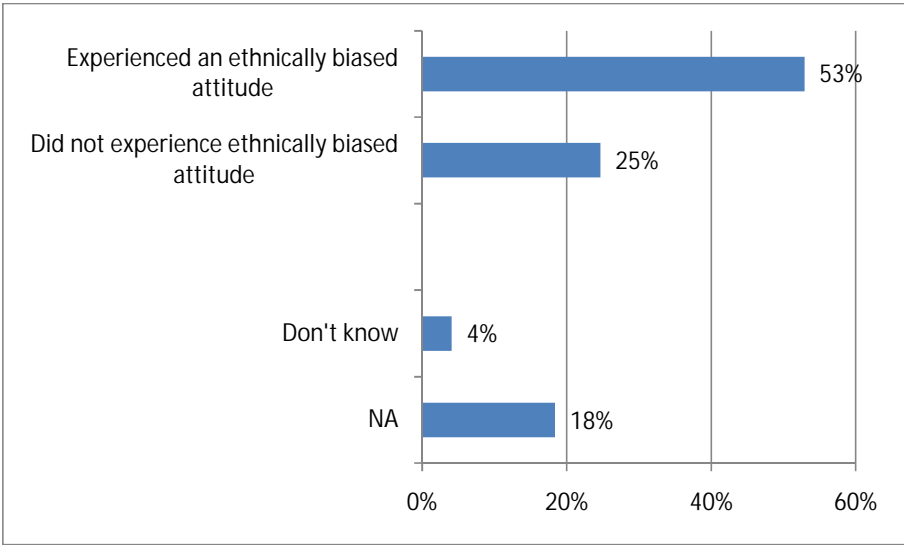
## 2.4. Significance of marriage partner ethnicity in the Baltic States



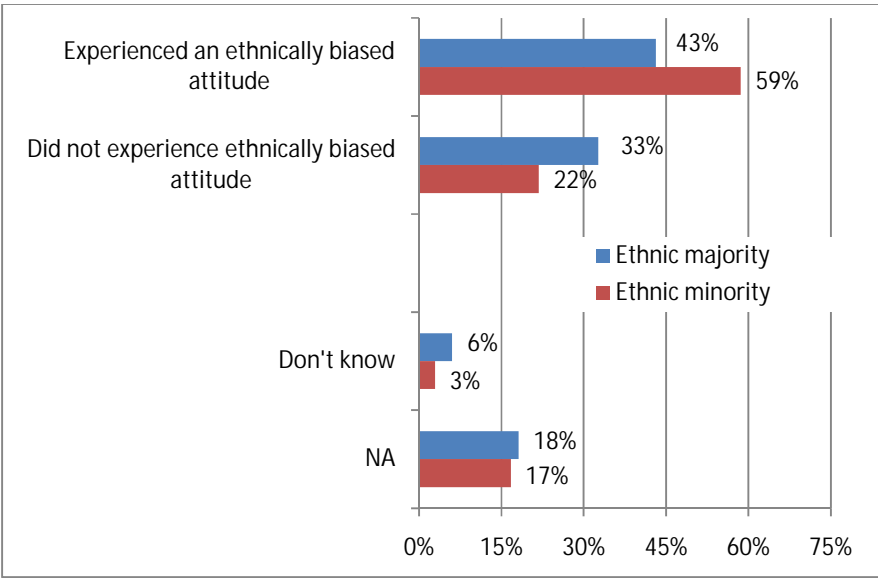
## 2.5. Significance of marriage partner ethnicity for low ethnicity importance group and high ethnicity importance group



## 2.6. Experience of ethnically biased attitude

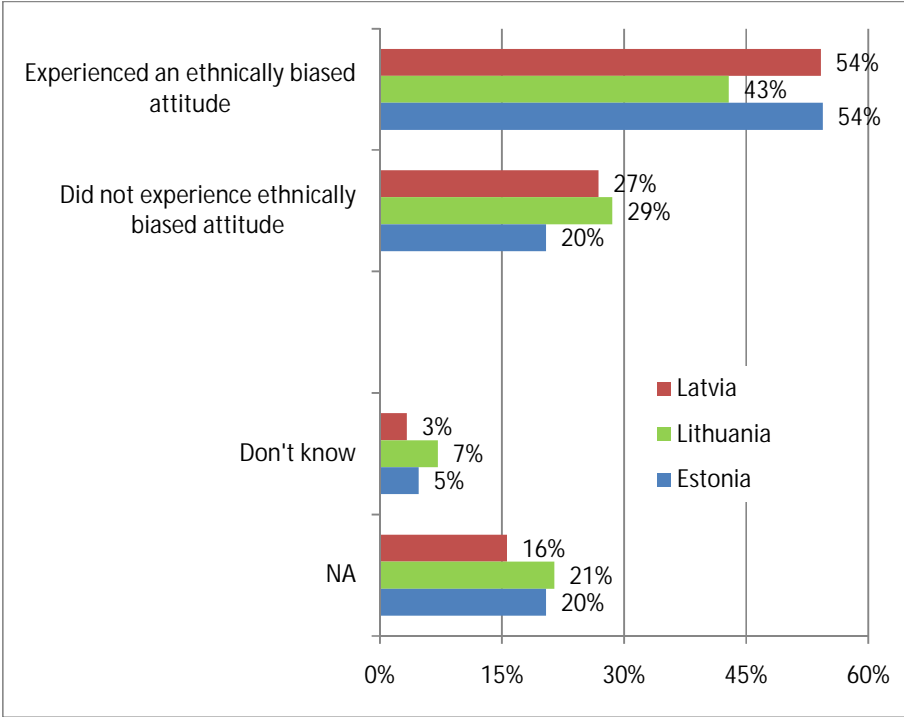


## 2.7. Experience of ethnically biased attitude of ethnic minority/majority groups

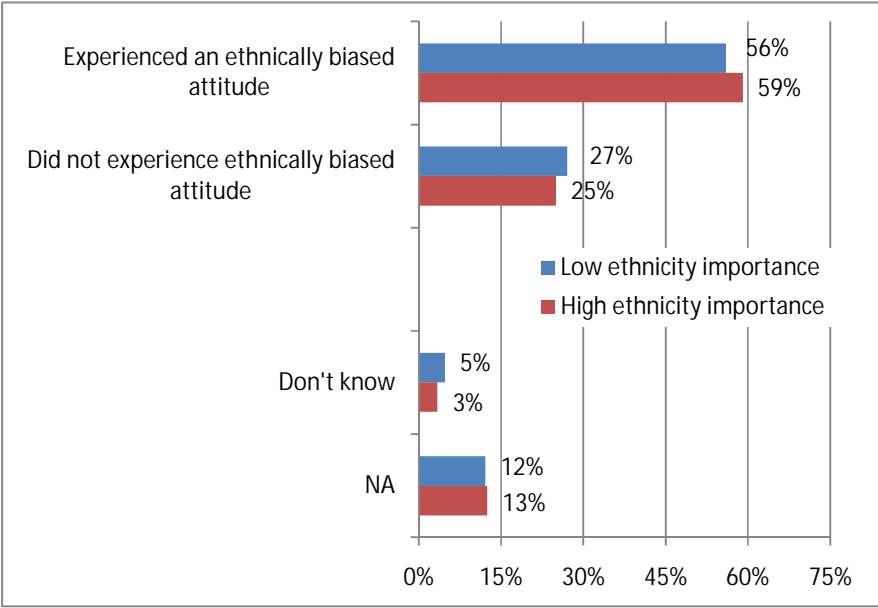




### 2.8. Experience of ethnically biased attitude in the Baltic States



### 2.9. Experience of ethnically biased attitude for low ethnicity importance group and high ethnicity importance group



## 2.10. Summary

1. Only 24% of respondents consider ethnicity to be an important factor in social interaction in general; however ethnicity of the marriage partner is important for 45% of respondents.

2. Ethnicity is equally important in Latvia and Estonia, and less important in Lithuania.

3. Importance of the marriage partner ethnicity is higher in Estonia and Latvia than in Lithuania. Estonians more frequently choose more radical answers (very significant/insignificant) whereas Latvians prefer less radical answers (rather significant/insignificant)

4. 27% of the low ethnicity importance group indicated that marriage partner ethnicity is rather important, and 10% – that it is very important.

This could mean that social interaction is understood as interaction between relatively unrelated people. Thus, there is a double standard – one for interaction outside family, where ethnicity is less important, and another in a closer circle, where its importance is greater.

On the other hand it indicates that there is a socially desirable answer to the general question about ethnicity importance, and more concrete practice, which contradicts it.

5. 53% of the respondents have experienced an ethnically biased attitude.

6. Unsurprising, ethnic minorities experience a biased attitude (59% of ethnic minority respondents). However, the fact that 43% of ethnic majority have experienced a biased attitude means that despite 76% respondents answering that ethnicity is unimportant, ethnic question is nonetheless very frequently put forward by both ethnic minority and majority.

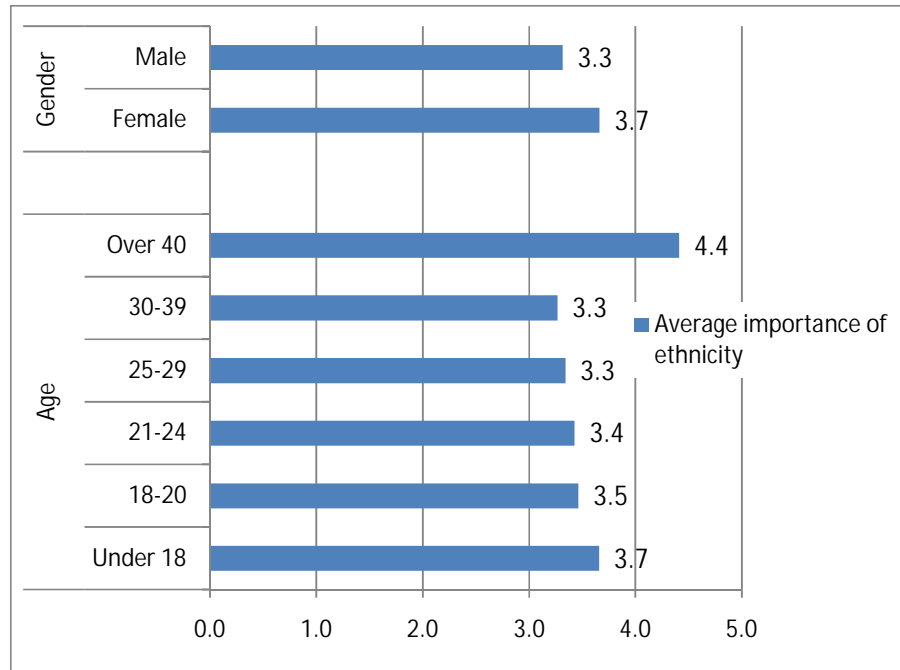
7. Ethnic bias is more often experienced in Latvia and Estonia and less often in Lithuania.

8. The proportion of respondents who have experienced a biased attitude doesn't differ between the high and low ethnicity importance groups. This means that beliefs about ethnicity importance are not based on experience of bias.

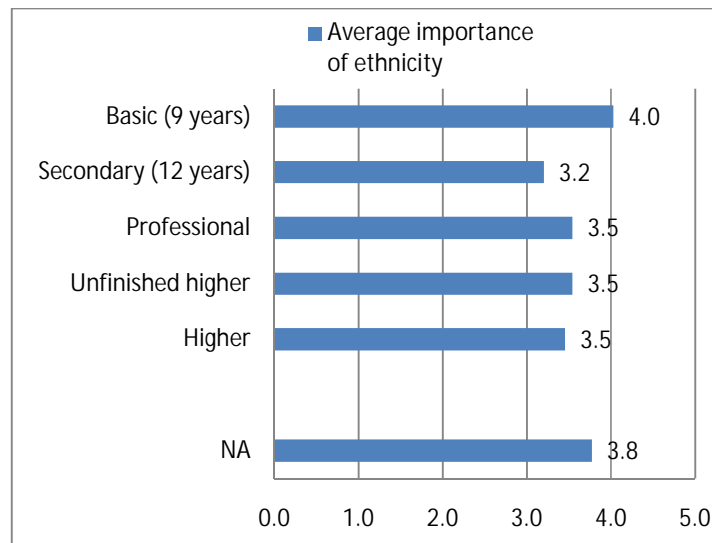
Curiously, actual experience of ethnically based attitude makes nearly no effect on persons beliefs about ethnicity importance.

