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## **When Faced with a Democracy: political socialization of first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants in Central and South Florida**

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When Faced with a Democracy: political socialization of first-generation ethnic Russian  
immigrants in Central and South Florida

by

Marina Seraphine Mendez

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Government  
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## **Abstract**

It is a qualitative study about political socialization of first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants in Central and South Florida. The method used is a constructivist grounded theory with two-level coding. Based on data collected in forty in-depth interviews, I constructed a model of political socialization. It incorporates a starting point (the legal status in the US), triggers (English language proficiency, spousal support, and parenting), political socialization agencies (English as Second Language classes, a spouse, volunteering, and the church) and output structures (bureaucratic institutions). Using respondents' opinions about American vs. Russian political systems and mass media, their political participation, and views about political efficacy, I created an original classification of immigrants' political attitudes and behavior. The classification consists of four groups: the Admirers, the Skeptics, the Incurious, and the Recluses. This study fills the gap in the literature about Russian-speaking immigrants in the US. It also contributes to the cache of micro-theories on immigrant political socialization.

## Introduction

“Where are you?” I could hear the urgency in Rina’s voice<sup>1</sup> over the phone. I looked at my watch, put down my coffee and said: “I am already here, waiting for you.” She went quiet for a second and then reported: “I just looked everywhere and I do not see you!” “Well, this is strange – I did the same, and you are not here either,” I replied. It took me a minute to realize that Rina and I were waiting for each other at different Panera Bread locations. “Stay where you are, and I will be right there!” I rushed out of the store and into my car to drive to another location. Fifteen minutes later I was sitting in front of Rina. She drank her coffee and smiled. She always smiles.

I met Rina at one of the Russian-speaking Women club’s meeting. She was quite a spectacle: dressed in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century attire, she led the group of Russian-speaking women through a museum exhibition where she volunteered. Rina was very excited about the museum and knew a lot of interesting information about 19<sup>th</sup> century Florida living. Somewhere between candle-making and thread-weaving, I managed to introduce myself. I told her about my dissertation project and asked if she would like to participate. She was excited and promised to talk my ears off.

Rina is from Rostov-on-Don, one of the largest cities in the Russian South. She was a young mother of two when the Soviet Union collapsed and, like most Russians, had to quickly adapt to new capitalistic realities. By the time she turned forty-five, she was a newly divorced

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<sup>1</sup> All names have been changed to protect the identities of the research participants

successful businesswoman. As her children grew up and started their own families, Rina focused on her future. She met an American man on an international dating website, and in 2012 moved to the United States. As I sat in front of Rina, I couldn't help but notice how confident she was. When she emigrated from Russia, her English was very elementary, but it did not stop her from exploring her new country and adopting the new and exciting lifestyle. After five years in America, Rina learned English, received a life coach license, and became a realtor. She also maintained a part-time position at a retailing store and still had time to volunteer at the museum. Rina respects the US history and admires American political system. *"Russian government always made me so mad: people are powerless and have no mechanisms to change the system. I know that life in the US is not easy, but you can always negotiate and compromise. I do not feel scared in the US."*

According to the Department of Homeland Security<sup>2</sup> the total number of Russian citizens who applied for legal permanent resident status during the period between 2004 and 2014 was 122,223. In the same period, 92,876 former Russian citizens were naturalized and became Americans. Between 2009 and 2013, Russian was the 9<sup>th</sup> most common language spoken in the United States. The estimated number of Russian speakers is 879.434.<sup>3</sup> How many of them are like Rina? How many ethnic-Russians immigrate to the United States and successfully integrated into American society? How many of them study the American political system and find it to be better and more stable compared to the one in Russia?

When it comes to studies on political attitudes and political socialization of Russian-speaking immigrants in the United States, most of the attention had always been paid to Russian-

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2016/table11>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.census.gov/data/tables/2013/demo/2009-2013-lang-tables.html?eml=gd&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](http://www.census.gov/data/tables/2013/demo/2009-2013-lang-tables.html?eml=gd&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

speaking Jews. This dissertation calls for exploring immigration experiences and political attitudes of all ethnic Russians in the United States. The main goal is to determine whether exposure to American society and its political values encourage any changes in attitudes toward politics and political participation of recent immigrants from authoritarian states (using ethnic Russians as a sample group).

This study looks at first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants who emigrated from Russia between 2004 and 2014. The study's main questions are:

1. What are the most common agencies of political socialization?
2. How do the American political system and society affect Russia's expatriates?
3. Does proficiency in English language increase the likelihood of successful political socialization into American society?

This study employs concepts of political culture, political socialization, and theories of political resocialization. Larry Diamond defined political culture as "people's predominant beliefs, attitudes, values, ideals, sentiments, and evaluations about the political system of their country and the role of the self in that system" (Diamond, 1999, p. 163). Political socialization is defined as a type of learning "characterized by the development, aggregation, and manipulation of symbolic forms and representations. It is at this stage that knowledge is codified and passed on; the foundation of culture itself is laid down" (Riccards, 1973, p. 7). Adult political resocialization is the process of adaptation to a political culture and system of a host society.

I conducted interviews with forty ethnic Russian immigrants in four metro areas of Central and South Florida. The sample was divided into four groups for easy comparison: by gender and English language proficiency. To determine if political resocialization had occurred, I

asked respondents to share their knowledge about American political system and ways how they obtained that knowledge. Respondents were also asked to share their opinions on political participation and political efficacy and how these opinions had changed after immigrating from Russian to the United States. In addition to interviews, I asked all participants to complete a survey that determined their political type (Pew Research Center, 2014, p. 37).

For the data analysis, I used constructivist grounded theory with two-level qualitative coding. Based on my analysis, political socialization of the first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants starts after receiving legal status (i.e. a lawful permanent resident/citizen); it is further triggered by interaction with American bureaucratic institutions and enhanced by English language proficiency, spousal support, and parenting. The most effective political socialization agencies include English as a Second Language (ESOL) classes, a spouse, volunteering, and English-speaking churches.

Despite the exposure to multiple agencies of political socialization, most respondents (65%) remained either skeptical or uninterested in politics and political participation. Only six people, or 15% of respondents, became more politically active after immigration. These six individuals are very optimistic about their political efficacy and believe that the US has more freedoms and liberties compared to Russia. Eight people, or 20% of respondents, admitted they became less politically active after they left Russia. The main contributor to the decrease in political participation is low proficiency in English language. Inability to communicate with American society turned eight respondents into recluses. Ultimately, issues concerning immigrant political socialization led to a bigger question about differences in political cultures and their abilities to change.

The chapters will proceed in the following order: Chapters 1 and 2 address theoretical concepts of political culture and political socialization respectively. Chapter 3 reviews existing literature on the economic, social, and political integration of Russian, Russian-speaking, and other groups of immigrants in the US. Chapter 4 describes the methodology and introduces initial data. Chapter 5 talks about economic and social integrations of study participants. Chapter 6 presents a theoretical model of political socialization of first-generation ethnic-Russian immigrants while chapter 7 analyses their political participation and efficacy. Chapter 8 presents a discussion of findings, theoretical inferences, study limitations, and some ideas for future research.

## **Chapter 1 Theoretical Framework: Political Culture**

This chapter concentrates on the concept of political culture and examines political cultures of Russia (home society) and the United States (host society). The first part analyses the concept of political culture and its development over time. The second part focuses on American and Russian political cultures. It is important to explore the similarities and differences in political cultures of the two countries because it can help to identify any challenges ethnic-Russian immigrants might face while adjusting to their new surroundings in the United States.

### *1.1. Political culture: a theoretical overview*

Studies of political culture became popular in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and can be linked to the behavioral revolution in social sciences. The modern political tradition emphasized particular attitudes, values, and beliefs that can be identified within a specific political culture (Gibbins, 1989, p. 14). The development of the political culture concept is usually associated with Gabriel Almond, Sidney Verba, and Lucian Pye.<sup>4</sup>

In 1956 Gabriel Almond proposed a fourfold political system classification: the Anglo-American; the Continental European; the pre-industrial or partially industrial political systems outside of the Europe and America; and the totalitarian (Almond, 1956, pp. 392-393). Almond argued that each political system follows particular patterns of orientations toward political actions, which he defined as political culture. Furthermore, he suggested that political culture relates to the general culture of a country (Ibid., p. 396). Anglo-American political systems

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note, however, that later they were criticized for their euro-centric approach.

possess a homogenous or secular (multi-valued) political culture with highly differentiated, organized, and stable role structures, which diffuse power within the political system. A totalitarian political system, such as a communist regime, may seem homogenous, but is a combination of conformity and apathy. It is imposed without considering alternatives. “This type of political system has become possible only in modern times, since it depends on the modern technology of communication, on modern types of organization, and on the modern technology of violence” (Ibid., p. 403). The totalitarian structure does not delegate power to elements of the political system. The two distinctive characteristics of a totalitarian political culture are the dominance of the coercive roles and a functional instability of the delegation of power.

Democratic political culture is a culture of participation. Aside from universal suffrage, diverse political parties, and an elected legislature, democratic political participation requires civic culture. Originating in Western Europe, it combines modernity and tradition. Civic culture is “a particular distribution of patterns of orientation toward political objects among members of the nation” (Almond & Verba, 1963, p. 13). There are three types of political culture: parochial (a society with no specialized political roles); subject (subjects are aware of specialized government authority and can form a political attitude, but relations are passive); and participant (individuals orient toward the system and play an active role in the political process). The three types of political culture are not mutually exclusive and may exist in a mix. The mixed civic culture concept has the ability “to establish what propensities for political behavior exist in the political system as a whole, and its various parts, among special orientation groupings (subcultures), or at key points of initiative or decision in the political structure (role culture)” (Ibid., p. 31). By focusing on political culture, one can compare structural and functional characteristics and also cultural, subcultural, and role-structural characteristics of different states.



No society has a single political culture, and there is a clear division between urban (modern) and rural (traditional) political cultures. The proportion of the two affects the course and speed of national development (Pye & Verba, 1965, pp. 22-23).

According to Almond and Powell (1966), political culture affects the structure and quality of a political system. The main function of the latter is to constantly recruit individuals to perform political roles or the basic units of a given political system. In traditional societies with primitive political cultures, the roles of the polity are not differentiated from other social roles. As a political culture develops, “men become increasingly rational, analytical, and empirical in their political action” (Almond & Powell, 1966, p. 24). As follows, the political system benefits from a fully developed political culture where political roles are distributed among rational individuals.

The development of political culture can be achieved through the secularization of culture. It is a process of replacing traditional attitudes and orientations with “more dynamic decision-making processes involving the gathering of information, the evaluation of information, the laying out of alternative courses of action” (Ibid.). According to these authors, secularization of political culture leads toward the emergence of pragmatic and empirical orientation. A political system, in turn, becomes more differentiated, complex, and able to respond better to societal needs. They also argue that the movement from primitive political society to a more progressive one can be achieved by shifting from one pattern of secularization to another. “It is in the secularization process that bargaining and accommodative political action becomes a common feature of the society and that the development of special features such as interest groups and parties become meaningful” (Ibid., p. 60). In other words, the parochial, subject, and

participant political cultures are pathways (from parochial to participant) for countries to improve their political cultures.

In the 1970s, Ronald Inglehart introduced the notion of post-materialism (Inglehart, 1971). After conducting his study of the six European industrial nations and assessing their values, he concluded that many aspects of life in industrial nations, including physical and economic security, are taken for granted. As opposed to political culture theorists before him (Almond, Verba, and Pye), Inglehart characterized post-materialism as a feature of developed industrial nations of the West. He identified 'acquisitive' (traditional) and post-bourgeois values. Acquisitive values include economic and social order, while post-bourgeois values consist of freedoms, liberties and active political participation. People born before 1945 are in favor of traditional values, while people born after 1945 prefer a post-bourgeois set of values. Values, skills, and structure are three types of variables that determine the pace of generational political changes (Inglehart, 1977, p. 11). If older generations are more conservative and individualistic, the younger ones prefer universal values and human rights. Post WWII generations were less materialistic and more oriented toward post-materialist values which include social and self-actualization needs: aesthetic (beautiful cities, preserved nature); intellectual (appreciation for new ideas); and needs for belonging and self-esteem (humane society, open and receptive communities and governments) (Inglehart, 1977, p. 42).