### 3. Ethnicity importance in demographic groups

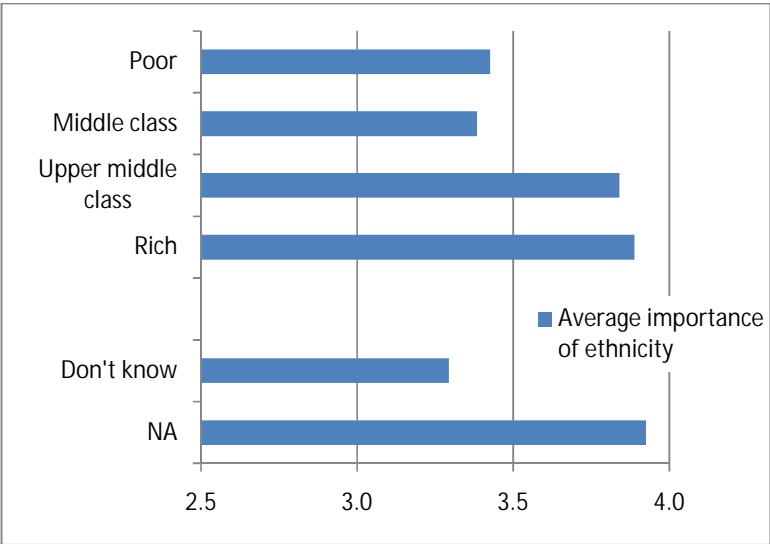
#### 3.1. Ethnicity importance in gender and age groups



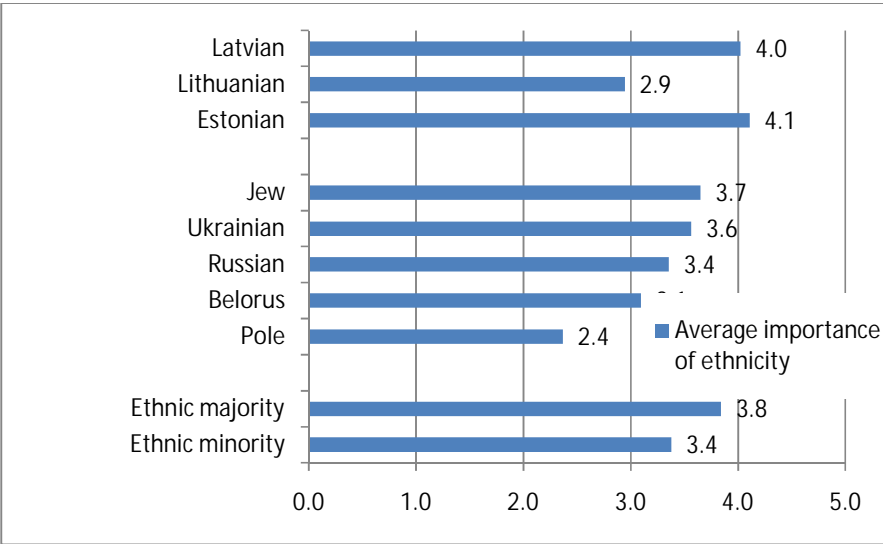
#### 3.2. Ethnicity importance and education levels



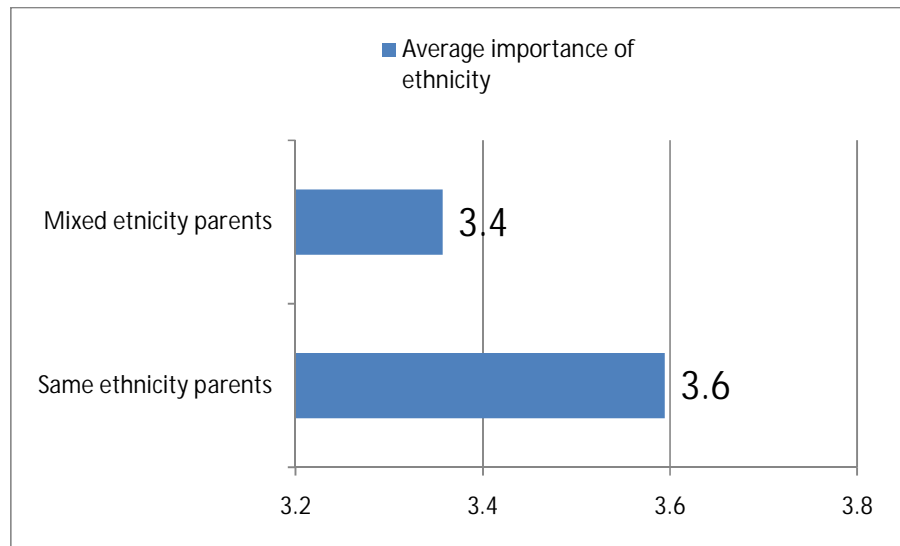
### 3.3. Ethnicity importance and family background



### 3.4. Ethnicity importance in ethnic groups



### 3.5. Ethnicity importance in families with mixed and same ethnicity

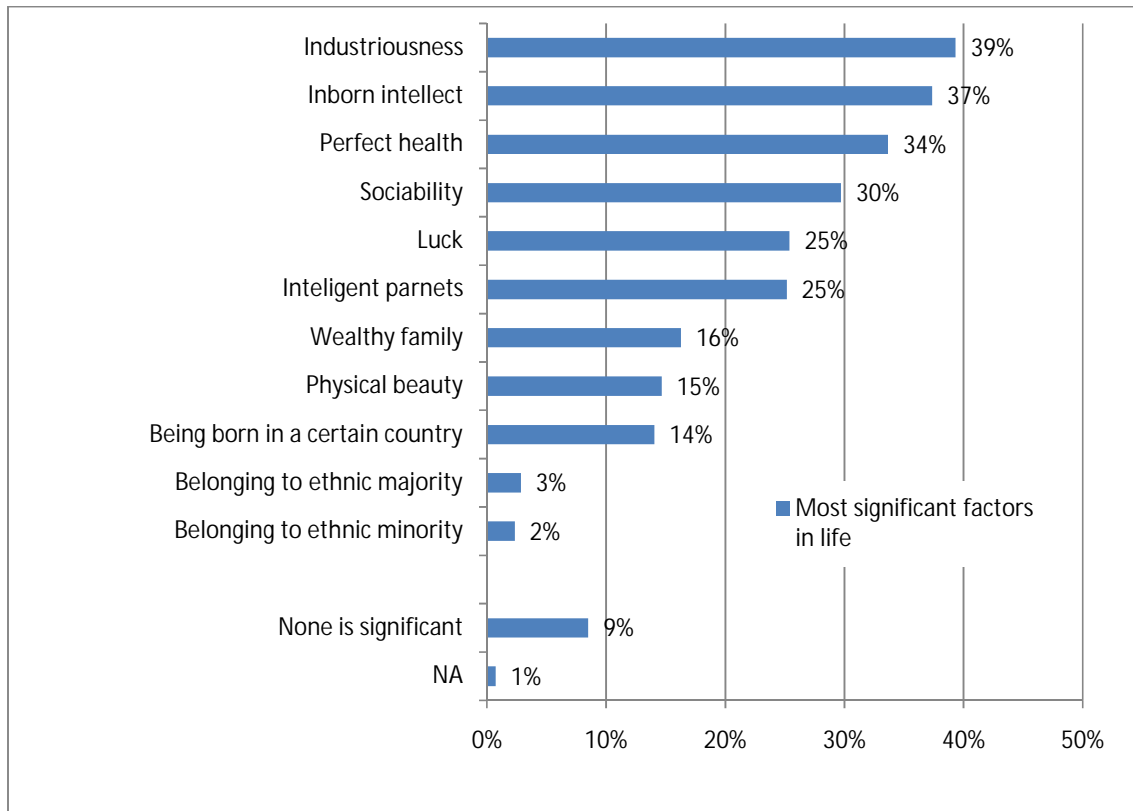


### 3.6. Summary

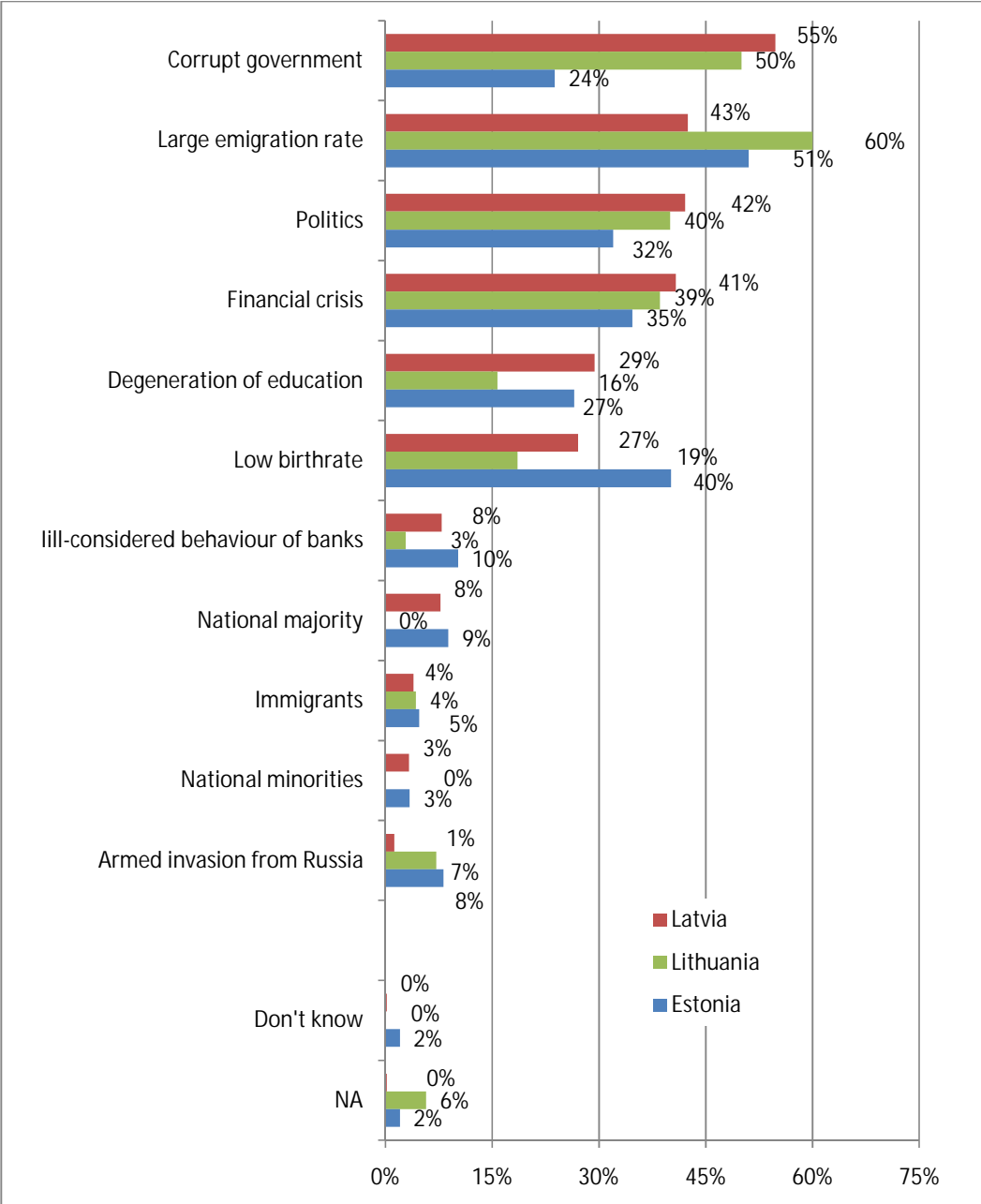
1. Ethnicity is more important for females than males.
2. Apparently, its importance decreases with age (we can suppose that the higher importance rate of the "over 40" group is somewhat unreliable, and is most probably due to the shortcomings of the sample, which alas is usual in internet surveys).
3. Ethnicity is more important for people with basic education level, as well as for those who refused to specify their education level.
4. Ethnicity is more important in upper middle class and rich families.
5. Ethnicity is most important for Estonians and Latvians, as well as for Jews and Ukrainians, while it is the least important for Poles and Lithuanians.
6. Ethnicity is more important for ethnic majority.
7. Ethnicity is more important in same ethnicity families.

## 4. Respondents' beliefs about self and society

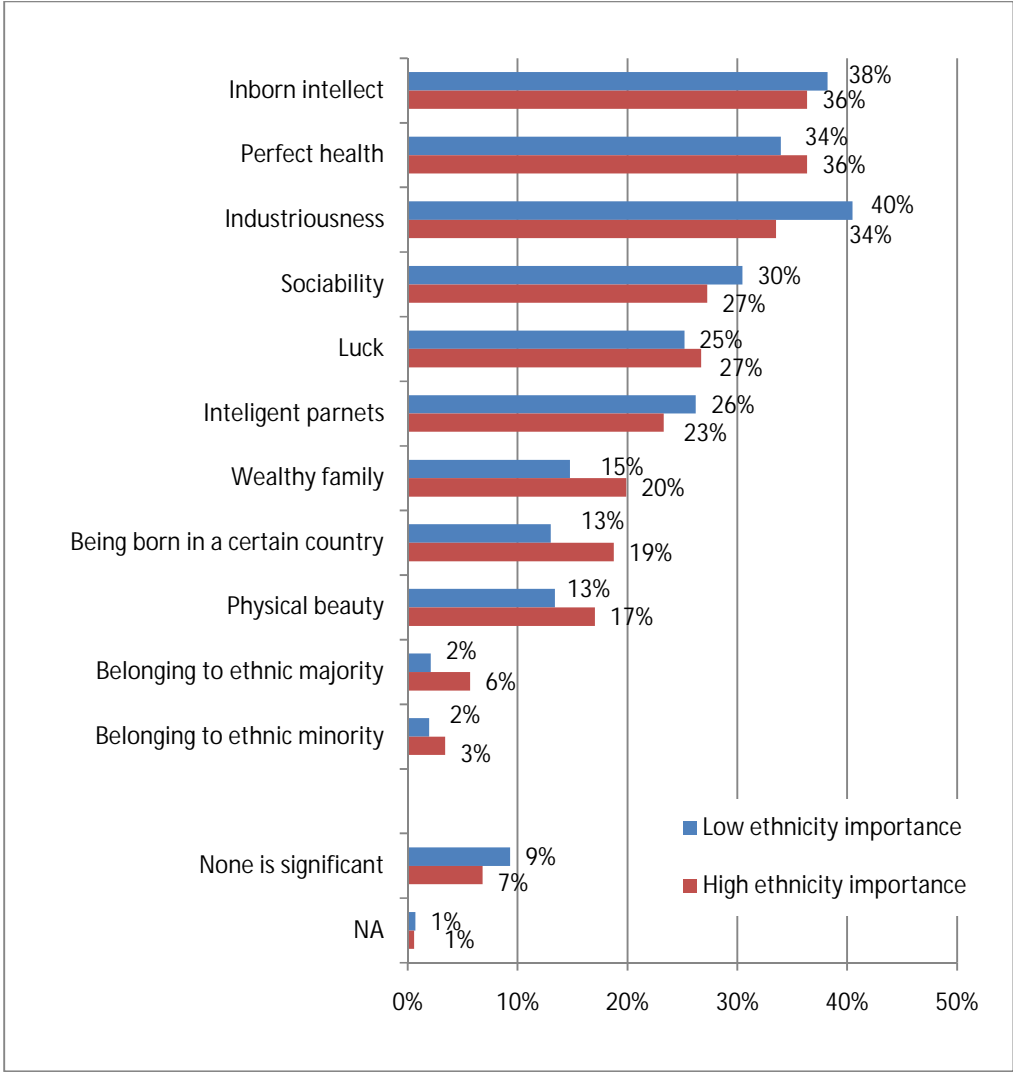
### 4.1. Most determinant factors in life