Post-materialism had offered entirely new venues in political culture studies, especially in comparison with the Almond-Verba-Pye framework which focused on allegiant citizenship. Inglehart developed an assertive citizenship model (Dalton & Welzel, 2014, p. 13). In the assertive model, the lines between elites and masses are blurred. It allows for more fluid communication between the two. It also makes governments more attentive and responsive to

public demands since the public became politically active and less trustful of political institutions. In Almond and Verba's terms, stable industrial nations climbed the Maslow's hierarchy of needs and acquired a participant political culture. Throughout Inglehart's long and prolific career, the materialism/post-materialism dichotomy resulted in the development of the World Values Survey (WVS) project<sup>5</sup>. It serves as a great source of information on people's values around the globe. In this study, I rely on the WVS data to highlight the main differences in political cultures of Russia and the United States.

The 1980s discussions of political culture were about postmaterialism and postmodernism. Postmodernism bases its understanding of political culture on dissatisfactions and disenchantments with modernity. "A postmodernist politics and political culture would highlight dissatisfaction with modern politics, its sameness, customary allegiances, its predictability, bureaucracy, discipline, authority and mechanical operation, and would stress the emergence of politics featuring difference, dealignment and realignment, unpredictability, freedom, delegitimization and distrust, power and spontaneity" (Gibbins, 1989, p. 14). There is a strong connection between political culture and people's political preferences. Aaron Wildavsky divided cultures into two groups with two types in each group (Wildavsky, 1987, p. 7):

1. Strong: collectivism and egalitarianism. Collectivism promotes hierarchy as an institutionalized authority where inequality is justified by specialization and division of labor. Egalitarian cultures reject authority altogether. They envision achievement of greater equality through the reduction of differences.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>

2. Weak: individualism and fatalism. Individualistic cultures rely on self-regulation where bargaining reduces the need for authority. Fatalistic cultures are characterized by the inability of people to control what happens to them.

The formation of political preferences, in theory, depends on a type of political culture. In practice, however, more often it reacts to the opposing forces due to conflicts among cultures. The possibility of conflict arises from having two or more political cultures within one state. The conflict can exist between the main political culture and one or more subcultures (Thompson, Ellis, & Wildavsky, 1990) or coexistence of several political cultures within one state (Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1993). The collapse of the Soviet Union revealed an additional phenomenon – an alternative political culture that existed parallel to the main or official political culture (Petro, 1995).

Political culture concept was used in democratization studies of the “Third Wave” democratic transitions (Gaman-Golutvina, 2015, p. 123). Larry Diamond conceptually connected political culture to democracy development. He argued that participant political culture, especially a belief in democratic legitimacy, is a central factor in the consolidation of democracy (Diamond, 1999).

Each political culture is unique and exists in its distinctive system of coordinates. People’s attitudes and political beliefs are shaped by their personal experiences and by the agents of political socialization. At the same time, each historical period has common outside trends that affect political cultures. Contemporary trends include democratization, marketization, and globalization (Powell, Dalton, & Strøm, 2012, p. 57).

A variety of factors can alter political culture such as historical experiences, institutional changes, political socialization, as well as economic, social, and international factors. The re-evaluation of political culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century led scholars to pay attention to how culture influences politics. The culture of power has two forms: an official truth and a common sense. The power of culture, however, has a variety of forms: from creative, autonomous practices and trade unions to writings, speeches, and interpretive arts. (Goldfarb, 2013).

Throughout the decades, scholars of political culture attempted to refine the concept, but it had always been associated with democracy and political participation. The concept of a civic culture coined by Almond and Verba in the 1960s is firmly attached to active citizenship. In the next subsection, I will discuss political cultures of the United States and Russia. I will concentrate on two things in particular: the participation aspect and the people's preferences for the governing regime.

I chose to use Larry Diamond's definition of political culture: "people's predominant beliefs, attitudes, values, ideals, sentiments, and evaluations about the political system of their country and the role of the self in that system" (Diamond, 1999, p. 163). In my opinion, it is the most encompassing explanation of political culture because it incorporates not only people's mentality but also their actions within their political system.

### *1.2. Political culture in the United States of America*

In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville had famously asked: "How does it happen that the United States, where the inhabitants have only recently immigrated to the land which they now occupy...where they met one another for the first time...where, in short, the instinctive love of country can scarcely exist; how does it happen that everyone takes as zealous interest in the affairs of his township, his country, and the whole state as if they were his own?"

(Tocqueville, 1945b, p. 243). According to Tocqueville, the answer is simple: active political and civic participation in the United States occurs in the form of associations. “Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions constantly form associations...wherever at the head of some new undertaking you see the government of France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association” (Tocqueville, 1945a, p. 106). In the US, there is unlimited freedom to form political and civic associations.

Tocqueville had also noticed that Americans are very independent and learn early in life to rely on themselves (Tocqueville, 1945b, p. 192). Max Weber picked up on this contradiction as well: Americans are devoted equally to two opposite values: individualism and civic engagement. Weber traced it back to the first European settlers: “Puritanism’s world-mastery individualism...implied a strong orientation to the believer’s salvation. It also called forth an equally strong orientation to a community” (Kalberg, 2016, p. 26). A ‘community-forming energy,’ as Weber put it, came from the ascetic Protestant practices of communal worship that were very exclusive. Honesty, goodwill, and openness prevailed in such communities and eventually traveled to their commercial relations. “...these extensions of trust and ethical conduct in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries laid the groundwork for the formation of a demarcated – and secular – civic sphere in the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century” (Ibid., p. 29). As follows, American political culture is deeply rooted in its history.

In *The Civic Culture*, Almond and Verba had classified the US political culture as a participant type. The role of the American people, or participants, is developed and widespread because people are frequently exposed to politics. Americans possess “a sense of obligation to take an active part in a community, and a sense of competence to influence the government”

(Almond & Verba, 1963, p. 440). People's ability to cooperate is a result of the high level of social trust that is present in the US political culture.

The US is ethnically and religiously diverse. As follows, American political culture emphasizes values like social tolerance, equality of opportunity, and political freedom. For the same reason, the dominant techniques in American politics are bargaining, compromise, and competition. Since numerous groups seek to maximize their political influence, they form highly organized interest groups with extensive lobbying as their most distinctive activity. American social diversity is responsible for the existence of many subcultures, which are "especially likely to conflict with the dominant culture when social groups have been the object of political discrimination" (Rosenbaum, 1975, p. 76). As the most prosperous economy in the world, the US was able to solve its various social problems by making social mobility possible and sharing a proverbial 'piece of its economic pie' with relatively disadvantaged groups (Ibid., p. 77). These methods helped the US to lessen any political or social dissatisfactions of political subcultures. Like Almond and Verba, Walter Rosenbaum noted high levels of political trust. Americans tend to be open and optimistic; they had earned a reputation as 'a nation of joiners' due to their interest in social collaborations and a widespread belief of their high effectiveness (Ibid., p. 81). American democratic ideals emphasize four procedural norms: equality, freedom, political participation, and the rule of law. Equality is associated with equal protection under the law. Freedom relates to expressive freedoms like voting, the right of petition, peaceful assembly, and publication of political opinion. According to Rosenbaum, all these actions are very dear to Americans, especially when it comes to voting which they regard as the most effective way to influence the government. "Americans have made popular elections almost a fetish" (Ibid., 85).

Most Americans assert that civic activism is an obligation of every good citizen. But in reality, Americans are not as active as they declare: they tend to limit their civic actions to voting alone.

Robert Putnam confirmed Rosenbaum's assessment of American civic activities. He noted a gradual decline in the voter's turnout and engagement with public institutions. As the levels of education rose, Americans became less trusting. Trust strongly correlates with the civic engagement – they both act as building blocks of the social capital. Putnam offered several explanations for the erosion of American social capital that included increased women participation in the labor force, increased mobility, changes in the family structure, and the patterns of individualization (Putnam, 1995, p. 233). Americans do participate, but the nature of organizations they chose have changed. Instead of traditional associations like churches or labor unions, Americans now prefer not-for-profit organizations. As for the leisure activities, Americans previously enjoyed public gatherings, but modern technology today allows for home entertainment. Overall, Putnam spoke about redistribution of social capital. In my opinion, participation did not go anywhere: it only changed venues. Individualistic tendencies and preference for non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations do not change the fact that Americans still participate. American participation serves as an example of Inglehart's theory of post-materialism (Inglehart, 1971) coupled with technological advances. Putnam's observation proves Inglehart's point. The transformation of American political culture and participation patterns are just the next step of political culture development.

J. Harry Wray identified five features of the US political culture he called American 'political curiosities' (Wray, 2001, p. 20):



- Political participation: in the US, political participation is unequally distributed across social classes. The working class participates less than both the wealthy class and the working class in Europe (Ibid., p. 27);
- Foreign aid: the US does not give nearly as much as Americans think (Ibid., p. 28);
- Social welfare: the US social welfare expenditures are high, but provide for fewer people. The United States is the only industrial nation without a comprehensive national healthcare program. There is a lack of national commitment to assist the poorest members of society. While Americans agree that it is important to have welfare programs, they are suspicious of both programs and people who apply for them.
- Income inequality: the regressive tax system and the prevalence of service jobs as opposed to industrial jobs are the two causes of income inequality in America (Ibid., p. 32).
- Crime and punishment: 25 to 35% of the world's lawyers' practice in the US where legal assistance is required for almost every activity. At the same time, the US is a country with a high crime rate and the highest prison population in the world (Ibid., p. 37).

In combination with individualism, a taste for competition, and materialism, these 'political curiosities' fill in the blanks in an intricate portrait of American political culture.

Lane Crothers summarized the main attributes of American civic culture (Crothers, 2013, pp. 15-16). Her list includes the following:

- Negative liberty (minimum of government involvement);
- Political equality;
- Individualism;
- Democracy;

- Tolerance;
- Exceptionalism (the US is destined to be the leader);
- Capitalism.

Finally, Stephen Kalberg emphasized a post-materialistic, in Inglehart's terms, nature of American people: "we volunteer far more frequently than do citizens of other nations, and we speak of a 'dedication' to improve our communities" (Kalberg, 2016, p. 2). Like Putnam, he acknowledged that American participation becomes less and less visible, but American altruism is still there. In contrast, Russian political culture only recently started to show post-materialist features. The Russian Federation is a young nation, if we consider the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union as its inception. At the same time, some of its cultural baggage can be traced back to the Russian Empire.

### *1.3. Political culture in Russian Federation*

The literature on Russian political culture identifies three general historical periods with different political regimes and distinct political and social features: Imperial Russia which ended in 1917; the Soviet Union (1922-1991), and the post-communist transitional period (1991-present). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced two very different regimes. The first occurred under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin (1991-1999) and the second continues under the leadership of Vladimir Putin (2000-present). The concept of democracy in these two periods had different interpretations as well. If during the 1990s democracy was associated with freedom, westernization, and economic liberalization, after Putin came to power, democracy was understood as a summation of people's aspirations based on common culture and history. In essence, democracy had stopped being universal and became a reflection of the culture and historical experiences of one given nation (Surkov, 2008; Tsygankov, 2014).

There is a consensus among scholars that pre-revolutionary Russia was a very communitarian society. Traditional values included collectivism, community, spiritual unity (соборность), solidarity, equality, and justice. A strong paternal state was the direct result of these communitarian values. Russian thought, according to Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev, is eschatological in its messianic ideas about Russia's destiny (Gaman-Golutvina, 2015, p. 387). Another historical feature of Russian culture is its antinomy: Russia incorporates initially opposing ideas and phenomena. Berdyaev pointed out that such duality might be the result of Russia's location between two very different worlds – the East and the West. Russia combines their features, and at the same time, differs from both (Ibid.).

Stephen White outlined the dominant features of the Soviet political culture as follows:

- Homogeneity (which has a strong increasing tendency);
- Building communism is the society's main aim;
- The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) is the only political force;
- The superiority of the socio-political system of socialism;
- Internationalism;
- Collective style problem-solving;
- High levels of psychological and behavioral involvement in politics (White, 1985, p. 79).

Oxana Gaman-Golutvina added a few more characteristics to the list: low levels of political activity; egalitarian values; conformism; absence of a plural political system, and, as a consequence, a lack of civic identification with the CPSU (Gaman-Golutvina, 2015, p. 393).

In the Soviet Union, national identity was constructed and reinforced by mechanisms that transmitted information across generations. There is evidence of continuity to many pre-

revolutionary cultural elements despite the restrictive political ideology: family as an autonomous unit within a society, 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature, religion, oral tradition and social custom, art, music, and folk heritage (White, 1985, p. 80).