## 4.2. Determinant factors in the Baltic States

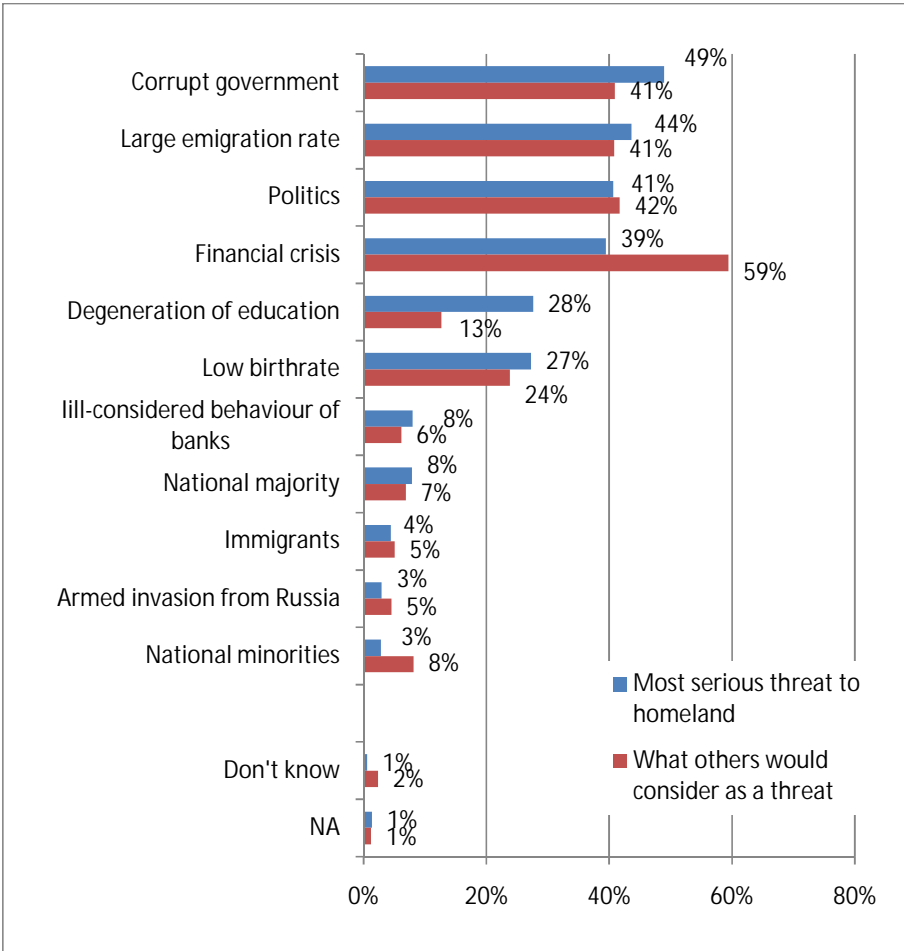


### 4.3. Determinant factors for low ethnicity importance group and high ethnicity importance group

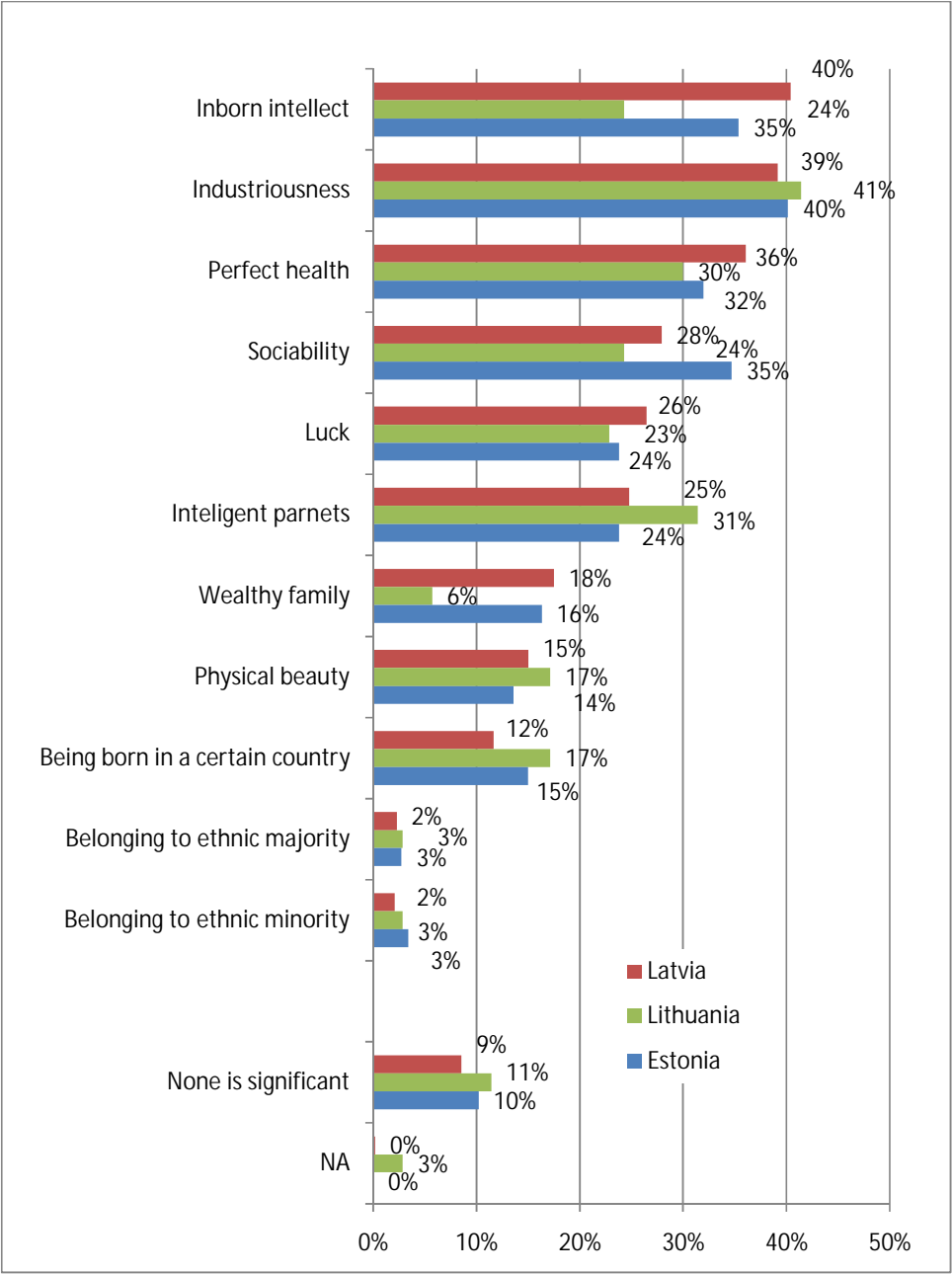




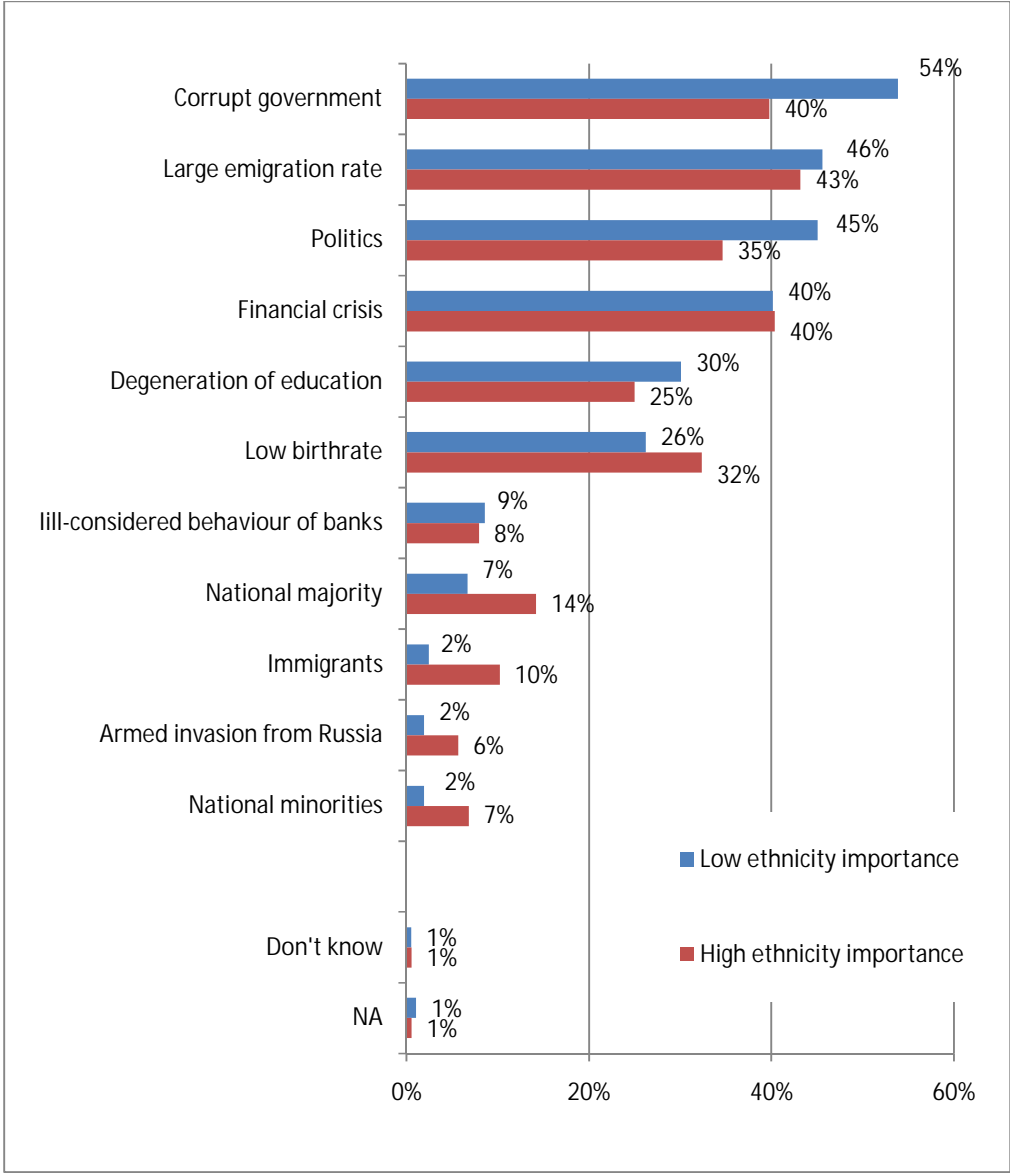
### 4.4. Threat perception



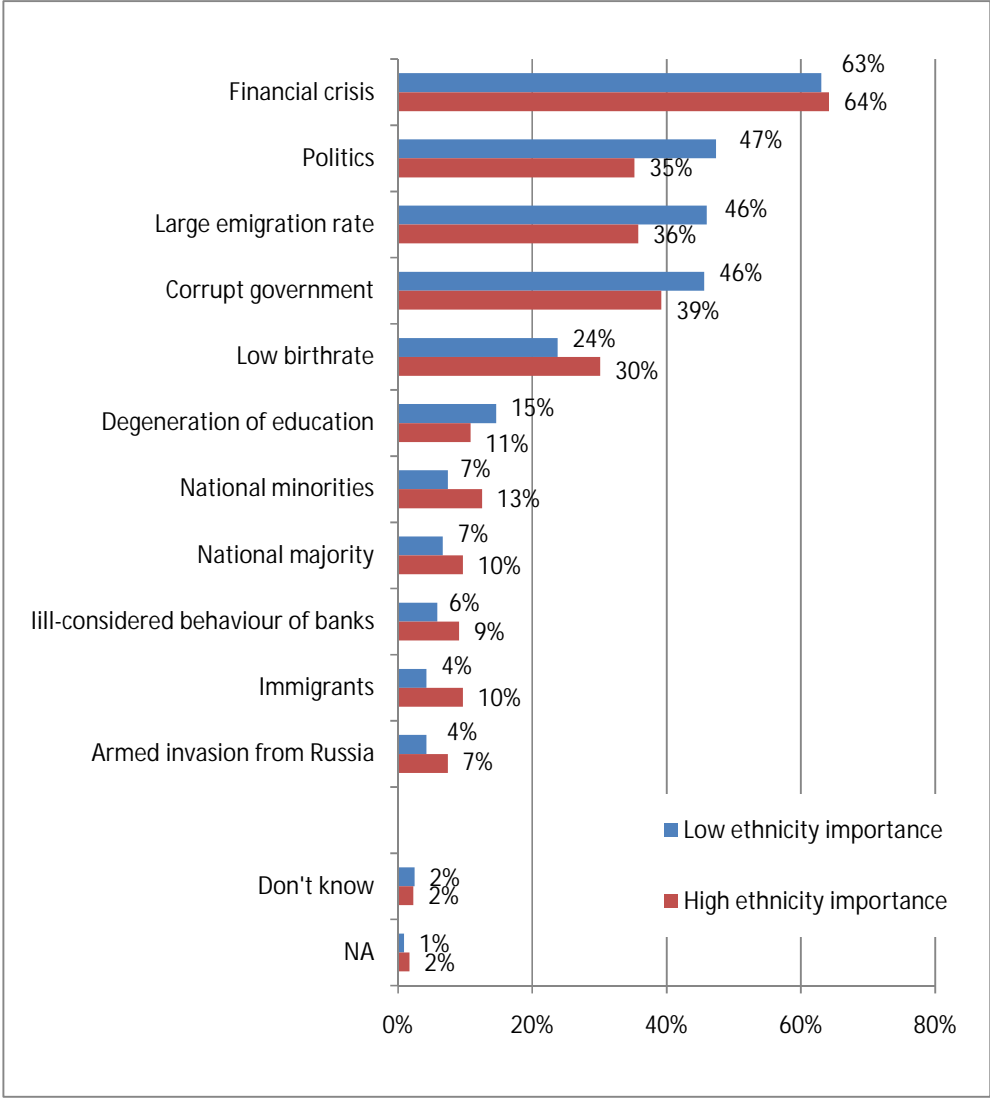
### 4.5. Threat perception for the Baltic States



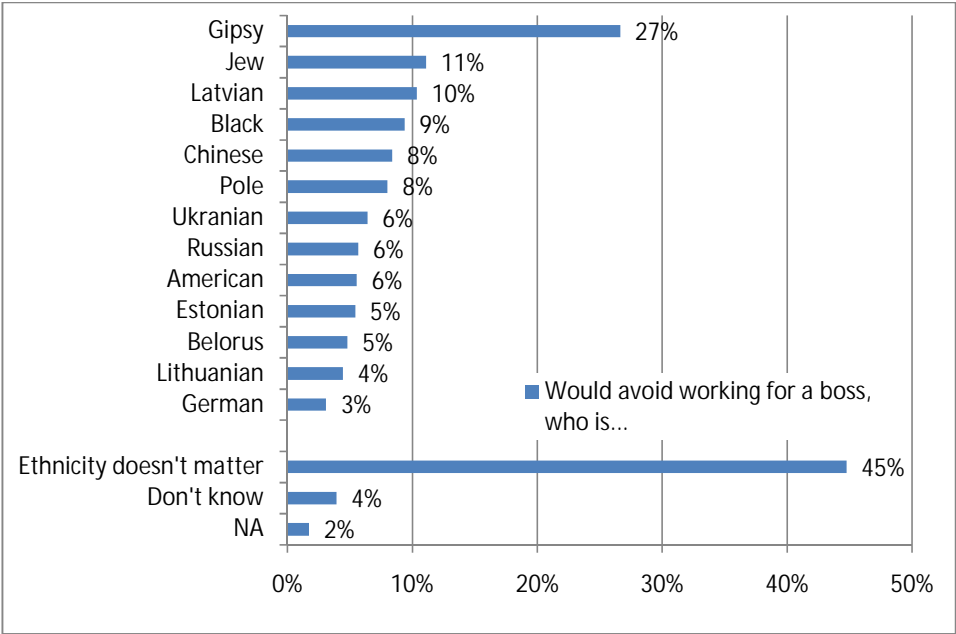
### 4.6. Threat perception for low ethnicity importance group and high ethnicity importance group



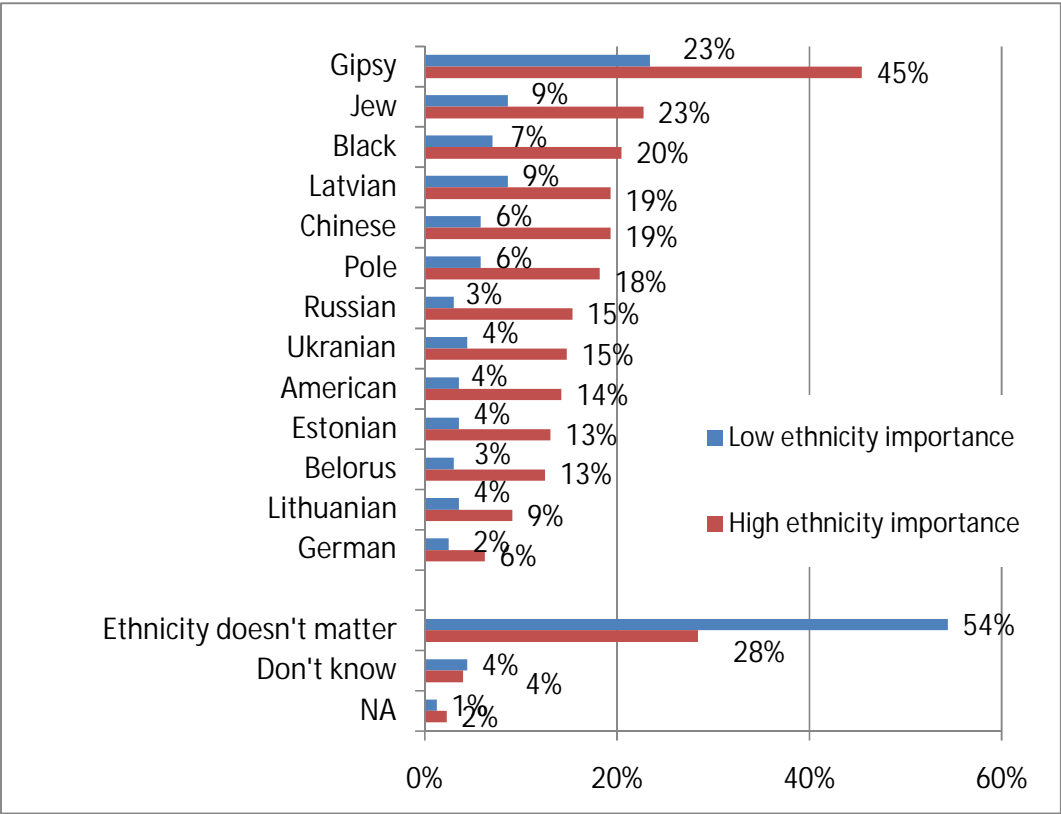
4.7. What others would consider a threat from the point of view of low ethnicity importance group and high ethnicity importance group



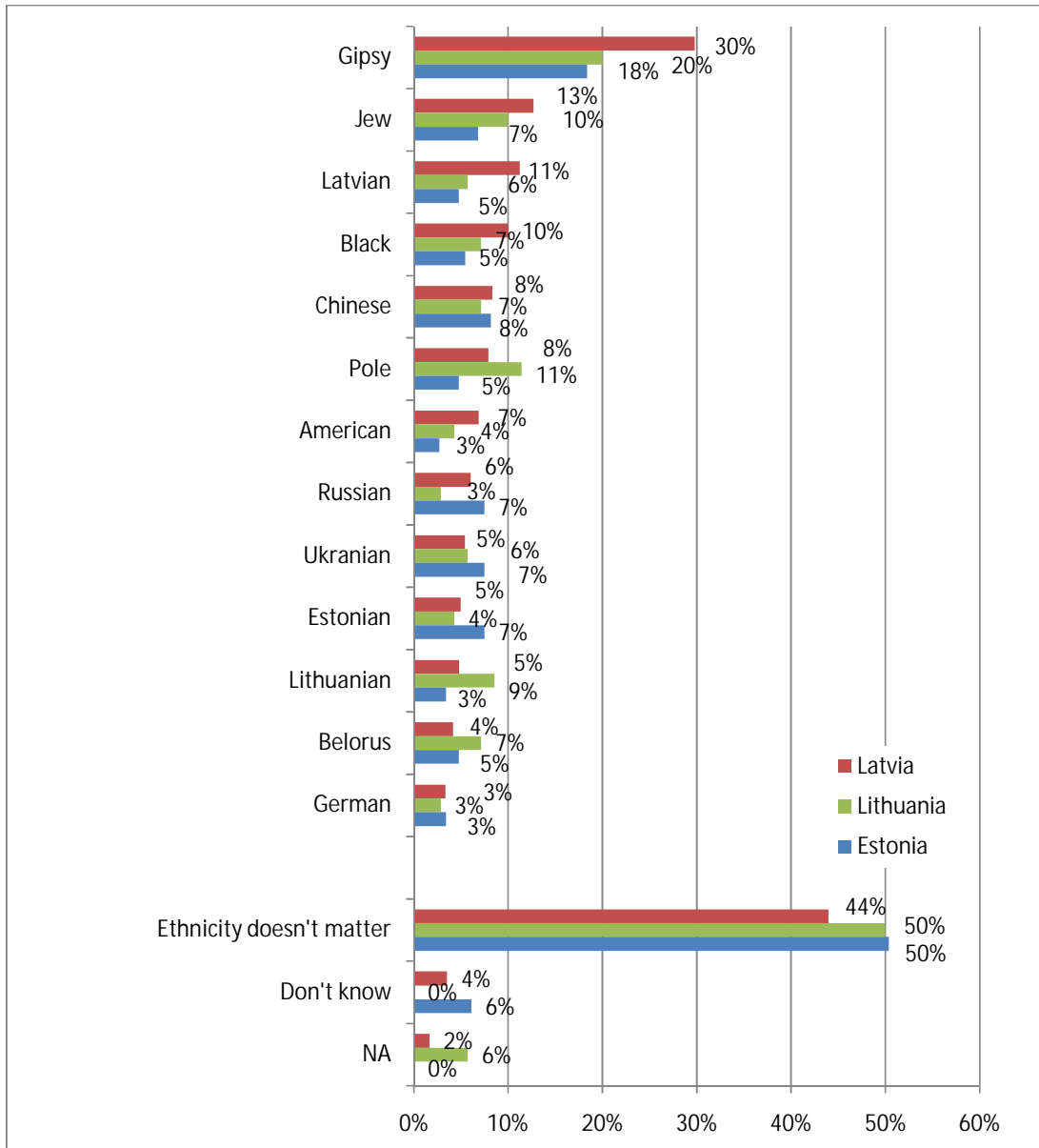
### 4.8. Ethnic bias in working situation



### 4.9. Ethnic bias in working situation for low ethnicity importance group and high ethnicity importance group



## 4.10. Ethnic bias in working situation in the Baltic States



## 4.11. Summary

1. Industriousness, intellect and health are the factors which most determine one's success in life, whereas such factors as wealthy family, beauty and ethnic or national origin are said to be relatively unimportant.

We can loosely generalize and suggest that factors which characterize one's ability to compete and accelerate on the labour market are evaluated as more important than those, which define the starting line.

2. Factor of belonging to national majority or minority was very seldom included among three most significant factors.

3. Latvians emphasize intellect and health. Lithuanians – intelligent parents. Estonians – sociability.

4. The high ethnicity importance group emphasizes family wealth, national origin and physical beauty – external qualities – as the main determinants of one's success in life. The low ethnicity importance group, on the other hand, emphasizes intellect, industriousness and sociability – internal qualities.

The high ethnicity importance group emphasizes external qualities (wealth, national origin and beauty).

The low ethnicity importance group, on the other hand, emphasizes internal qualities – intellect, industriousness and sociability.

5. Corrupt government, large emigration, politics and financial crisis are perceived to be the most serious threats to homeland.

On the whole, the perception of others' beliefs is adequate.

When comparing what respondents themselves indicate as a threat and what they think others would indicate as a threat, the financial crisis is overemphasized, while degeneration of education is underemphasized.

6. Latvians consider the corrupt government as the most serious threat, whereas Lithuanians consider it to be large emigration rate. Estonians in their turn emphasize the low birthrate.

7. Low ethnicity importance group emphasizes corrupt government and politics as the most threatening, whereas high ethnicity importance group emphasize low birthrate, ethnic majority and immigrants.

Thus, low ethnicity importance group focuses on management problems, while high ethnicity importance group focuses on demographic problems.

8. Low ethnicity importance group holds the opinion that other people would consider politics, emigration and corruption as most serious threats, while high ethnicity importance group considers to be more dangerous in others' opinion.

9. 45% of respondents consider that ethnicity of their boss is not an important factor. However, if we compare it to 76% who indicated that ethnicity is unimportant for them in social interaction; we find 31% for whom general social interaction doesn't cover their working situation.

27% of respondents indicated that they would not like their boss to be a Gipsy, which is almost 3 times more than the next disliked ethnic group (Jew – 11%).

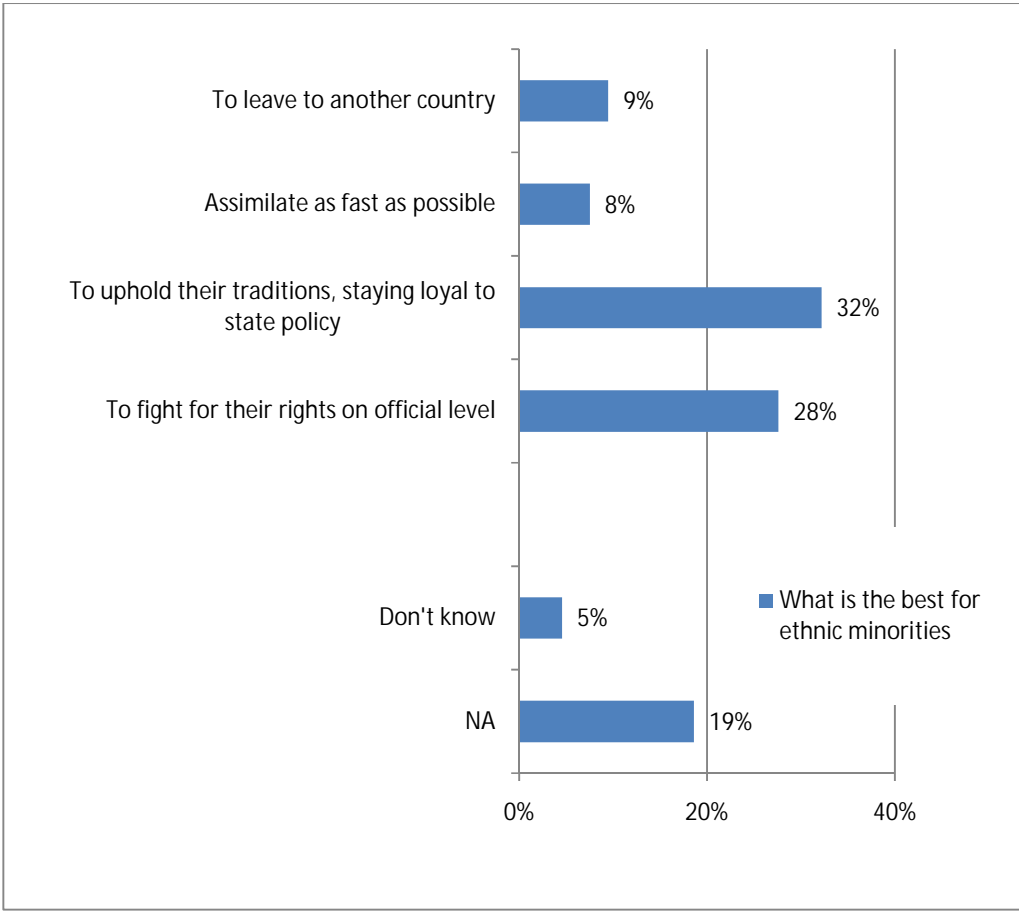
9% of respondents would not want their boss to be black, which is 4<sup>th</sup> result, after Gypsies, Jews and Latvians. Thus, classical racism is not a very serious, but still an issue in the Baltic States.

10. Latvians are the most intolerant regarding their bosses' ethnicity. Their intolerance is foremost focused on Gypsies.

11. Ethnicity of the boss is almost 2 times more important for high ethnicity importance group than for low ethnicity importance group. Also here, Gypsies are by far the leaders.