The central feature of the Soviet political culture, according to White, was patriotism. Institutions like the Red Army had always been respected by the Soviet society (Ibid.). Archie Brown had also argued that pride in the victory over Nazi Germany took a special place in the 'official political culture.' It was a political memory that brought every member of the Soviet society together. "Party leaders and propagandists lay such constant stress on the 'Great Patriotic War' in their conscious political socialization efforts since there is no other shared experience with which they can so instantly achieve a rapport with their listeners or readers" (Brown, 1985, p. 103). Brown had also pointed out that the actual term 'political culture' was used in official Soviet discourse starting in 1974. Leonid Brezhnev described a 'Soviet Man' to be 'a person of high political culture.' From the context, it was clear that a low political culture was associated with the "problem of egoism, philistinism, avarice and heavy drinking" (Ibid., p. 105). Both Brezhnev and his successor, Yuri Andropov, used the term 'political culture' and 'high political culture' to describe personal qualities everyone should possess in an ideal socialist society. The intent was to shift attention from the Soviet political system to Soviet people.

As argued by Natalia Kovalyova, despite the symbolic powers vested in the working class, "[p]olitics was something that they at the top did and that we at the bottom did not and could not comprehend. In an hour-glass society, the elite managed the regime from above, while at the bottom the subjects sought to minimize contact with rulers, worked around politics, limiting their involvement, for the most part, with matters of household interest" (Kovalyova, 2014, p. 31). Mass participation in the Soviet Union was not a political act, but an act of social

belonging where people concentrated on complying with the rules and celebrating imposed symbols. Those who questioned the established order were quickly identified and labeled as anti-Soviet elements (Ibid.).

Peter Ester, Loek Halman, and Vladimir Rukavishnikov described the Soviet political culture as a 'belief culture': "Russia had always been a society of believers. So it was with old Orthodox Russia, and so again with Soviet Russia under Lenin" (Ester, Halman, & Rukavishnikov, 1997, p. 43).

The Soviet collapse brought questions about the new Russia's political culture into focus. As early as 1990, scholars performed studies to evaluate the results of political and social reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev, the last General Secretary of CPSU. Jeffrey W. Hahn conducted a pioneering qualitative study on political attitudes in Russia. With the help of local sociologists, he interviewed 960 individuals in the Russian city of Yaroslavl'. His goal was to determine if Russia had the potential to transform into a typical western democracy. The study showed not only high levels of trust in their government, but also high levels of political alienation and political cynicism, indicating that the potential for political participation was low (Hahn, 1991, pp. 407-409).

On the other hand, Hahn's study revealed high levels of political interest. He concluded that younger generations possessed considerable political knowledge and a strong preference for competitive elections. These findings let Hahn express a careful optimism about Russia's political culture's ability to transform into a participant political culture (Ibid, p. 416).

In the aftermath of Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost reforms, the first major change in political culture came with the ubiquitous support for market reforms coupled with a gradual

revision of Soviet history. Russian post-Soviet society looked up to western countries in search of new economic and political models. By 1991, Perestroika failed, and the dismay of the Communist party became inevitable.

Before addressing any post-Soviet political culture transformations, it is important to look at economic and political changes performed by Russia's First President, Boris Yeltsin, and his team. First, Yeltsin 'westernized' the new Russian government: he reduced the number of deputies and abolished most of the Soviet industrial ministries. He also put economists in charge of transition reforms which started in 1992 (Åslund, 2007, p. 92). The Soviet Union was notorious for ration coupons distribution and long waiting lines to get anything from groceries to furniture. Radical price liberalization and market reforms gradually diminished shortages of goods and services, even though the process took longer than in other former socialist countries like Czechoslovakia and Poland (Ibid., p. 97). Another successful reform was privatization, which Timothy Colton characterized as "the largest divestiture of state resources in history" (Colton, 2016, p. 102). The main goals were to form a broad class of private owners, improve industrial efficiency, and create a competitive market. Privatization was so massive and quick that "in late 1994, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development assessed that half of Russia's GDP originated in the private sector" (Åslund, 2007, p. 111).

In addition to economic reforms, Russia of the 90s enjoyed an unprecedented amount of freedoms and liberties including freedom of speech, assembly, and petition. Mass media were mostly independent while the political system was competitive but inclusive. "The costs of entry into the political electoral ring were low to nonexistent – 239 parties and political movements were registered in 1999, and State Duma candidates in local districts could sign up as non-partisans" (Colton, 2016, p. 110).

Fundamental economic and political transformations came at a steep price. Despite the initial optimism, the 1992-1993 economic and political reforms in Russia resulted in a psychological atmosphere of uncertainty and insecurity. Drastic economic reforms caused retail prices' increase by 2,520 percent in 1992 which wiped out all people's savings. The rule of law was weak, governmental institutions drowned in corruption, and private business developed vicious habits such as tax evasions, rackets, and bribes (Ibid., p. 103-111). The moral crisis coupled with an unprecedented increase in criminal activities was an unexpected outcome of the Russian transition to a bright capitalistic future. Income inequality, which was never significant in the Soviet Union, "became one of the decisive factors of social stratification in Russia...the ideology of egalitarianism of the former communist regime has been replaced by a situation in which income differences are growing, and social inequality is on the rise" (Ester et al., 1997, p. 17). The 1990s are strongly associated with inflation and salary delays.

Notwithstanding the negative aspects of transition, throughout the 1990s, Russia was not abnormal when compared to countries with similar income levels. "Both in 1990 and 2003, Russia was a middle-income country, with GDP per capita around \$8,000 at purchasing power parity..., a level compatible to that of Argentina in 1991 and Mexico in 1999. Countries in this income range have democracies that are rough around the edges, if they are democratic at all" (Shleifer & Treisman, 2005, p. 152). In other words, there was nothing abnormal about Russia's struggles, especially considering just how fast the transition progressed.

Toward the end of the 1990s the main characteristics of Russian political culture included the following:

- Low levels of public trust: Russians did not believe in media, trade unions, the legislature, military, and police. The most trusted public institution was the Russian Orthodox Church (Ibid., pp. 90-100).
- Low political efficacy: Russians did not believe they could influence public policy. As a result, the Kremlin was not too concerned with public opinion (Ibid., p. 61).
- Russia's civil society was weak. Ester et al. argued that the western concept of civil society should be either modified to apply to post-communist societies or not used at all (Ibid., p. 63).
- In the 1990s political participation in Russia was limited to elites. Also, Russians were less likely to participate in political protests (Ibid., p. 65);
- Russians differed from the West in their understanding of human rights. Americans emphasize freedoms and liberties (first generation human rights). Russians preferred socio-economic rights (second generation human rights). Hence, Russians instinctively rely on their government more than any western society (Ibid., p. 69).
- Favoring equality is a deeply-rooted element of Russian political culture and can be traced back to Tsarist Russia (Gaman-Golutvina, 2015, p. 387).

By the end of the 1990s, it was evident that the Russian public did not accept market democracy as a value and refused to appreciate Western ideology. Yeltsin's approval rating had dropped from 81 percent in 1991 to 8 percent in 1999 (Morozov, 2008, p. 158).

Under Vladimir Putin's leadership (2000-present), Russia was slowly losing its fresh democratic flair. "Authoritarian regime in Russia under Putin was institutionalized with the reformation of major institutions such as separation of powers, electoral and party systems, and center-regional relationships" (Gel'man, 2015, p. 75). Putin's closest friends and followers



occupied key positions in government and business. The main priority was to institute the power hierarchy. In 2000, Putin limited influence of regional elites by establishing regional districts with appointed envoys (Ibid., p. 78). United Russia political party (Putin's legislative project) was created in 2001 and by 2007 had 315 out of 450 seats in the lower house of Russian Parliament – the State Duma. It became ubiquitous throughout federal and regional administrations and got into a habit of disabling any attempts to challenge Putin's authority in the legislative branch (Colton, 2016, p. 148). As a result, the State Duma, once a patchy and colorful cornucopia of political parties and regional representatives became much more homogenous. While its law-making activities had increased, its political representation performance became limited due to the loss of political autonomy (Gel'man, 2015, p. 78).

By 2005, according to Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Neil Munro, Russia developed into a plebiscitary autocracy where “there are elections with mass participation and a degree of competition, but governors are not accountable to the rule of law. Nor the governors accountable to the electorate, for a lawless regime can organize elections that are unfree and unfair” (Rose, Mishler, & Munro, 2006, p. 34). The New Russia Barometer surveys<sup>6</sup> showed that in 13 years (from 1992 to 2005), Russian public opinion had moved from being negative toward the new regime to neutral. Only in 2003, it became slightly positive (Ibid., p. 91). As of 2006, 80 percent of Russians had accepted the new Russian regime (Ibid., p. 201). According to Paul Starobin, Russians are not interested in freedoms and other democratic values if their economic needs are not satisfied. “It is not that Russians are uninterested in the pursuit of happiness – it is just they tend to have a collective concern about where this road can lead” (Starobin, 2009, p. 124). It seems that Russians are more interested in their economic stability and, to have it, they

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.cspp.strath.ac.uk/catalog1\\_0.html](http://www.cspp.strath.ac.uk/catalog1_0.html)

are willing to sacrifice freedoms of press and other democratic ideals. Putin's authoritarianism did not invade people's private lives. "Russians were at liberty to think, pray, spend, read, and pass their spare time as they pleased. Relative prosperity left them freer than before to soak up property and goods, and to see the world...Like it or not; the modern creative class made its entrance in Russia during the Putin years" (Colton, 2016, pp. 150-151).

One of the key developments during Putin's presidency was the concept of 'sovereign democracy.' It was authored by Vladislav Surkov, the Deputy Chief of the Russian Presidential Administration (1999-2011), who argued that Russia needed to establish its place in the community of nations. Vladimir Putin was portrayed as a strong leader who promoted Russian identity and opposed the spread of Western pressure. After the turmoil of the 1990s, Russians became more pragmatic in their view of democracy. They also viewed political instability as the main threat to the Russian state. Among Russians, there is a widespread belief that political order is fragile and an authoritarian approach might be the only way to keep it stable (Powell et al., 2012, p. 352).

'Sovereign democracy' offered a more rigid understanding of a stable political order. The core of the new strategy was developed around the idea of sovereignty rather than democracy. If the classical notion of democracy is based on the sovereign autonomy of people, Russian policymakers had envisioned the form of democracy that supports the sovereignty of the state. Russia's role did not have to be dominant or leading, but it had to reflect the national character and people's political and social aspirations (Surkov, 2008, p. 14). The three characteristics of Russian political culture are centralization, personification, and idealization. Surkov strongly discouraged implementation of political features of other states, even if these features were proclaimed to be truly liberal, democratic and rational: "in choosing paths for the development of

our democracy and economy, we must ponder which of these paths best suits the special traits of our national character and culture” (Ibid., p. 18). As a result, he proposed the concept of sovereign democracy that responds to Russia’s realities and needs (Ibid., p. 21):

- It justifies centralization;
- Makes Russian democracy more flexible and promotes the wholeness of Russia as a nation;
- It is personified “as it interprets the course set by Putin”;
- It is idealistic.

In February 2019, Surkov argued that the contemporary Russian state had transformed into a new system led by historical processes and the art of possible. Russian government created its sovereign version of democratic development when it rejected the contemporary global state-building trends in favor of realism and determinism. Russia’s state system is not elegant, but honest. There is no point of hiding authoritarian mechanisms under a misleading ‘an illusion of choice’ façade. Surkov claimed that there is no ‘deep state’ in Russia. Instead, there is a phenomenon he called ‘deep *narod*’ (deep people/folks). ‘Deep narod’ is an enigma – it lives by its own logic, unattainable and impossible to study or predict by sociological surveys, propaganda, and other means. In fact, it is very difficult to even describe ‘deep narod’ – history knows attempts to define it as a group of peasants; later, workers, people without political party preferences, hipsters, or office workers (white collar). The state created by Putin seem to hear and respond to the ‘deep narod’ better than any other system. As a result, the “Long state of Putin,” will continue to thrive long after Vladimir Putin is gone (Surkov, 2019).

According to Timothy Colton, the ‘sovereign democracy’ concept did not revive a monarchy or totalitarianism, but it did recreate a ‘vintage personal dictatorship’ or Putinism.