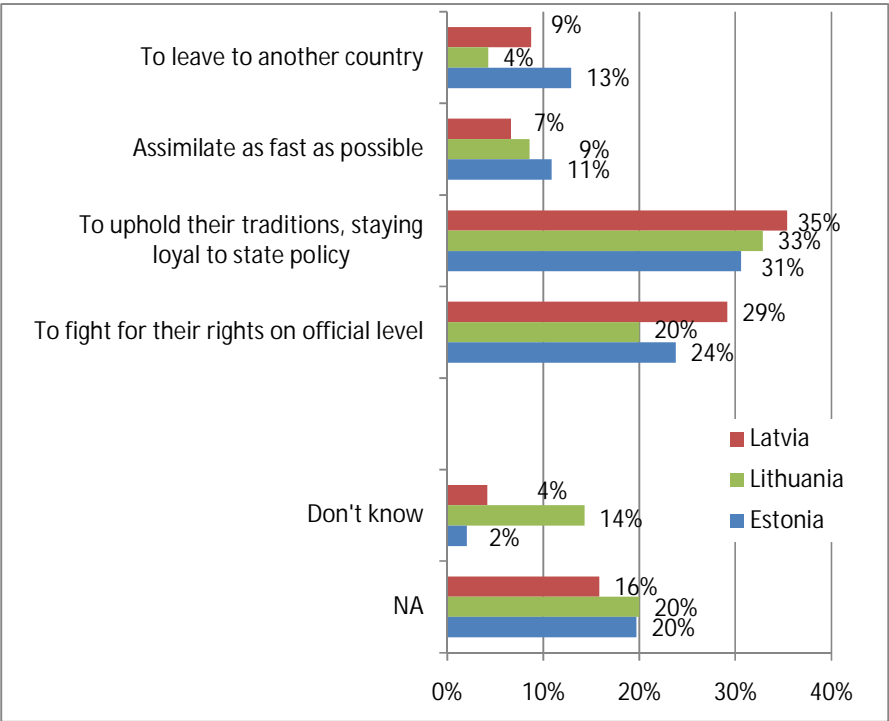
## 5. Ethnic minorities

### 5.1. Minorities' perspective

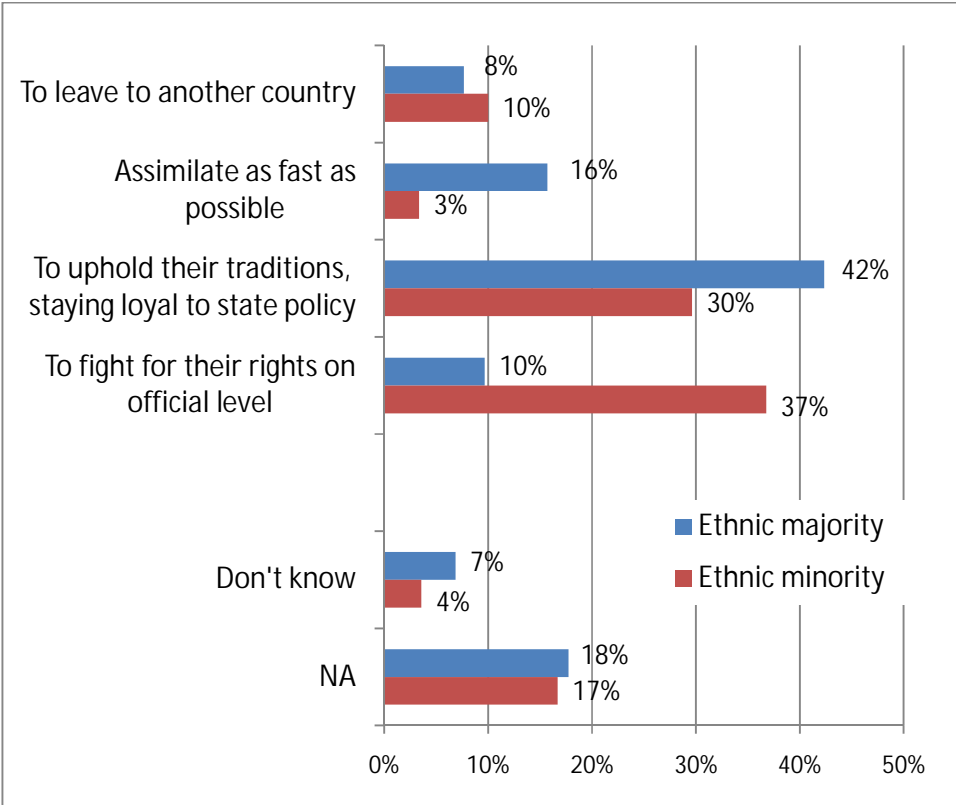




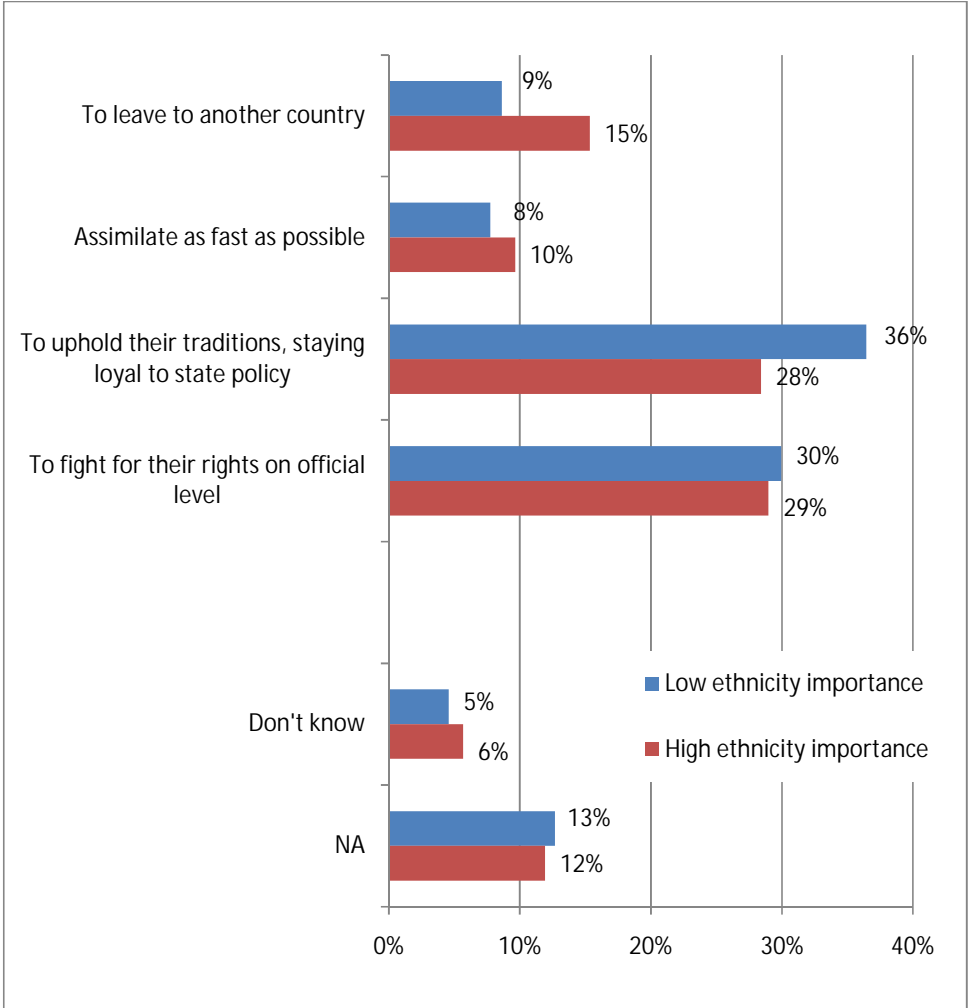
### 5.2. Minorities' perspective in the Baltic States:



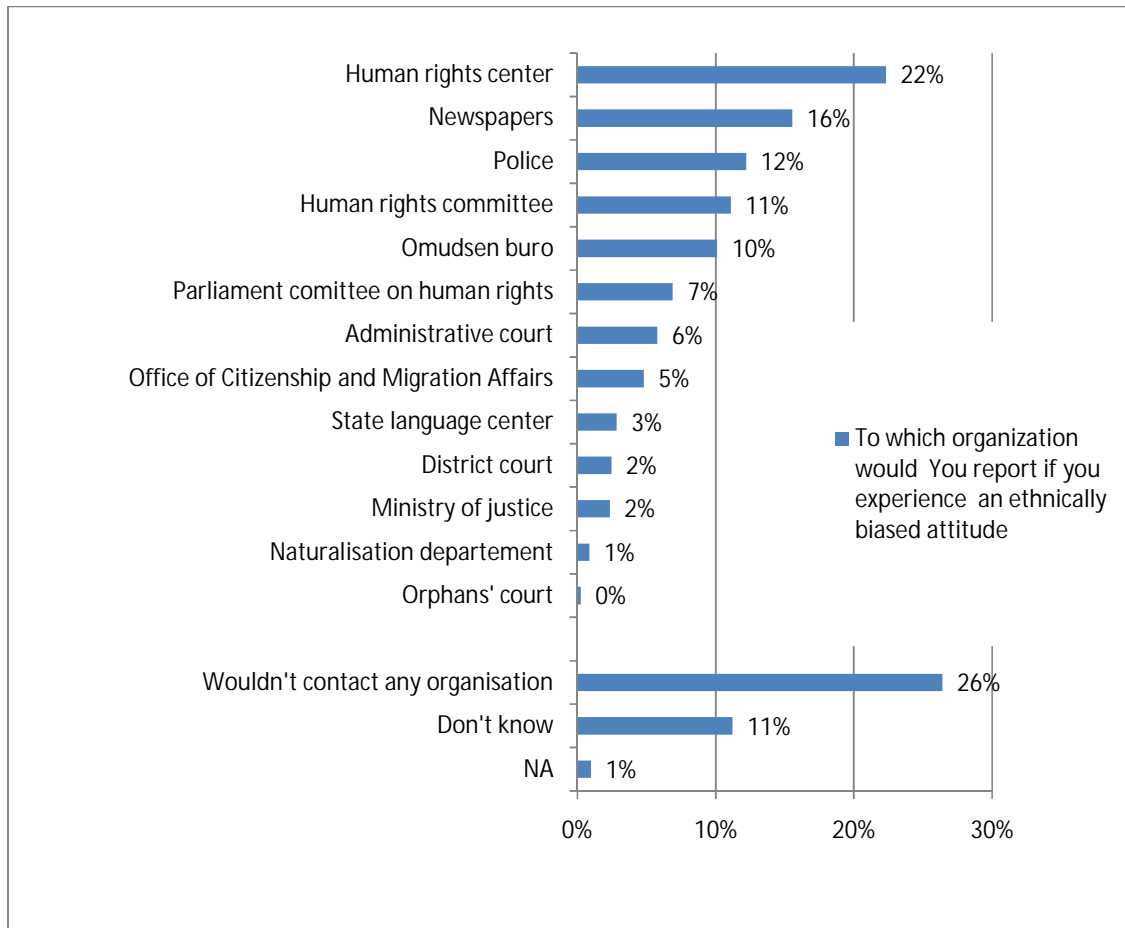
### 5.3. Minorities' perspective from point of view of ethnic minority/majority groups



### 5.4. Minorities' perspective for low ethnicity importance group and high ethnicity importance group



## 5.5. Awareness of human rights protecting organizations



## 5.6. Summary

1. Only 9% of the respondents consider that leaving the state is the best thing to do for ethnic minorities. Probably the large awareness of the emigration as a threat (over 40% for all groups) has played its part.
2. On the other hand 28% consider that ethnic minorities should actively fight in order to change current government policy regarding the minorities. Estonians are more radically set, whereas Lithuanians are more neutral.
3. Ethnic majority more often considers that assimilation or quiet upholding of traditions is the best strategy for ethnic minorities, whereas the minorities themselves more often consider that they should actively fight for their rights.
4. Low ethnicity importance group more often holds that upholding traditions while staying loyal to current state policy.

5. High ethnicity importance group more often holds that it is best for ethnic minorities to leave or assimilate.

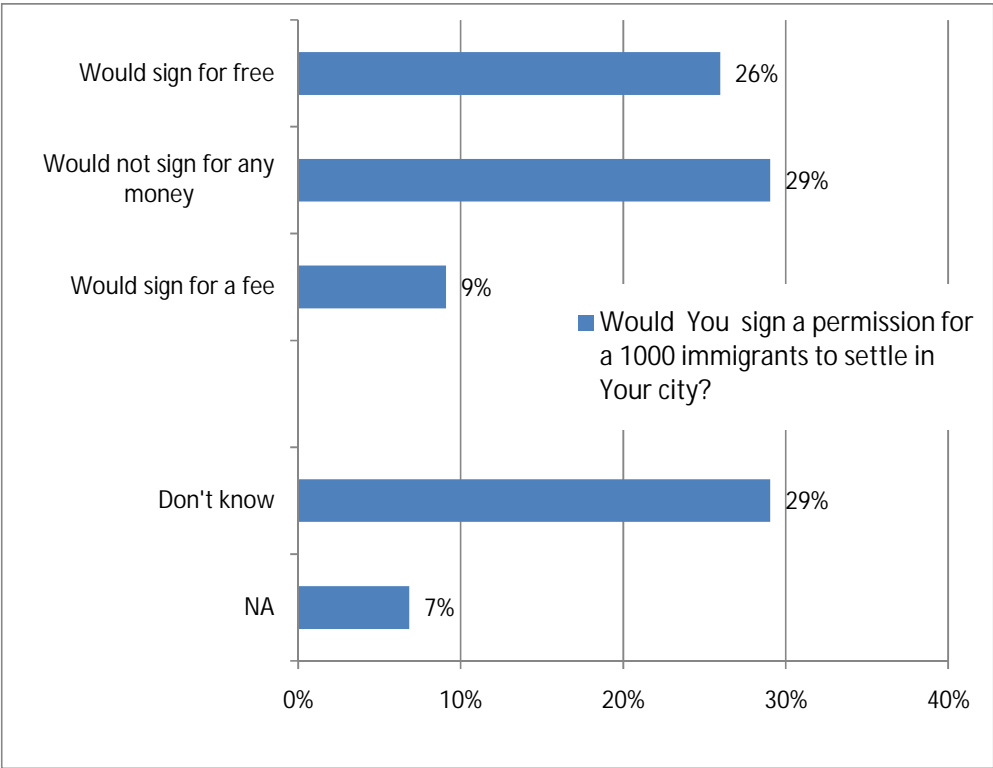
6. The fact that there is nearly no difference between the high/ low groups on the “fight for their rights” response means that currently ethnic minorities do not consider fighting for their language and traditions to be an ethnic issue.

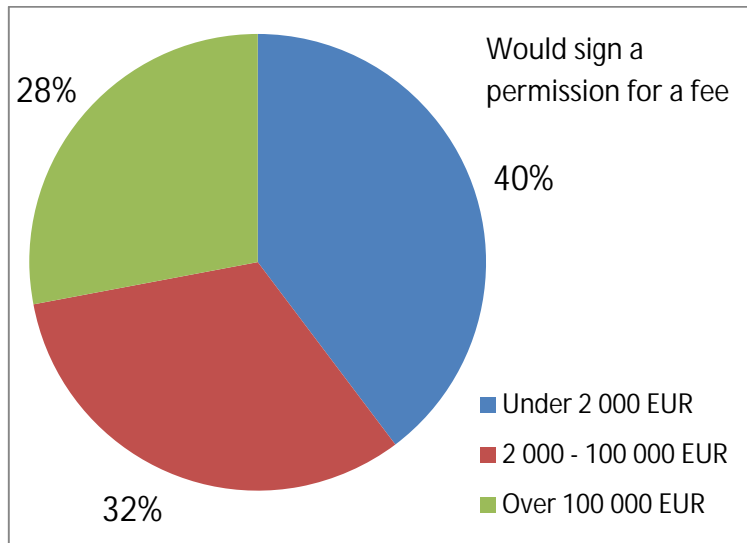
7. Human rights center, newspapers and police are most frequently mentioned among the organizations where one would turn to report a case of ethnically biased behavior. However, 26% of respondents (which is the most popular response) indicated that they would not report case of ethnically biased behavior to any organization. Results indicate that many respondents have a very vague notion about functions of aforementioned institutions and do not know about procedure of protection of their rights in case of their violation.

## 6. Immigration

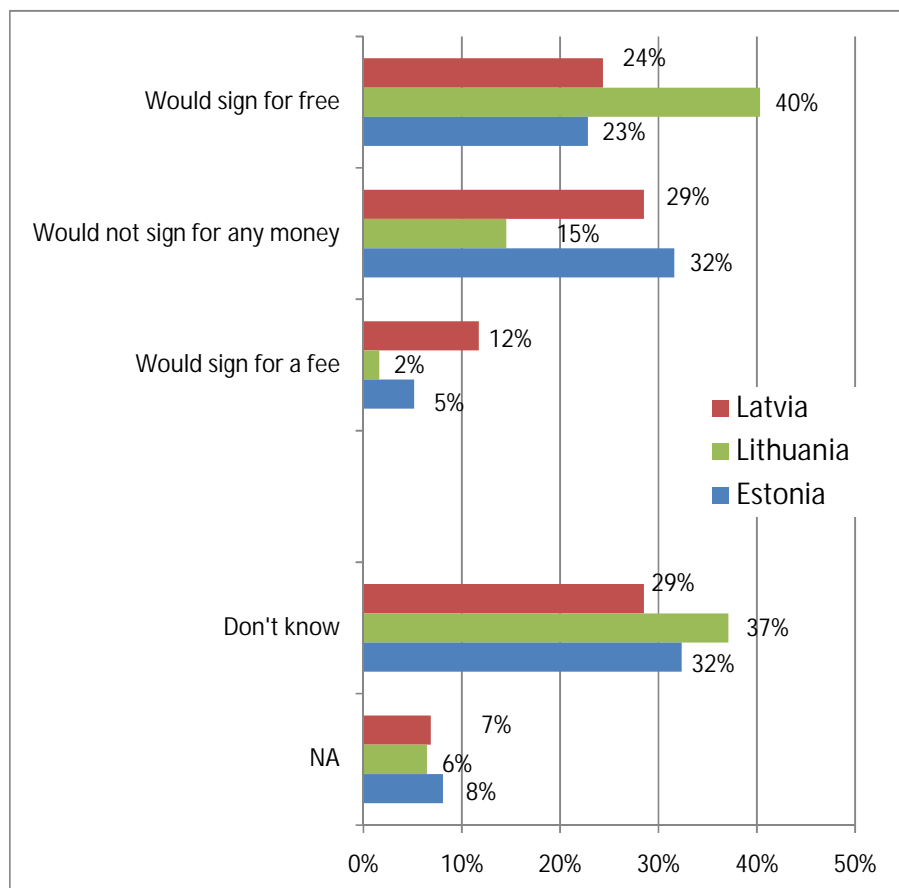
### 6.1. Attitude to immigrants

The respondents were asked to answer the question “Would you sign permission for 1000 immigrants to settle in your city?”.