Colton argued that Putinism is a mix of political and cultural ingredients including “the attachment to order and past achievements, reflexive nationalism, casting aspersions on alien influences, and neopatrimonial reverence for the state as a provider and regulator” (Colton, 2016, p. 149)

Andrei Tsygankov and others have referred to Putin’s Russia as a ‘managed democracy.’ “The Russian view of democracy is not fundamentally opposed to that of Western nations, yet it is distinct. As in the West, many Russians define democracy in terms of civil liberties and political freedoms. However, Russians predominantly associate the success of democracy with a strong state. They do not think in terms of oppositions between ‘order’ and ‘rights’ but instead, tend to favor their combination...When asked whether it is possible for Russia to be both democratic and have a strong state, more than 50% believe that they can have both” (Tsygankov, 2014, p. 130). The order is as important as an idea of democracy. The widespread belief in a strong state is the main inspiration behind Russia’s traditional authoritarian style of government, a so-called managed democracy. “Such an understanding of democracy as linked to the state has roots in Russia’s premodern and contemporary history...when not receiving the desired protections, peasants could rebel, but their anger was commonly directed at the nobles and not the tsar, who was viewed as the ultimate protector. Members of the Russian intelligentsia, beginning with Nikolai Karamzin and Alexander Pushkin, also expected freedom and progress to come from the monarch, rather than society” (Ibid., p. 131).

Since Russia is an authoritarian state, why call it democracy? If we were to define democracy simply as people’s will, then Russia’s ‘sovereign’ system is democratic. According to

the Levada Center<sup>7</sup>, the simple majority of Russians consider an authoritarian leader to be necessary for their country. Please refer to Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1 Opinions on Russia's authoritarian leadership (The Levada Center, 2018, p. 31)**

Are there situation where the presence of a strong and authoritative leader, a 'strong hand', is necessary for the people?	1989	1994	1995	1996	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Our people need a 'strong hand' at all times	25	35	33	37	42	45	43	40	44	42	43	41	31	32	35	40
There can be situation (like now) where it is necessary to give full power to one person	16	23	27	32	31	29	29	31	33	29	31	31	46	39	37	38
It should never be possible for one person to have full power	44	23	24	18	20	18	18	25	19	22	17	20	15	21	21	17
Difficult to answer	16	18	15	13	8	8	10	5	5	8	9	8	7	9	7	5
Number of respondents (hundreds)	15	30	30	25	16	16	15	16	16	8	16	16	16	16	16	16

Sovereign or ‘managed’ democracy has its setbacks. For example, by attempting to control and anticipate certain political and social developments, the political system undermines the whole idea of democracy. It was the case with Kremlin’s attempt to create a civil society from above and limit external influences (Primakov, 2008, p. 101). Other than that, a ‘sovereign democracy’ is the product of a long history of Russian political culture that originated in Imperial Russia, survived through the Soviet experiment, and continued in Russia as we know it today.

#### *1.4. American and Russian political cultures compared*

The best way to compare the two is to look at people’s responses to surveys about their political preferences and participation. The most recent survey Americans and Russians both participated was World Values Survey (WVS) Wave 6 in 2011<sup>8</sup>. I picked several questions from the survey to illustrate the key values that respond to the definition of political culture adopted for this study: “people’s predominant beliefs, attitudes, values, ideals, sentiments, and

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.levada.ru/cp/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2017Eng.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>

evaluations about the political system of their country and the role of the self in that system” (Diamond, 1999, p. 163).

**Table 1.2 Interest in politics (WVS – V84)**

<b>How interested would you say you are in politics?</b>		
	Americans, %	Russians, %
Very interested	17.6	4.7
Somewhat interested	41.3	27.9
Not very interested	25.6	45.0
Not at all interested	14.7	20.4

On average, Americans are more interested in politics compared to Russians. From Table 1.2 it is evident that 58.9 percent of Americans are interested in politics. In Russia, the number of respondents interested in politics is only 32.6 percent.

**Table 1.3 Political participation (WVS – V84, 86, 87, 88)**

<b>Political action: signing petition</b>		
	Americans, %	Russians, %
Have done	60.1	11.1
Might do	30.7	24.6
Would never do	8.0	62.8
<b>Political action: joining in boycotts</b>		
Have done	15.5	2.1
Might do	51.1	17.2
Would never do	32.0	78.5
<b>Political action: attending a peaceful demonstration</b>		
Have done	13.7	12.1
Might do	54.8	22.1
Would never do	30.0	63.5
<b>Political action: joining strikes</b>		
Have done	7.4	2.3
Might do	41.7	17.2
Would never do	49.5	76.3

Americans are more willing to engage in political action whether it is a petition signing, joining a boycott, attending the peaceful demonstration, or strike. The overwhelming majority of Russians, however, would never participate in any of these actions. It can be an indication of

political cynicism and low levels of political trust. At the same time, since 65.4 percent of Russians are not interested in politics (Table 1.2), they might not find participation in political action to be an appealing or useful activity.

**Table 1.4 Government responsibility (WVS – V98)**

<b>Who should have more responsibility?</b>		
	Americans, %	Russians, %
The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for	8.5	41.9
People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves	18.2	4.0

When it comes to responsibilities, there is a big difference between Americans and Russians. While less than 10 percent of Americans rely on their government for services, 42 percent of Russians think the government should be the main provider of services. It is very common for Russians to rely on a government's assistance and compensation in case of a natural disaster, fire, or a terrorist attack. Not many Russians insure their property. In the United States, insurance is one of the main priorities for any property owner. American citizens themselves are largely responsible for the safety of their property in case of any natural or human-made disaster.

**Table 1.5 Confidence in the government (WVS – V115)**

<b>How much confidence do you have in the government?</b>		
	Americans, %	Russians, %
A great deal	3.7	7.0
Quite a lot	28.9	40.4
Not very much	51.2	30.6
Not at all	14.1	16.6

65.3 percent of Americans do not have confidence in their government. It is a trait of an individualist society where people tend to rely on themselves and, as follows, has less trust in the system. In Russia, there is almost an even split between those who have confidence in their government (47.4 percent) and those who do not (47.2 percent). Russia is traditionally a

communitarian society which explains the high percentage of those who has confidence in the government. At the same time, the economic and political turmoil of the 1990s and several financial crises (1998 and 2008) probably affected levels of confidence in the government and resulted in a high percentage of those who do not trust the government as much. Since the WVS survey took place in 2011, the memories of the 2008 financial crises were still fresh.

**Table 1.6 A strong leadership (WVS – V127)**

<b>Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections is</b>		
	Americans, %	Russians, %
Very good	6.1	26.0
Fairly good	28.0	41.0
Bad	26.2	16.1
Very bad	37.2	5.4

63.4 percent of Americans think that it is not a good idea to have a strong leader with many unchecked powers. On the other hand, 67 percent of Russians prefer strong leadership. Russians historically inclined to favor a traditionally paternalistic state which implies having a powerful and charismatic leader.

**Table 1.7 Democratic political system (WVS – V130)**

<b>Having a democratic political system is</b>		
	Americans, %	Russians, %
Very good	37.8	20.8
Fairly good	41.9	46.5
Bad	12.2	12.6
Very bad	4.9	4.6

Both Americans (79.7 percent) and Russians (67.3 percent) prefer a democratic system of government. In my opinion, ‘democracy’ is one of the most popular words in the world, but there are many interpretations of the term. These percentages are misleading because World Values Survey did not define democracy before asking questions about it.



**Table 1.8 Voting levels (WVS – V226 & 227)**

<b>Do you vote in national elections?</b>		
	Americans, %	Russians, %
Always	57.8	41.8
Usually	20.6	39.4
Never	19.8	15.6
<b>Do you vote in local elections?</b>		
	Americans, %	Russians, %
Always	37.8	37.5
Usually	36.5	41.1
Never	24.0	17.7

Table 1.8 shows respondents' voting activity. Overall, the combined number of those who vote 'always' and 'usually' is greater among Russian respondents: 81.2 percent vote in national elections and 78.6 percent vote in local elections. Americans are less active but also show high numbers of voters: 78.6 percent in national and 74.3 percent in local elections.

**Table 1.9 National pride and willingness to serve (WVS – V211 & V66)**

<b>How proud are you to be American/Russian?</b>		
	Americans, %	Russians, %
Very proud	56.1	28.6
Quite proud	30.6	47.5
Not very proud	6.8	14.7
Not at all proud	1.4	3.8
<b>Would you be willing to fight for your country?</b>		
	Americans, %	Russians, %
Yes	57.7	52.7
No	40.6	21.5
Don't know, unsure	1.7	17.8

Lastly, table 1.9 addresses respondents' patriotic feelings. Over a half of American respondents are very proud of their country. The combined number of Americans who are 'very proud' and 'quite proud' is 86.7 percent. A little less than a half of Russian respondents are 'quite proud' of their country, and the combined number of all the proud respondents is 76.1 percent. It is worth noting that the number of Americans who are not proud of their country is less than 10 percent, while the number of Russians who are not proud of Russia is close to 20

percent (18.5). The majority of respondents in both countries are willing to fight for their country. In the United States, 40.6 percent are not willing to protect their country, and 1.7 percent provided no answer. In Russia, only 21.5 percent are not ready to fight for their country, and 17.8 percent were not sure. Overall, both countries show high levels of patriotism. Americans are much more proud of their country, and a larger number of them is willing to protect the United States.

In sum, there is an evident difference between Americans and Russians about their political preferences and activities. Americans show more interest in politics and are more willing to participate in a variety of political activities, while Russians prefer to limit their participation to voting and avoid other forms of political participation. Russians tend to trust their government more than Americans. They also appreciate having a strong executive that can make decisions without cooperating with the legislature. In other words, they do not see value in checks and balances. Respondents in both countries are proud of their countries and willing to fight for it which shows that both Americans and Russians are very patriotic.

### *1.5. A closer look at Russia*

In the case of Russia, a country that went through many regime changes throughout its modern history, it is not enough to present data for just one year. Wave Six of the World Value Survey was conducted in 2011, and it is possible that Russian data on political opinions and participation were influenced by eleven years of authoritarian oppression, or Putinism, which started in 2000. Also, toward the end of 2011, Russia witnessed massive protests following Parliamentary Elections in December of 2011. As follows, a closer look is needed. The Levada Center had recently published a report on public opinion in Russia. It shows data for multiple

years and includes several decades, from the 1990s up to 2017 (The Levada Center, 2018). Table 1.10 shows the distribution of responses about interest in politics, in percentages.

**Table 1.10 Interest in politics (The Levada Center, 2018, p. 37)**

To what extent are you interested in politics?										
	1990	1991	1992	1997	2006	2010	2011	2012	2016	2017
To a very large extent	6	1	5	2	5	1	2	2	2	2
To a large extent	15	15	10	9	10	8	6	8	8	8
In moderate	44	40	33	36	37	39	34	36	37	37
To a small extent	23	23	32	32	27	32	34	31	29	29
Not interested at all	12	13	20	17	20	19	24	21	22	22
Difficult to answer	-	8	<1	4	1	1	<1	2	2	2
Number of respondents (hundreds)	10	15	15	17	16	16	16	16	16	16

The number of those who are interested in politics (to a very large extent and a large extent) had been slowly decreasing over the years. The highest number was 15% in 1990 and 1991, the lowest number of people interested in politics was in 2011 (2% and 6%). Throughout the whole period, most people were either moderately interested in politics or interested to a small extent. The number of those who are not at all interested in politics was slowly increasing from 12% in 1990 to 22% in 2017, picking at 24% in 2011. Table 1.11 displays data on respondents' evaluation of their involvement in politics:

**Table 1.11 Involvement in political life (The Levada Center, 2018, p. 23).**

How would you describe your involvement in political life?								
	1989	1990	1991	1993	1994	2015	2016	2017
Politics doesn't interest me, I am not knowledgeable in politics	14	11	20	26	27	34	38	31
I think that I still have no ability to influence political events	19	21	18	18	23	32	27	32
I've become disappointed in politics lately	11	14	16	16	16	16	15	14
What matters most for me is the fate of my people	31	25*	27*	24*	17	6	8	12
I've always taken and will take part in social life	13	7	3	3	4	5	6	4
I feel that a possibility to really take part in politics has opened up for me now	4	1	1	1	2	4	4	2
Difficult to answer	19	20	15	12	12	3	3	6
Number of respondents (hundreds)	16	24.6	28	18	39.6	16	16	16
* Not really interested in politics, but still am prepared to defend the interests of my people								

Over the years, the number of people who are not interested in politics had increased from 14% in 1989 to 31% in 2017, which could be attributed to the 17 years of Putinism. However, the percentage of uninterested started to grow in the 1990s, peaking in 2016 at 38%. Similar tendency is seen in the next category as well: the number of people who believe they have no ability to influence politics vacillated between 19% in 1989 and 23% in 1994. In the recent years (2015-2017), the average percentage of people who think they have no ability to influence political events was at 30.3%.