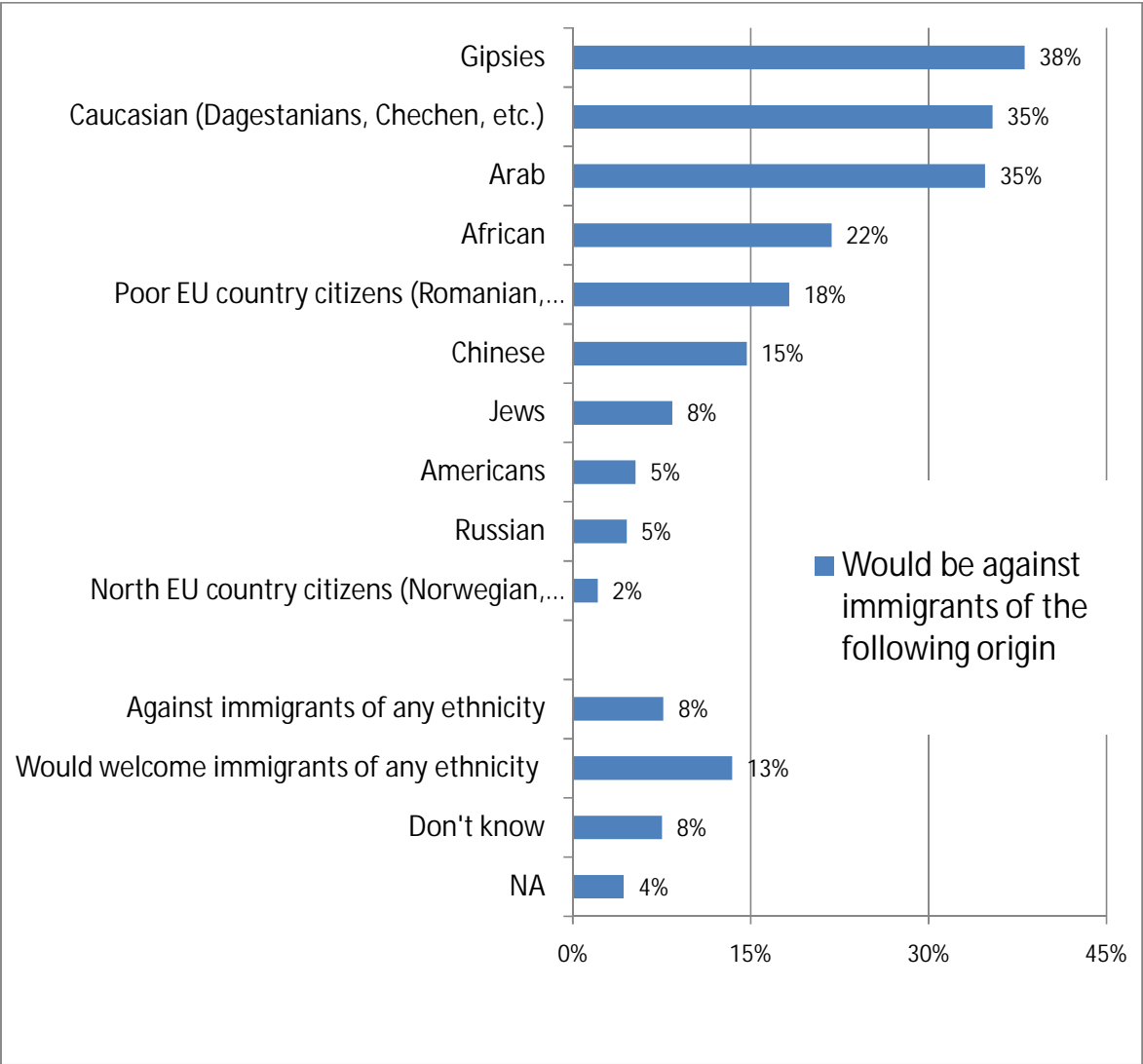


## 6.2. Attitude to immigrants in the Baltic States

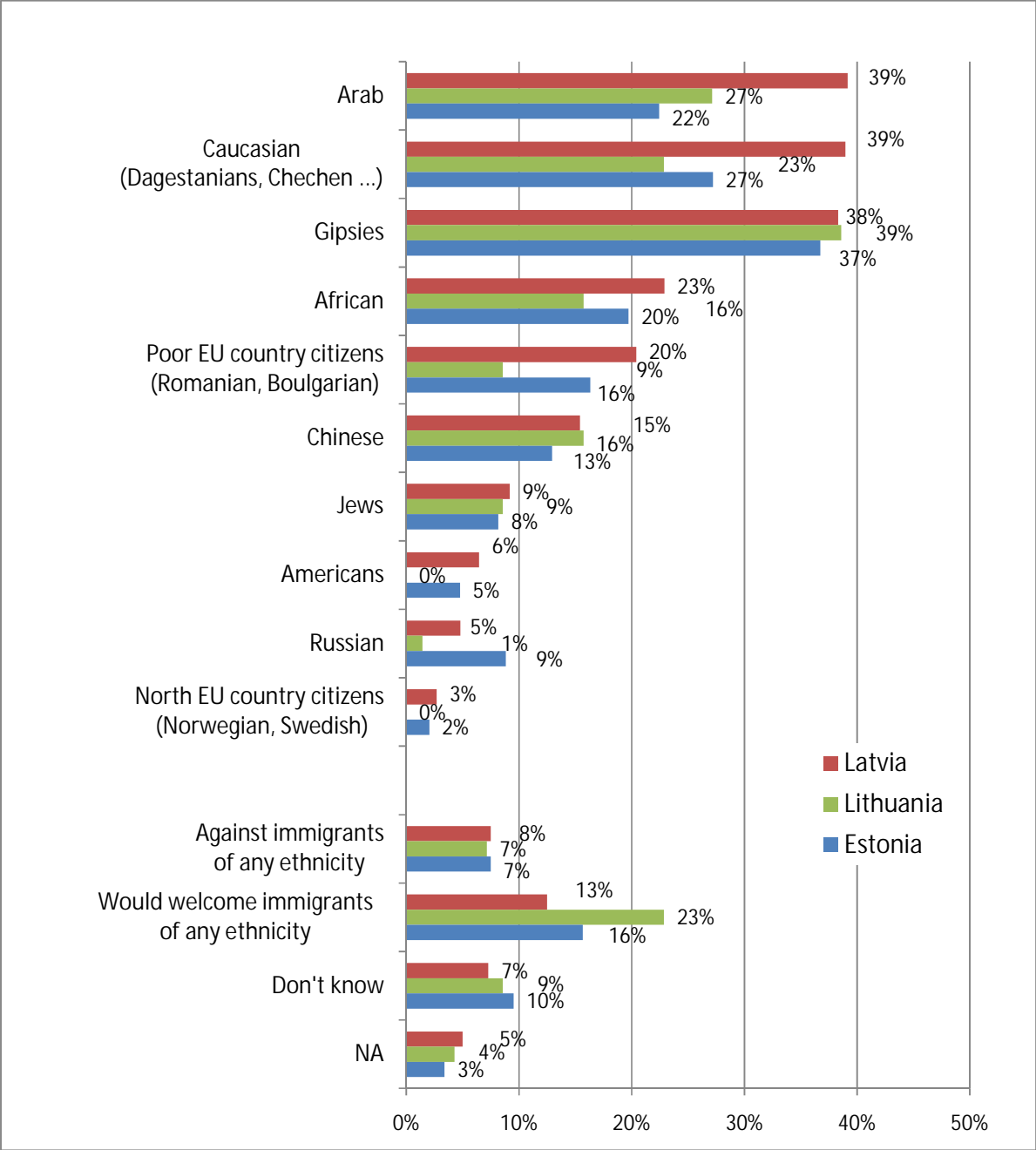


### 6.3. Particularly unacceptable immigrants

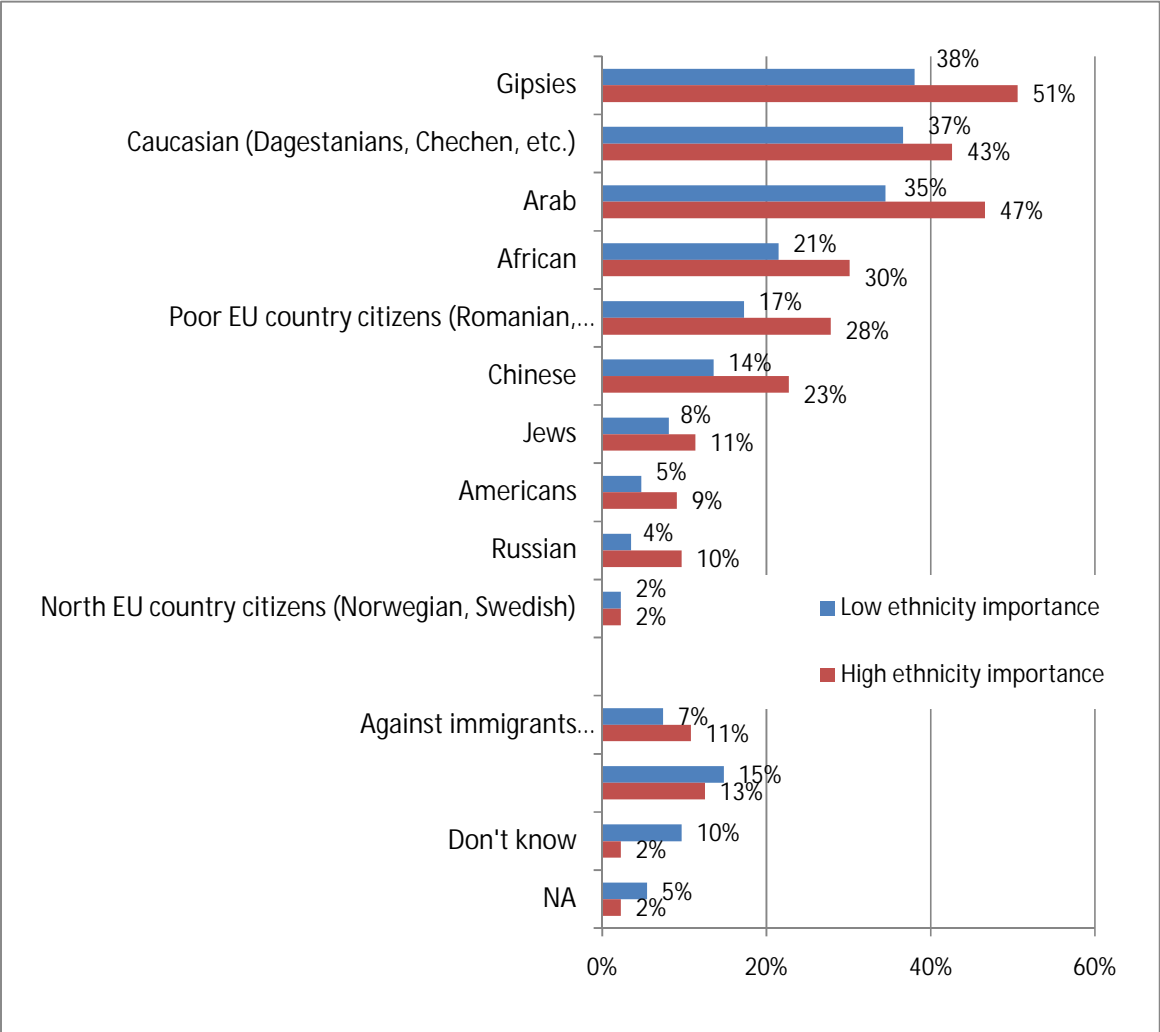
The respondents were asked to answer the question which categories of immigrants they do not wish to let in the country