Another interesting tendency is decreasing numbers of people who care about the fate of their people (a collective): this number was high in the 1990s (31% in 1989), and low in the 2015-2017 period, plummeting to 6% in 2015 and reaching 12% in 2017. It could be a sign that Russian society slowly becomes more individualistic and moving away from the communal frame of mind.

Table 1.12 lists respondents' political activities within a given year:

**Table 1.12 Participation in political activities (The Levada Center, 2018, p. 39).**

Which of the activities listed below have you participated in the past year?					
	1995	2014	2015	2016	2017
Voted	29	30	22	35	33
Discussed politics with my friends	45	21	19	15	14
Was at the meeting with a politician or a candidate	8	5	6	4	3
Signed a petition or address	6	5	3	3	3
Was at a meeting with government officials	4	2	3	3	2
Took part in demonstration or rally	5	2	2	4	4
Sent a letter to editor's office or TV, or some government office	2	3	2	3	2
Took part in a strike	2	2	2	1	1
Made a donation to support polit. Party, movement or a candidate	1	2	1	1	1
Spoke at a meeting or rally	2	1	1	<1	1
Took part in political party activities	1	3	1	1	1
Took part in protest activities or insubordination to authority	1	1	<1	1	2
Did nothing of the kind	34	46	50	49	52
Difficult to answer	7	3	5	3	3
Number of respondents (hundreds)	30	8	16	16	16

Compare to the first decade of the post-Soviet period (1995), in the third decade (2015-17), Russians do not discuss politics with their friends as much (there is a drop from 45% in 1995 to 14% in 2017). They are considerably less active politically: an increase from 34% in 1995 to 52% in 2017. It could also be attributed to the fact that Russia is managed by the same person for the last 18 years. At the same time, the percentages of other forms of political activity, like attending a meeting with a candidate or signing a petition, were never high.

There was a period of political enthusiasm at the beginning of the post-Soviet period in Russia's history. It was the time of hope. However, the political activity started to tone down in the mid-1990s, before Putin came to power. People express their interest in politics for different reasons. In my opinion, in the 1990s, Russians were interested in politics due to all the changes Russia had to go through as the result of the Soviet collapse. The transition to democracy and market economy created an aura of uncertainty, and people paid more attention to their political environment. When Putin came to power, the political situation in Russia became more stable and predictable, and for this reason, Russians decreased both their interest and participation in politics.

### *1.6. Summary*

In this chapter, I traced the development of political culture concept from its origins in the 1950s to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century. There are many definitions of political culture. For this study, I used Larry Diamond's definition: "people's predominant beliefs, attitudes, values, ideals, sentiments, and evaluations about the political system of their country and the role of the self in that system" (Diamond, 1999, p. 163).

I also analyzed and compared political cultures in the United States and Russia. Political cultures of both countries showed continuity with some features easily traceable through the

centuries. For the United States, individualism and a tendency to form associations are deeply-rooted cultural features that go back to the first European settlers. In Russia, people historically lived in a strong paternalistic state. A short-lived multi-party political system of the 1990s was replaced with authoritarian 'sovereign democracy' in 2000s. Families and collectives are traditionally important elements of Russian society. Russian collectives can be described as communes where people either live or work together. It is different from voluntary 'associations' that are created by people with similar interests or to achieve a certain goal.

When it comes to political participation, Americans are more active. Their levels of political efficacy are high – they are confident they can make a difference in politics. Russians do not display such confidence, they are not interested in politics as much and do not want to participate in the political process.

## **Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework: Political Socialization**

The study of political culture leads to the study of political socialization, and ultimately, to the learning experiences that are passed from generation to generation in any society. Political socialization serves as a mechanism for understanding and practice of political culture. In this chapter, I examine comparative politics literature on political socialization. Next, I discuss political re-learning that occurs after a drastic political, social, and economic change in a society. After that, I describe theories of immigrant re-socialization and similar concepts of assimilation, acculturation, and integration. Finally, I discuss political, social, and economic socializations. I argue that one cannot analyze political socialization separately from social and economic socialization.

### *2.1. Political socialization concept development*

The origins of political socialization studies can be traced back to Herbert Hyman and his 1957 book *Political Socialization*. Hyman defined political socialization as an individual's "learning of social patterns corresponding to his societal positions as mediated through various agencies of society." (Hyman, 1959, p. 25). In other words, an individual's social class – his or her family's economic and societal standing – corresponds with appropriate agencies in a society which determine his or her socialization process. Hyman argued that political socialization occurs throughout an individual's life, starting at an early age. Political participation can be evaluated within four areas: the choice of ego-ideals (the role model); media exposure; levels of political knowledge; and responses to direct questions on political involvement and interest. Hyman argued that family is the most important socialization agency. Parental influence in

things like party affiliation is usually confirmed by a larger environment (community, city, or state). As a child matures, parental influence is reduced and replaced by other groups: friends, co-workers, and a spouse.

Political socialization can occur as a result of the intentional teaching of politics and political attitudes (manifest political socialization), as well as unintentional or indirect exposure to politics through observation of political behaviors of others (Almond & Verba, 1963). Also, some things learned at an early age may affect an individual's political socialization throughout his or her life. For example, not talking to strangers might develop into a hostile attitude toward others, i.e., xenophobia (Pye & Verba, 1965). Conventional agencies of political socialization include family (immediate and extended); community; peer groups; the church; the school system; the workplace; formal organization; mass media; specialized political input structures (interest groups and political parties); specialized output structures (legislature, bureaucracy, and the court system); and social, economic, and political outcomes (Almond & Powell, 1978). Upon reaching adulthood, children can influence their parent's political preferences. There is some evidence that young adults are highly likely to influence their mothers even if they do not affect fathers (Zuckerman, Dasovic, & Fitzgerald, 2007, p. 92).

Terry S. Weiner argued that marriage is a powerful political socialization agency. Husbands and wives tend to have homogenous party preferences. There are two possible explanations for it. First is 'assortative mating': people with similar political preferences are attracted to one another. The second explanation states that political homogeneity among spouses is a result of the resocialization process after marriage. If a husband and a wife have different political views, it is usually a wife that changes political preferences toward those of her husband (Weiner, 1978, pp. 209-211).



Scholarly interest in political socialization had decreased toward the end of the 1970s. It was revived in the 1990s for several reasons. Richard Niemi and Mary Hepburn had called for a re-evaluation of previous assumptions by moving the focus to young adulthood as opposed to pre-adolescence (Niemi & Hepburn, 1995). There were two faulty assumptions about early political socialization theory:

1. What was learned in early childhood remained unchanged in adulthood.
2. Early learning is important and has a significant influence throughout an adult's life.

Niemi and Hepburn disputed both statements claiming that political learning does not end at a certain age.

Another reason for the revival of political socialization scholarship was due to drastic changes in geopolitical realities. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a huge geographical segment of Eurasia demanded social, economic, and political renovation. Orit Ichilov was one of the most prominent scholars to tie together concepts of political socialization and democratization (Ichilov, 1990). She argued that the study of citizens as 'active' socialization recipients could provide a better understanding "of the diffusion and persistence of democracy" because both 'political participation' and 'civic engagement' are active components of democratic citizenship (Ichilov, 2013, p. 110). The goals of socialization agents in a democratic state are to encourage political participation and to assist in forming stable opinions. Most importantly, any democratic system should encourage respect for any outcomes of the political process, "especially when those outcomes may not be in one's personal interest" (Gimpel, Lay, & Schuknecht, 2003, p. 13).

## *2.2. Political re-learning*

How does a drastic regime change affect political learning? This question had also become prominent in the 1990s. The total of 28 countries needed to transition from a command-style to a market economy and from one-party authoritarian regimes to democratic governmental systems. Rose, Mishler, and Munro argued that the majority of socialization literature does not account for a drastic societal change similar to the experiences of the post-socialist bloc in 1989. In an attempt to determine how such an experience affects political learning and re-learning in Russia, authors came up with the lifetime-learning model which accounts for multiple influences (Rose et al., 2006, p. 103). “While Russians would prefer to live in a democratic regime, they appear resigned to accepting the real existing regime of plebiscitarian autocracy supplied by the country’s political elites” (Ibid., p. 201).

Later, Rose, Mishler, and Matukhno hypothesized that the shock of regime discontinuity forced the rejection of attitudes and values learned early in life. Authors placed emphasis on post-disruption learning. Newer generations who received minimal to no exposure to an old regime should not have any socialization conflict. For older generations, the initial conflict between the old and the new realities should dissipate over time (Mishler, Rose, & Matukhno, 2016, p. 126). Authors confirmed their hypothesis in Eastern European states, but not in Russia where economic and political transitions were particularly painful. Eastern European countries had an easier time transitioning because they had always viewed their communist regimes as forcefully imposed by the USSR. As for Russia, the communist ideology was indigenous and harder to leave behind.

Citizens of Eastern European states went through a relatively smooth ideological transition to democratic values and became active participants of political processes. With some

moderate variations, support for democracy grew consistently throughout the region while attitudes toward old regimes remained negative in both older and younger generations (Ibid., pp. 131-134). Transitional experiences of Eastern Europeans serve as evidence that political re-learning after a sudden regime change is possible and can be successful. Early childhood socialization is not as decisive as was previously considered, which is consistent with the critique of political socialization literature expressed by Niemi and Hepburn (Niemi & Hepburn, 1995).

Despite the liberalization progress made in the East European region, it is still a region where democracy is perceived differently. East Europeans prefer larger governments with expanded social roles. For example, they are more likely to rely on their governments for the provision of basic services to ensure public welfare (Powell et al., 2012, pp. 48-49). Even though all post-socialist countries craved democracy and market economy after the end of Cold War, today “citizens in post-communist countries on average have lower levels of support for democracy than citizens from the rest of the countries included in the World Values Survey” (Pop-Eleches & Tucker, 2017, p. 100). The problem with democracy and capitalism is that they create undesirable, but unavoidable consequences such as unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Western nations are accustomed to these side effects, but for post-socialist countries, they are very difficult to understand and accept. As follows, Grigore Pop-Eleches and Joshua Tucker attributed social orientations to the communist legacy. They hypothesized that differences in perception of democracy between the post-socialist region and the rest of the world could be due to either living through communism or living in post-communist societies. Their analysis confirmed that living through communism resulted in lesser support for democracy. There is a “very strong evidence that additional years of exposure to communist rule were correlated with greater support for state responsibility for social welfare...it appears that

the attitudinal imprint of communism affects not only individuals with long personal exposures to communism but also post-communist citizens with very limited personal exposures to communist regimes (and welfare states)” (Ibid., p. 126). Pop-Elechers and Tucker argued that East Europeans’ perceptions of liberal values, inclusion, and protections of civil rights are not different from the West. But they “were significantly more likely to consider state aid for the unemployed and a prospering economy as an essential component of democracy” (Ibid., p. 128).

When people are faced with fast and drastic political change, regardless of their age and attachment to old values, over time, they change perceptions. If this is true for populations who face changes in their countries, it should equally stand for immigrants whose home and host countries have different political structures. They also, no matter how slowly, should adapt to their new political surroundings. The next subsection talks about theories of political resocialization of immigrants. It is followed by the discussion of different concepts that are used by political scientists and sociologists to analyze immigrant adaptations in a host society.

### *2.3. Immigrant political resocialization*

Marylin Hoskin identified three theoretical approaches to immigrant socialization (Hoskin, 1989, p. 342):

1. Macro-theories concentrate on economic migration driven by market forces and labor flows.
2. Micro-theories are about group adaptations or conflicts with the host. They seek to understand how a particular immigrant group socializes in a host society. The standard initial assumption for this group of theories is the inevitability and desirability of eventual assimilation into a host society. The good example is Milton Gordon’s six-stage integration theory (Gordon, 1964).

3. Sub-micro theories focus on an individual socialization response. It is the most precise way of studying immigrant political resocialization, but it requires synthesis of many factors including not only individual responses to the host system but also the analysis of the host and its public mechanisms, socioeconomic conditions, churches, ethnic associations, etc. (Hoskin, 1989, p. 347).

Hoskin had also identified five behavioral traits exhibited by immigrants to cope with their adaptations: motivation to emigrate; initial socio-economic position in a host society; immigrant group activity; access to political information; and political behavior (Ibid., pp. 349-358).

According to Zvi Gitelman, the process of immigration involves mainly adult resocialization. There are two possibilities in immigrant political socialization:

1. The primary principle states that despite the physical relocation, any changes to a person's political behavior are superficial because he or she maintains political perceptions acquired in their home country;
2. Immigrant uprooting is capable of changing some or all 'primordial beliefs' about politics.

The success of resocialization depends on many factors. The main factor is an immigrant's commitment to renounce the culture of his childhood. Migration is a 'cataclysmic event' on an individual level. "Social and economic events may change the political physiognomy of a generation, so might the experience of uprooting and transplantation bring about an individual's political reorientation" (Gitelman, 1982, p. 173). Adult immigrants are not exactly tabula rasa, but drastic (and sometimes unexpected) changes in their lives can bring them closer to being 'a clean slate'. The complex process of political socialization in a host country does not occur separately from economic and social contexts of immigration. Social, economic,

and political socializations must be considered together. Gitelman argued that desocialization of previously learned values and beliefs occurs simultaneously with resocialization which is the process of acquiring a new set of values, beliefs, and attitudes. Resocialization is not linear and requires adjustments. Desocialization is not a necessary prerequisite to a successful resocialization. Studies conducted in different countries concur that resocialization is a spiral process with fluid prerequisites and social and economic conditions. "...there is a pattern of initial elation, arising from novelty, social freedom, and self-justification, followed by depression, due to culture shock, nostalgia and acceptance by the host society, and then followed by a return of a moderated favorable evaluation" (Ibid., p. 179).

The most recent theoretical contribution was done by Stephen White, Neil Nevitte, Andre Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, and Patrick Fournier who pointed out that theories of political socialization are pessimistic because "[t]he conventional wisdom is that early political learning deeply conditions later political learning and so the expectation is that citizens have difficulty adapting to radically different political environments" (White et al., 2008, p. 268). Theories of political resocialization, on the other hand, are more optimistic. There are three general theories of political resocialization: Exposure, Transferability, and Resistance. Exposure theory states that immigrants adapt to the host political system through exposure – "the more exposure they get, the more they adopt" (Ibid., p. 269). It means that intense exposure to politics of the host society will eventually get immigrants involved. While a plausible theory, it lacks empirical support. According to the Transferability theory, immigrants bring previous experiences from their home countries and apply them in the host society. "Thus immigrants' past interest in politics and their prior patterns of participation emerge as strong predictors of engagement in the new host country regardless of country of origin" (Ibid.). Strong support of this theory comes from studies

conducted with immigrants in Canada from other advanced industrial democracies (Ibid., p. 273). Finally, Resistance theory treats political resocialization as a cumulative mechanism where previous experiences serve as filters which are used to process any new knowledge and sort it according to existing orientations. “The crucial point is that most political predispositions are acquired early in life during the ‘formative years.’ These political predispositions may be shaped by such highly salient exogenous political, social, or economic shocks as wars, economic depressions, and political crises that occur during the formative years, but the conventional wisdom is that these orientations deepen over a relatively short period, they become stable as the formative years end, and they are resistant to change” (Ibid., p. 269). In other words, resistance theory is grounded in theories of political socialization and claims that resocialization is not likely to occur if an immigrant had spent a considerable part of his/her adult life in a home society. Authors conducted the study with data about political involvement of Canadian immigrant population to test theories of political resocialization but did not come up with concrete results. Nevertheless, their research contributed to the field of immigrant political resocialization in two ways. First, there is no uniform way of political learning. Second, “when it comes to political engagement in the new host country, early learning may not condition later learning to the extent that classic socialization theory supposes.” (Ibid., p. 278).

White et al.’s study did not show definite results because they looked at the Canadian immigrant population in general. Research on political resocialization can be more productive when it is concentrated on one immigrant group at a time. The main objective of the present study is to target the group of recent ethnic Russian immigrants who emigrated from Russia between 2004 and 2014. In Hoskin’s terms, it is a micro-theory where complete assimilation, or a desire of such, is assumed as a null hypothesis. There are many studies conducted with

different groups of immigrants to contribute to micro-theoretical cache about immigrants' political socialization in the United States, but none ever concentrated on ethnic Russians. Before I discuss some of the relevant literature, it is important to acknowledge different concepts that are used by both political scientists and sociologists to study and analyze immigrant experiences in a host land. The next subsection will briefly discuss some of the prominent concepts.

#### *2.4. Conceptual considerations*

Political socialization is not the only concept used to study migrants' experiences, but the one I use since it is closely connected to political culture concept in comparative politics literature. There are several other concepts applied in Immigrant Studies:

- *Assimilation*. It was originally defined as “the process or processes by which people of diverse racial origins and different cultural heritages, occupying a common territory, achieve cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain a national existence” (Park, 1930). It is an idea that newcomers will eventually assimilate into a host society. There are several assimilation possibilities: Anglo-conformity, the melting pot, and cultural pluralism (Gordon, 1964, p. 81). There are different theoretical discussions about assimilation including a ‘straight-line’ hypothesis (Gans, 1979) and segmented assimilation (Zhou, 1999). In general, the concept of immigrant assimilation “is primarily concerned about individual outcomes such as language acquisition, educational attainment, labor market participation, and health behavior” (Ramakrishnan, 2013, p. 31).
- *Acculturation* is a cultural assimilation and the initial step in the assimilation process. Milton Gordon argued that acculturation is likely to occur first and may also take place when no other type of assimilation follows (Gordon, 1964, p. 71).



- *Political incorporation* devotes attention to “how institutional structures and rules get constituted and changed and to the interaction of political institutions with interest groups, civic organizations, and religious institutions that are constituted of immigrants” (Ramakrishnan, 2013, p. 32). Unlike immigrant assimilation, political incorporation may look at individuals or groups - members of the formal organization or informal associations.
- *Civil-political incorporation* emphasizes how people understand certain values and how they utilize ideas, rights, and opportunities of a host society. If political incorporation concentrates on political participation, civil-political incorporation is a more complex model. It consists of four elements: contributing factors, dimensions of immigrants’ civic-political incorporation (citizenship status, voting, interest and involvement in public activities, ideas about democracy); patterns of immigrants’ civic-political incorporation (there are three: mainstream, ethnic path, and mixed varieties); and effects of immigrants’ civic-political incorporation (E. Morawska, 2013, pp. 139-144).
- *Political socialization*, for a comparison, looks at the agencies of socialization and their effect on an individual’s perception of the political system and the formation of political preferences. In this study, I use Michael Riccards’s definition of political socialization as a type of learning “characterized by the development, aggregation, and manipulation of symbolic forms and representations. It is at this stage that knowledge is codified and passed on; the foundation of culture itself is laid down” (Riccards, 1973, p. 7).

### 2.5. *How many socializations at once?*

When it comes to immigrant experiences in a host society, one of the most prominent questions as to whether we should look at different aspects of socialization separately or analyze

them altogether. Should political socialization be separated from its social and economic counterparts? Even though there are ways to participate in political life of a state without needing any funds; newcomers, to be politically active, must accumulate economic and social resources, especially when it comes to organizing or participating in an association of any sort – it requires effort and time (Chattopadhyay, Gay, Hochschild, & Jones Correa, 2013, p. 19).

While studying political socialization of the Soviet and American Jews in Israel, Zvi Gitelman noticed that it “does not occur in a vacuum, but in an economic and social context” (Gitelman, 1982, p. 127). He highlighted several aspects of social and economic socialization that had a direct effect on immigrants’ political socialization: housing, employment, linguistic acculturation, interaction with a host population, immigrant satisfaction and identification (Ibid., pp. 136-154). As mentioned earlier, the role of political socialization agency is played by many entities including family, friends, employers and also, economic and societal outcomes (Almond & Powell, 1978). As follows, in this study I do not separate political socialization from economic and social experiences because they re-enforce one another.

## *2.6. Summary*

In this chapter, I elaborated on the concept of political socialization and possible changes that can be brought by either a drastic societal change in the country of residence or a migration to a new country. Immigrant resocialization is typically a process of an adult political learning. Theoretically, there are different ways an immigrant can resocialize in a new political environment. He or she can adopt a new political system through exposure; apply previous experiences and learn a new system by comparing it to the old one, or use previously learned knowledge as a filter and resist socialization in a new society altogether.

There are many concepts used to study immigrant experiences. This study is intended to analyze political socialization of first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants in the US through the exposure to the most common agencies of political socialization.

Finally, this study does not address political socialization separate from economic and social adaptations of immigrants in their host society.

## **Chapter 3 Previous studies on Soviet/Russian immigrants**

This chapter presents a review of scholarly works and studies about immigration from Soviet Union/Russia to the United States. There are no studies dedicated to ethnic-Russian immigrants to the US, but there are several very interesting studies of Jewish migrants from the Soviet Union. Also, to provide a frame of reference, this review includes studies of immigration and political socialization of immigrants from other parts of the world.

### *3.1. Immigration waves*

There were four waves of immigration from Russia to the United States. The first wave followed the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Tsarist Russia and consisted mostly of aristocracy. Thousands of people fled the new socialist regime and its drastic political and social changes. They hoped to return after the revolution was over. The majority of these immigrants settled in Europe and, eventually, many returned to Russia only to be either executed or jailed (Isurin, 2011, p. 5). The second wave started in the 1930s and continued through World War II – it included those who fought against the Soviet Red Army (the Vlasov army), prisoners of war, and displaced people. They faced possible treason charges upon their return to the USSR and that is why many preferred to stay away. The third wave started in the 1970s as an aftermath of the political period of the Khrushchev Thaw or *Otтеpel'* (late 1950s – early 1960s) which considerably softened the Soviet foreign policy. Most people who left the USSR during that period were political and religious dissidents. Finally, the fourth wave occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Shasha & Shron, 2002, pp. 31-32). It was estimated that over the past decades, about 80 percent of immigrants from the Former Soviet Republics were predominantly

Jewish (Lewin Epstein, Ritterband, & Ro'i, 1997, p. 235). Israel, Germany and the United States were the primary destinations of these resettlers (Isurin, 2011).

### *3.2. Russian-speaking Jews in the US*

Compared to other major immigrant groups (East Asian and Latin American), Russian-speaking Jews experienced a smooth integration. Their ethnic characteristics regarding appearance, national character, food and clothing preferences were very similar to those of North Europeans. As pointed out by Portes and Rumbaut, “[a] well established sociological principle holds that the more similar new minorities are regarding physical appearance, class background, language, and religion to society’s mainstream, the more favorable their reception and the more rapid their integration. For this reason, educated immigrants from northwestern Europe face little difficulty in gaining access to U.S. middle- and upper-class circles and are readily able to deploy their educational and work skills to their advantage” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, p. 47). The Soviet and later Russian immigrants of both genders are highly educated and accustomed to employment. High educational levels and work experience resulted in the high human capital that was easily absorbed into the American workforce. Similar observations are made in Herbert Gans’s discussion of the assimilation of Eastern European Jews (Gans, 1979); Richard Alba and Victor Nee’s analysis of European experiences (Alba & Nee, 2003); and Kasinitz et al. study of Russian Jews (Kasinitz, Mallenkopf, Waters, & Holdaway, 2008).

In the US, Soviet Jews usually settled close to each other. The largest Soviet Jewish communities are located in Brooklyn, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago. Upon arrival, Soviet Jews enjoyed the assistance of multiple agencies like the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Council of Jewish Federations (CIF), and the New York Association for New Americans (NYANA). The latter assisted over 240,000 Jews from the Soviet Union and Russia

over a 30 years period from the 1970s till the early 2000s (Shasha & Shron, 2002, p. 90). Upon settlement, Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants expressed interest in the American democracy and political system. “Taking their status as refugees seriously, activists hoped to become full participants in American democracy. Activists sought to act as intermediaries between the Soviet Jewish community and the larger American Jewish community” (Lewin Epstein et al., 1997, p. 270).