### 6.4. Particularly unacceptable immigrants in the Baltic States



### 6.5. Particularly unacceptable immigrants for low ethnicity importance group and high ethnicity importance group

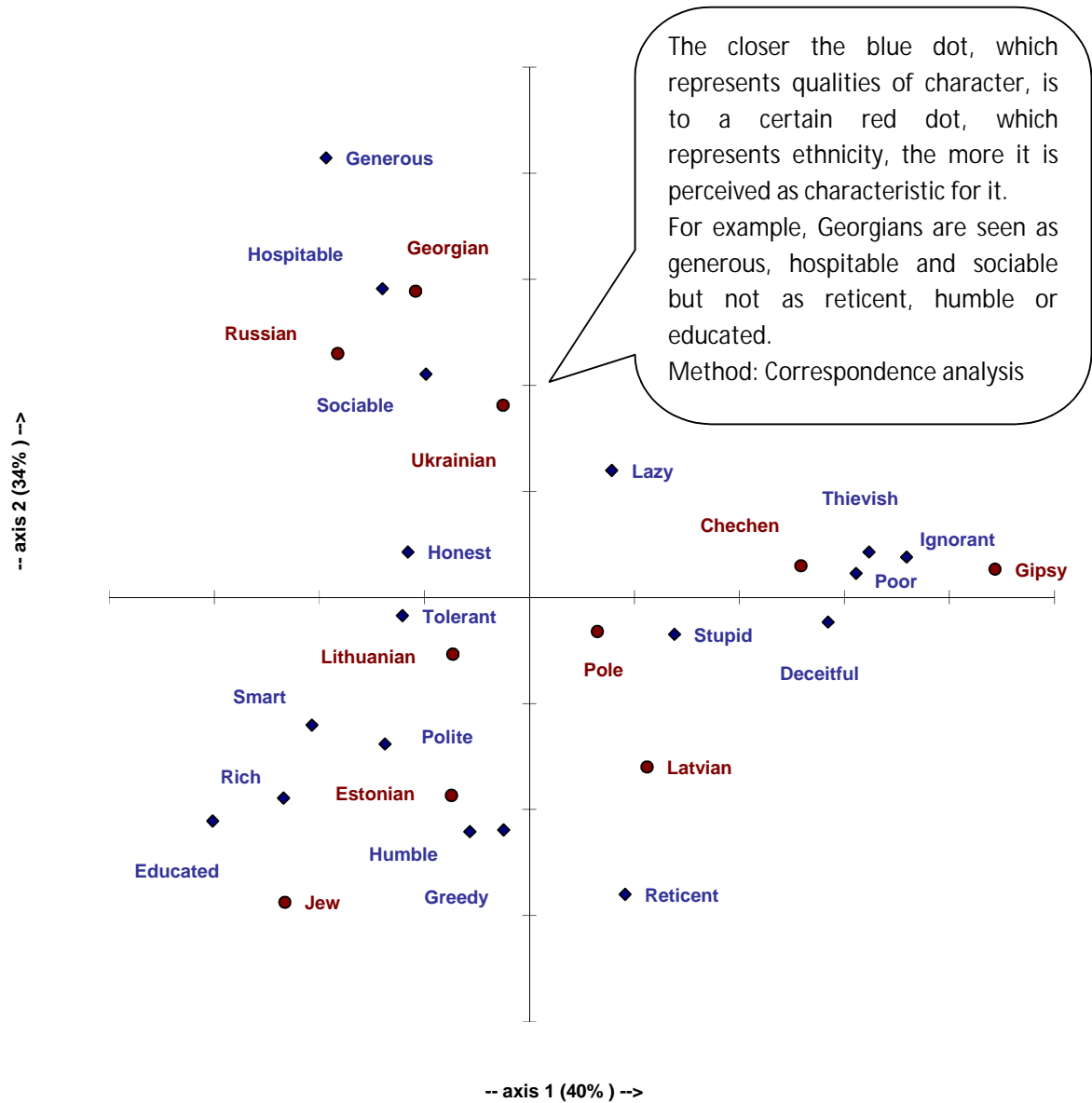


### 6.5. Summary

1. The split of opinions is almost equal between those who would welcome immigrants, those who would not and those who do not have an opinion on the issue.
2. Lithuanians are the most open towards the immigrants, while Estonians are the least open, with Latvians following closely behind. Latvians also relatively more often would be ready to accept immigrants for a fee.
3. Gypsies, Caucasian ethnicities and Arabs are the most undesired categories of immigrants in the Baltic States.
4. Latvians dislike almost all immigrant ethnicities more than Lithuanians and Estonians, with exception of Russians, who are more disliked by Estonians.



## 7. Ethnic stereotypes in the Baltic States



We can loosely assume that X dimension represents "good" vs. "bad" qualities, whereas Y dimension represent "social" vs. "personal" qualities.

## 7.1. Ethnic stereotypes in the Baltic States – full table

	Russian	Latvian	Lithuanian	Estonian	Jew	Ukrainian	Pole	Georgian	Chechen	Gipsy
Smart	41%	14%	21%	19%	58%	11%	13%	11%	6%	9%
Stupid	9%	25%	8%	18%	2%	11%	11%	8%	11%	12%
Greedy	6%	31%	14%	13%	45%	22%	18%	4%	6%	15%
Generous	51%	5%	8%	5%	3%	19%	7%	32%	6%	3%
Honest	21%	12%	9%	17%	6%	8%	6%	9%	6%	1%
Thievish	21%	19%	11%	7%	19%	19%	18%	12%	18%	72%
Lazy	40%	25%	9%	12%	4%	16%	11%	8%	9%	23%
Deceitful	9%	22%	9%	8%	18%	13%	15%	11%	17%	46%
Humble	7%	22%	10%	20%	7%	4%	6%	2%	2%	1%
Polite	14%	21%	15%	22%	24%	8%	12%	13%	5%	1%
Tolerant	25%	18%	13%	13%	15%	10%	9%	7%	3%	4%
Educated	32%	12%	10%	18%	52%	6%	7%	4%	2%	1%
Hospitable	69%	14%	17%	12%	11%	37%	13%	38%	13%	7%
Rich	20%	6%	8%	9%	51%	5%	6%	10%	6%	7%
Poor	12%	26%	9%	7%	3%	10%	10%	7%	20%	31%
Ignorant	11%	18%	6%	8%	3%	7%	10%	8%	19%	36%
Sociable	60%	10%	20%	11%	20%	30%	15%	32%	10%	19%
Reticent	3%	47%	16%	32%	25%	3%	12%	5%	15%	16%

## 7.2. Top 5 stereotypes in the Baltic States

		All	Latvia	Lithuania	Estonia
Gipsy	Thievish	72%	75%	71%	62%
Russian	Hospitable	69%	68%	63%	68%
Russian	Sociable	60%	64%		57%
Jew	Smart	58%	59%	51%	
Jew	Educated	52%		49%	
Estonian	Reticent				65%
Russian	Generous				53%
Gipsy	Deceitful			55%	
Latvian	Reticent		55%		

## 7.3. Top 5 stereotypes for low ethnicity importance group and high ethnicity importance group

		All	High ethnicity importance	Low ethnicity importance
Gipsy	Thievish	72%	77%	71%
Russian	Hospitable	69%	63%	71%
Russian	Sociable	60%		63%
Jew	Smart	58%	59%	58%
Jew	Educated	52%	56%	
Gipsy	Deceitful		57%	
Russian	Generous			52%

## 7.4. Top 5 stereotypes for national majority/minority groups

		All	National majority	National minority
Gipsy	Thievish	72%	68%	74%
Russian	Hospitable	69%	58%	73%
Russian	Sociable	60%	54%	63%
Jew	Smart	58%	51%	59%
Jew	Educated	52%		
Gipsy	Deceitful		46%	
Russian	Generous			56%

## 7.5. Top 5 stereotypes for experience of nationally biased attitude

		<b>Bcero</b>	<b>Experienced a nationally biased attitude</b>	<b>Did not experience a nationally biased attitude</b>
Gipsy	Thievish	72%	73%	72%
Russian	Hospitable	69%	75%	64%
Russian	Sociable	60%	62%	60%
Jew	Smart	58%	59%	56%
Jew	Educated	52%		53%
Russian	Generous		58%	

## 7.6. Top 5 stereotypes for age groups

		<b>All</b>	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>18-20</b>	<b>21-24</b>	<b>25-29</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>Over 40</b>
Gipsy	Thievish	72%	68%	77%	70%	65%	82%	80%
Russian	Hospitable	69%	60%	67%	72%	66%	73%	80%
Russian	Sociable	60%	58%	60%	58%	63%	63%	76%
Jew	Smart	58%	52%		60%	63%	69%	76%
Jew	Educated	52%					68%	72%
Jew	Rich		42%		55%			
Jew	Greedy			51%				
Gipsy	Deceitful			51%				
Russian	Generous					59%		

## 7.7. Top 5 stereotypes for education level groups

		<b>All</b>	<b>Basic (9years)</b>	<b>Secondary (12 years)</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Unfinished higher</b>	<b>Higher</b>
Gipsy	Thievish	72%	66%	73%	84%	73%	72%
Russian	Hospitable	69%	59%	64%	70%	75%	72%
Russian	Sociable	60%	51%	59%	66%	61%	66%
Jew	Smart	58%	51%	50%	56%	60%	66%
Jew	Educated	52%				60%	60%
Russian	Generous		45%		52%		
Gipsy	Deceitful			49%			

## 7.8. Top 5 stereotypes for same/mixed ethnicity parents

		All	Same ethnicity parents	Mixed ethnicity parents
Gipsy	Thievish	72%	72%	75%
Russian	Hospitable	69%	66%	76%
Russian	Sociable	60%	60%	64%
Jew	Smart	58%	54%	64%
Jew	Educated	52%	49%	
Jew	Rich			60%

## 7.9. Top 5 stereotypes for family background groups

		All	Poor	Middle class	Upper middle class	Rich
Gipsy	Thievish	72%	70%	75%	67%	
Russian	Hospitable	69%	72%	71%	72%	
Russian	Sociable	60%	63%	62%	56%	50%
Jew	Smart	58%	67%	57%	56%	63%
Jew	Educated	52%	63%		53%	
Russian	Generous			53%		
Georgian	Generous					63%
Russian	Thievish					50%
Georgian	Sociable					50%

## 7.10. Top 5 stereotypes for gender groups

		All	Female	Male
Gipsy	Thievish	72%	73%	72%
Russian	Hospitable	69%	69%	70%
Russian	Sociable	60%	60%	63%
Jew	Smart	58%	56%	61%
Jew	Educated	52%		
Jew	Rich		53%	
Russian	Generous			57%

## 7.11. Summary

1. By far, the most widespread stereotype is of Gypsies as thievish (72%). This stereotype is the most widespread in nearly all the groups.  
The exclusion are the higher middle class and rich family origin groups – which is surprising, considering that these groups are on average more ethnically biased (e.g. assign higher importance to ethnicity).
2. Other popular stereotypes include Russian as hospitable and sociable and Jew as smart and educated.
3. Different groups (age, gender, national majority/minority) indicated approximately the same stereotypes regarding the same nationalities, which justify about vitality of traditional stereotypes in society.

## 8. Conclusions

### 8.1. Ethnic importance: the causes

Ethnic importance is likely to be higher for respondents from more well-to-do families, families of parents of same ethnicity and representatives of national majority.

Thus, higher ethnic importance is in a way another expression of having a good start in life and valuing it.

This assumption is supported by a fact that national minorities' fighting for rights is not perceived as an ethnic importance issue (respondents with high ethnic importance are as likely to consider that minorities should fight for their rights as respondents with low ethnic importance) – since belonging to an ethnic minority does not constitute an advantage in life, fighting for minorities' rights is not perceived as an issue of ethnic importance.

On the other hand, beliefs about ethnic importance are not affected by actual experience of ethnic bias.

Thus, beliefs about ethnic importance are formed – most probably by family and media – well before a person can encounter an actual experience of it.

### 8.2. Ethnic importance: the effects

Since ethnic importance is perceived as a factor similar to family well-being, belief in its importance is usually accompanied by emphasizing the importance of other “given” qualities – such as health, country of origin and physical beauty.

High ethnic importance group are also more likely to see demographic problems as presenting the most serious threat as opposed to management problems in the perception of low ethnic importance group.

Of all the ethnicities, Gypsies have the worst image and are also much more often rejected in both the role of an employer and that of an immigrant.