Some Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants participated in American politics. In 2006, Alec Brook-Krasny became the first Soviet-born politician to be elected to the New York State Assembly. He emigrated from the Soviet Union in 1989, at the age of 31. Brook-Krasny was a member of the Democratic Party and represented a district populated mostly by Russian-speaking immigrants and African Americans. According to *The New York World* magazine, Russian-speaking Jews were not satisfied with Brook-Krasny. “He’s not representing the Russian community because he votes Democratic down the line and the Russian community wants a smaller government” (Chavkin & Keller, 2012, p. n.p.). In addition to dissatisfaction with their representative, New York’s Russian Jewish community was split among several districts, thus weakening their voice. Alec Brook-Krasny resigned in 2015 and was recently accused of a painkillers scam.<sup>9</sup> Another example is Igor Birman, a Soviet-born attorney, who emigrated from Russia in 1994. In 2014 he sought an election to the US House of Representatives from the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District in California.<sup>10</sup> He is also listed as a former Chief of Staff to Congressman Tom McClintock (R-CA).

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/ex-brooklyn-pol-busted-medicare-scam-hit-charges-article-1.3247579>

<sup>10</sup> [https://ballotpedia.org/Igor\\_Birman](https://ballotpedia.org/Igor_Birman)

### 3.3. Relevant literature

There were two qualitative studies involving immigrants from the Soviet Union. Both relied on interviews of Soviet immigrants to reveal details about the USSR's highly guarded domestic affairs. The first one, *The Soviet Citizen* (or The Harvard Project) conducted by Alex Inkeles and Raymond A. Bauer, was based on interviews of almost three thousand Soviet expatriates. The main objective was to gain information about the daily life in the Soviet Union, including relationships between individuals and the state. They found that the majority of interviewees favored state ownership of industries and the Soviet welfare system (education, healthcare, and workers' benefits) (Inkeles & Bauer, 1961, p. 244). Based on their data, authors defined an ideal Soviet state as "[a] paternalistic state, with extremely wide powers which it vigorously exercised to guide and control the nation's destiny, but which yet served the interests of the citizen benignly, which respected his personal dignity and left him with a certain amount of individual freedom of desire and a feeling of security from arbitrary interference and punishment" (Ibid., pp. 246-247). The main disadvantages of living in the USSR included low levels of job satisfaction, conformity, and loyalty enforcement. As the first study of its kind, *The Soviet Citizen* was remarkable but had several major flaws. According to Nicolai Petro, interview questions were misleading, and there was an evidence of poor translation and interpretation. The study exaggerated levels of social consensus and failed to explain the duality of people's simultaneous support and rejection of the Soviet values (Petro, 1995, pp. 10-12).

The second study, *The Soviet Interview Project* (SIP), was done in the 1980s and studied generational changes in attitudes of Soviet citizens. After Stalin's death, there were many changes in political realities. Khrushchev's Ottepel' put an end to Stalin's political terrors. SIP data revealed that the post-Stalin's generation "proved to be more active: the most interested in

public affairs, the most heavily engaged in ‘mobilized participation,’ but at the same time taking a greater part in unsanctioned study groups, protests, strikes, and other unconventional activities” (Millar, 1987, p. 76). Nonconformity which, as the SIP researchers determined, was predominantly male activity, shows that “for those who came of age after Stalin, the standard for judging the regime is how the system currently performs rather than how far it has come. They are more critical than their elders and less inclined to be satisfied with a backward look at the Soviet past to judge their own well-being” (Ibid., p. 91). Further, the SIP data revealed another tendency – people of the post-Stalin era favored individual rights and political freedoms. There is also a difference in levels of satisfaction with the regime that vary depending on the place of residence. Paradoxically, former Soviets who lived in the largest cities, Moscow and Leningrad, tended to be less satisfied with their living conditions, medical and educational services, as well as the political regime in general. (Millar, 1987, p. 132).

Zvi Gitelman’s meticulous analysis of immigrants’ political resocialization in Israel is considered to be one of the most substantial contributions to the political resocialization scholarship (Hoskin, 1989, p. 346). *Becoming Israelis* is a longitudinal study of political resocialization of two immigrant groups in Israel: American and Soviet Jews. Gitelman interviewed his respondents three times over the period of three years. Both groups (American and Soviet) consisted of males between the ages of 18 and 60 who came to Israel approximately at the same time. Compared to American immigrants, the Soviet group was less homogenous since it included people who differed among themselves in language, culture, and social customs. As a result, Gitelman made three comparisons: between American and Soviet immigrants; within the Soviet immigrant group and between the 1972 and 1975 findings (Gitelman, 1982, p. 187). When assessing political resocialization of Soviet immigrants, Gitelman stated: “Zionist activism



in the USSR does not predict to successful integration in Israel. Some of the most active fighters for Aliyah<sup>11</sup> in the Soviet Union became among the most ‘difficult cases’ in Israel, and....some of them left Israel altogether. For some, the clash between an ideal formulated in the abstract while in the USSR and the realities of daily life in the Jewish state was so sharp that it led to bitter disappointment and frustration” (Ibid., p. 204). Moving to Israel had served as the main goal, and after it was accomplished, the lack of concrete goals instigated depression and disappointment. At the same time, compared to American immigrants, former Soviets were more likely to renounce their previous citizenship and lose interest in Soviet domestic affairs altogether. While Soviet immigrants preferred Israeli government structure and bureaucratic services, they felt that healthcare and education should be administered by the state and provided free of charge, like it was practiced in the USSR (Ibid., p. 215). Unlike American Jewish immigrants, the Soviets were more willing to regard themselves as Israeli and preferred to have Israeli friends. They also expressed an interest in voting, and 58 percent of all Soviet respondents had a political party affiliation (Ibid., p. 276). Gitelman noted that Soviet immigrants favored strong leadership, but “as the Soviet immigrants spend more time in a democratic system, they become more convinced of the possibility of ordinary people influencing political life” (Ibid., p. 310). Their political efficacy and trust increased over time. Overall, Gitelman concluded that the process of political resocialization is possible, but no single agency works equally well for different groups of immigrants. The process is complex and involves many variables. Immigrants are more likely to successfully incorporate into social, cultural, and economic life than a political one (Ibid., p. 344).

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<sup>11</sup> Is understood as a ‘homecoming’ of Jews to Israel, followed by an immediate citizenship and the initial resettlement assistance package (Remennick, 2010, p. 6).

Ewa Morawska argued that after immigrating to the United States, Russian Jews demonstrated host-country oriented assimilation: they had readily embraced the American way of life. Jewish immigrants from the USSR/Russia associated America with freedom and security. In the US, they found a new meaning of their Jewishness – in Russia they were Jews on paper, but “in America, we attend the synagogue on Holidays and we light candles..., American people accept us as Jews” (Morawska, 2004, p. 1388). Russian Jews adapt to American society through private rather than public channels. Their social circles remained ethnic – respondents of different generations justified it by their shared present (instead of the past). Russian Jews are not interested in developments occurring in their homeland (very similar to Gitelman’s findings). If they travel back for a visit, it is mostly due to sentimental reasons. Very few of them communicate with people back home, and even fewer provide financial support. Morawska’s study showed that Russian Jews went through the America-centered ethnic-path adaptation with no sense of obligations toward their homeland and no intentions of ever returning. The assistance they received from Jewish organizations gave them numerous advantages compared to other immigrant groups. On the other hand, due to this assistance, they remained distant from the mainstream American society. Moreover, resentment of their homeland and acquired sense of freedom, security, and stability in the United States minimized their transnational involvements with Russia and Israel.

Ludmila Isurin conducted a comparative study of ethnic Russian and Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants from the Former Soviet Union to the United States, Germany, and Israel. Even though she distinguished between the two groups, the study concentrated on the social acculturation and linguistic changes occurring among Russian-speaking Jews in all three countries. Her main focus was on people who migrated in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s.

Using the acculturation model, Isurin investigated changes in cultural perceptions, self-identification, and native-language retention (Isurin, 2011, pp. 20-21). The study had three main conclusions. First, Russian-speaking immigrants in all three countries preferred Russian culture since it was the most familiar and comforting. Immigrants who live in Germany had the hardest time adapting to the local culture. Second, integration into a host society is strongly correlated with having a career and displaying professional success. Third, immigrants retain Russian as the main language of daily communications. Their knowledge of a host society language varied based on necessity and comfort level. Some immigrants knew only basics, but because they mainly interacted with fellow Russian-speakers, it was not detrimental to their comfort levels (Ibid., pp. 223-224).

In 2016, The Boris Nemtsov Foundation (Bonn, Germany) conducted a survey of *Russians in Germany*. The study targeted residents with Russian or Soviet background and included people between the ages of 18 and 88 (with 51 being an average age). Only 40 percent of all respondents came from Russia, and 5 percent were born in Germany (the second-generation). The majority (65%) of respondents immigrated to Germany in the 1990-1999 period. The Boris Nemtsov Foundation “supports the development of democracy and freedom in Russia” (Koneva & Tikhomirova, 2016, p. 1). As follows, the study’s main objective was to analyze attitudes, values, and perceptions about Russia held by Russian-speaking Germans. The study showed that only 17 percent of respondents were satisfied with democracy in Russia. Corruption, economic uncertainty, and conflict with western countries were identified as main challenges for democracy in Russia. 61 percent of respondents thought that Russia and Europe have common cultural roots and should be closer to one another (Ibid., p. 5). Based on the study findings, the total of 606 respondents were divided into four groups (Ibid., p. 13):

1. New Generation (34%). This group has the biggest share of young people who immigrated in the 1990s mostly from Kazakhstan (40%) and Russia (38%). They speak German and feel fully integrated. They maintain very few connections in Russia;
2. Middle men (36%). It is the most socially stable group and consist of middle-aged immigrants mainly from Russia (42%) and Kazakhstan (39%). They also immigrated in the 1990s, and 59 percent of them speak German.
3. Burgers (14%) is a skeptical and conservative group where 64 percent are 55 years of age and older. 40 percent of this group came from Kazakhstan, and 38 percent were from Russia. Most immigrated during the 1990s, they have good language skills, and most of their connections are in Germany.
4. Imported parents (16%) – is also an older group. 48 percent emigrated from Russia, and 20 percent are from Ukraine. They are the least integrated since only 23 percent of them speak German. They also the most recent immigrant group – 43 percent immigrated between 2000 and 2009.

*Russians in Germany* is an interesting study aimed at evaluating attitudes of Russian-speaking German residents toward the EU, Germany, Russia, and their respective foreign policies. The sample includes individuals from the former Soviet republics as well as a small percentage of second-generation immigrants. The study admits that Germany's Russian-speaking population is very heterogeneous where the two largest groups, repatriated ethnic Germans and Russian-speaking Jews, are considered in the same category as other immigrants from the former USSR (Ibid., p. 42). In a way, the study tested the influence of Russian media on Russian-

speakers in Germany because not all of the respondents came from Russia and could only know about its domestic affairs through the media and third sources.

In 2009, Saltanat Liebert conducted 48 interviews with migrants from Central Asia and South Caucasus to learn about irregular migration (which implies that, at some point, migrants either came or stayed in the US illegally) and migrants' interactions with formal and informal institutions in the US (Liebert, 2009, p. 9). Liebert analyzed the whole immigration process starting with initial stages of making a decision, obtaining travel documents, the US visa, and airfare tickets. He went to Kyrgyzstan and interviewed key customs officials and one of the American consulate employees to get the whole picture. Some of his interviewees came to the US with tourist visas and overstayed, and some were smuggled through Mexico (Ibid., pp. 69-70). The main goal was to determine the way migrants familiarized themselves with life in the US. Almost all study participants had communications with informal institutions through referrals and 'word of mouth.' Migrants' unofficial networks proved to be vital in obtaining documents, a place to live, and employment. Liebert used the theory of formal-informal institutional interactions with four possible types of interaction: competing, complementary, substitutive, and accommodating. His study reveals how illegal migrants from the Former Soviet republics live and work in the US relying exclusively on informal eastern-European and Russian networks which are, apparently, abundant in all spheres of life, especially in places like Philadelphia and New York.

Nina Michalikova's book *New Eastern European Immigrants in the United States* is a quantitative analysis of cultural, socioeconomic, structural, and political adaptation of post-1991 East European immigrants in the US. She relied on data accumulated by the Department of Homeland Security and several surveys conducted between 2006 and 2010 by the U.S. Census

Bureau (Michalikova, 2017, p. 10). Mikhalikova expressed the need to emphasize the plethora of Eastern European nationalities in immigration, but due to limited data, the major accent of the study was on Polish, Ukrainian, and Russians immigrants who came to the US as adults from their respective countries of origin in or after 1991. Unlike immigrants from other parts of the world, Eastern European do not move to the US to escape poverty, war, or persecution. They seek to improve their living standards and the US is strongly associated with high quality of life. Post-1991 immigrants come from urban areas and tend to be highly educated. In this regard they are different not only from immigrants elsewhere in the world but also from early East European immigrants who were mostly peasants from rural areas (Ibid., p. 32). Michalikova defined immigrant adaptation as “the adjustment of immigrants to their life in the host country” (Ibid., p. 6). She analyzed different aspects of adaptation, including political which she described as “the extent to which immigrants participate in the political process of the host society” (Ibid., p. 7). Political adaptation was analyzed based on number of citizenship acquisitions and voter registrations. Mikhalikova concluded that East European immigrants are more likely to naturalize in the United States compare to other immigrant groups. 67 percent of post-1991 Ukrainian immigrants became American passport holders, making them the largest group of naturalized immigrants among East Europeans in the US (Ibid., p. 181). When it comes to voting, East European immigrants, “were not much different in their likelihood to vote from Hispanic, Asian, and all foreign-born immigrants, whose voter turnout was 37, 40, and 41 percent respectively” (Ibid., p. 198). Mikhalikova’s book is a great quantitative analysis of immigrant experiences that aimed at generalization of adaptation among immigrants from the same region. I use her findings in comparison to my own to provide a perspective and elaborate on commonalities and occasional discrepancies in immigrant experiences.

Extending the review to Asia, in 2011, a group of political scientists conducted a study about political participation, political attitudes, and behaviors of Asian Americans (Wong, Ramakrishnan, Lee, & Junn, 2011). The Asian American population constitutes about 5 percent of the US population and is considered to be one of the fastest-growing populations over the last several decades (Ibid., p. 3). Authors developed the National Asian American Survey and conducted 5,519 interviews with representatives of six Asian nationalities that together account for 85% of the Asian American population in three major cities: Los Angeles, New York, and Boston. It is a pan-ethnic study of six major groups: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese (Ibid., p. 14). Authors concentrated on five key participatory acts as dependent variables: voting, political donations, contacting government officials, group problem-solving, and protest. Their sample includes first- and second-generation immigrants. The list of independent variables included: nativity; immigrant generation; length of stay in the US; English-language skills; and citizenship status (Ibid., p. 28). Based on survey data, authors ran a multivariate analysis. Their findings regarding political socialization were as follows: migrants that were socialized outside of the United States display lower rates of political participation compared to native-born Americans. Also, foreign-born participants show lower rates for most political activities. Immigrants who received education at their home country and followed ethnic news tend to participate even less than their more acculturated counterparts (Ibid., p. 212).

#### *3.4. A comparison with the experiences of Cuban immigrants to the US*

There are many similarities between Russian-speaking and Cuban immigrants. Cubans too migrated to the US in waves, enjoyed certain government and local support, and escaped from the USSR's main ally – Fidel Castro's Communist Cuba.

The first wave of immigration from Cuba occurred in 1959-62, following the Castro's revolution. It consisted of Cuban business elite. The second wave started in 1965 and was composed of the working class immigrants. This group benefited the most from the Cuban Refugee Program which ended in 1974. The third wave was labeled the *Marielitos* and started in 1980 when Fidel Castro allowed people to leave if they so desired. Artists, intellectuals, and minorities populated this wave. Finally, the fourth wave or Cuba's *Balseros* gained momentum after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This time around, people ran from an acute economic crisis (Pedraza, 2007, pp. 3-9).

The four waves of Cuban outmigration are very compatible to those out of Russia. First waves from both countries occurred as a reaction to socialist revolutions and consisted mostly of nobility. In both cases, they hoped to return after the revolutionary turmoil was over. Third waves are also very compatible since both consisted of intellectuals and dissidents. Finally, fourth waves occurred for the same reason – the collapse of the Soviet Union and the crisis of communist ideology in both Cuba and Russia.

Another commonality between the two immigrants groups is they both enjoyed generous support from the US government and ethnic organizations. Cuban immigrants received aid from the Cuban Refugee Program as well as a plethora of federal initiatives like direct loans, subsidies, healthcare, and career assistance (E. Morawska, 2013, p. 151). Soviet and Russian Jews benefited from assistance provided by numerous organizations (as mentioned earlier).

Susan Eckstein compared assimilation and acculturation experiences of the two groups of Cuban migrants: the very first (the Exiles) and the very last (the New Cubans). "The different emigre's views and involvements reflect, in turn, contrasting conceptions of self. Whereas most of the first who fled the revolution perceived themselves as exiles and exiled, deprived of their



homeland because of their political convictions, recent arrivals tend to view themselves as economic immigrants or merely as ‘having gone abroad’” (Eckstein, 2009, p. 4). Cuban Americans are, arguably, the most successful immigrant group in the US. In Miami, with every passing decade, more and more Cubans attain top-level positions in different professional fields. They’ve done very well compared to other Latin American immigrants and even average Americans. Cuban immigrants showed an economic ‘assimilation effect’ (Ibid., p. 72).

When it comes to political efficacy, there is a drastic difference between the first and last waves of Cuban immigration. The Exiles did not socialize into American political system. Instead, they used it for their purposes. Damian Fernandez described their political activities as the politics of passion where ends always justify means. Starting in 1959 Cubans in exile were passionate about the collapse of the Castro regime. An active political position allowed Cuban-Americans, by the early 1980s, to achieve a considerable economic effect, gather critical electoral mass in southern Florida, and even found the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) under the leadership of Jorge Mas Canosa. He “exercised considerable influence in Congress and the White House, specifically on the U.S. policy toward Cuba. CAHF’s efforts resulted in several policies, including the establishment of Radio and TV Marti to broadcast to the island, the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, and the Helms-Burton Act that tightened the U.S. embargo in 1996” (Fernández, 2000, pp. 143-144). The Exiles had also positioned themselves as political and cultural gatekeepers as they wanted to keep Miami free of ‘Castro sympathizers.’ They also actively participated in altering Miami’s appearance by installing museums and naming streets and parks (Eckstein, 2009, p. 59).

The reason for outstanding political efficacy is a tradition of civic engagement in the pre-Castro Cuba. The Exiles’ pre-immigration civic background predisposed them to use politics

to promote their anti-Castro agenda. Even “in the post-Cold War world, their mission centered on maintaining the embargo, to debilitate the Cuban government to the point of collapse. Their pre-immigration background also led many in their ranks to have a low tolerance for political compromise” (Ibid., p. 88).

In contrast, the New Cubans remain on political sidelines. They do not belong to politically influential groups. They came from a transformed Cuba, and they have “no familiarity with a political life independent of the state, and many disliked the state-directed political life they knew” (Ibid.). Because they have no organized political agenda of their own, they naturally came under the political influence of the Exiles. At the same time, unlike the Exiles, the New Cubans bond with friends and family in the homeland much eagerly (Ibid., p. 128). Even though the Exiles cherished a dream to transform post-Castro Cuba, it is the New Cubans who are actually helping to transform the Cuban socialist regime.

Regardless of the time of arrival to the US, all Cuban immigrants insist on remembering where they came from. Cuba is always at the center of any political activity, even though several generations of Cuban Americans were born and raised without setting a foot on the island. This passion about the place of origin sets Cuban and Russian immigrants apart. As it was pointed out by several scholars (Gitelman, 1982; Morawska, 2004), Soviet and Russian Jews tend to lose interest in their homeland’s affairs quickly, wipe the slate clean, and embrace their new state and its political system as soon as possible.

### *3.5. Summary*

Since there are no studies about political socialization of ethnic Russian immigrants, this literature review included studies about political socialization of Russian-speaking Jews and other ethnic groups in the United States, Israel, and Germany. Russian-speaking immigrants have

a lot in common with Cuban expatriates. Namely, they immigrated to the United States due to similar circumstances. At the same time, their patterns of socialization are quite different: Cuban Americans concentrated their political effort on their homeland, while former Soviet/Russian Jews were likely to put thoughts of motherland behind and start over with a clean slate.

## **Chapter 4 Method and Description of the Sample Group**

In this chapter, I ask research questions, describe my methodology, and present initial data analysis. Since there are no studies about political socialization of ethnic Russian immigrants, this study will fill the gap in academic literature about Russian-speakers in the US, and contribute to the cache of micro-theories on immigrant political resocialization as described by Marilyn Hoskin (Hoskin, 1989). This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of South Florida (IRB Study Number: Pro00027010). In Appendix A you can find the following study documents: an Advertisement (Flyer), a Verbal consent form, an Interview Questionnaire, and a Survey Form. All documents have two copies: one in English and one in Russian. For the recruitment on Facebook and in Russian-speaking businesses, I used the Russian version of the study advertisement.

For data analysis, I followed a grounded theory approach because it allowed me to generate a theory or a codified set of propositions relying solely on collected data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 31-32). I will briefly discuss grounded theory in more details in subsection 4.4.

### *4.1. Research Questions*

This study calls for exploring socialization experiences and political attitudes of first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants in the United States. There are two main goals:

1. Identify what agencies of political socialization are used by first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants in their familiarization with American political system. Research

- question #1: What political socialization agencies are the most popular and most effective with ethnic Russian immigrants?
2. Determine if the exposure to American society and its political values resulted in any changes of political preferences, attitudes, and opinions. Research question #2: How and why do Russians, who permanently reside in the United States, perceive American democracy? Do they see the differences between political systems in Russia and the US? How do ethnic Russian immigrants view Russia? Do English language proficiency and exposure to multiple socialization agencies make a difference?

#### *4.2. Initial assumptions*

I interviewed forty first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants, who moved to the US from Russia between the years of 2004 and 2014. I looked for two general types of immigrants – those who speak English well and use it in their daily communications, and those who speak English poorly or not at all. I assume that people who do not speak English, interact mostly within their linguistic diaspora. For ethnic Russians, a diaspora consists of an amalgamation of people from the former Soviet republics. My interactions and observations allowed me to conclude that Russian-speakers in Central and South Florida do not differentiate among themselves based on countries of origin.

My initial hypothesis about political socialization of first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants is that English language proficiency ensures successful socialization in the American society. Also, exposure to multiple socialization agencies results in faster and more effective political socialization.

### *4.3. Study criteria*

#### 4.3.1. Who is eligible?

A successful candidate for this study is an ethnic-Russian individual who emigrated from the Russian Federation. Another important criterion was the immigration year. I only interviewed people who came to the US between 2004 and 2014. I created this time parameter because of the political and societal changes that occurred in Russia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the 1990s Russia was under the rule of Boris Yeltsin who applied a liberal approach to the state economy and politics. He resigned on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1999 and named Vladimir Putin as his successor. Putin was the President of Russia from 2000 until 2008 and from 2012 till present. From 2008 until 2012, he served as the Prime Minister, but, de-facto, was the most influential figure in Russia's domestic and foreign politics. Putin's policies differ from those of Yeltsin, and his governing style is more authoritarian. Thus, people who emigrated from Russia before the year of 2000, left a more liberal state.

The early 2000s is a good starting point because it ensures that an individual lived in Putin's Russia for at least several years. 2014 is the cutoff year because I wanted to make sure respondents had been living in the US for at least three years. It would not make sense to interview a newcomer because he or she would not have enough exposure to American socialization agencies to judge their effectiveness.

There are two main clusters of interviewees:

- Ethnic Russians who obtained or are currently obtaining an education from a US college or university, have an American partner and friends, and work or worked for an American company. These criteria confirm that an immigrant is exposed to American culture and speaks English. There are 20 respondents in this group.

- Ethnic Russians who do not speak English and did not attend any American college or university, have their own business or work for/with other Russian-speaking people, and are either single or married to a fellow Russian. In other words, people who reside in the United States but get little to no exposure to American political socialization agencies. This group also consists of 20 respondents.

The sample was divided further to see if socialization varied based on gender. There are 24 female and 16 male respondents.

I recruited participants through several Facebook groups created by and for Russian-speakers in Central and South Florida. All of them are private, and to gain access, I had to join first. Some of them were gender specific and created by and for Russian-speaking women only. Gaining membership in these groups was my strategy to reach a very specific group – female non-speakers who use Facebook to socialize with other Russian-speaking women in their areas. Most of identified Facebook groups were territory specific. I found and joined groups in Tampa Bay, Sarasota, Orlando, and Miami. I used the IRB approved study flyer for recruitment. I recruited three respondents (John, Stephanie, and Elena) while participating in the events organized for Russian-speakers; five people (Margarita, Korina, Bill, Nikita, and Vladislav) I recruited by referrals; thirty-five respondents contacted me or were contacted by me through Facebook. There are three people I invited to participate. In addition to Facebook advertising, I went to several Russian-speaking businesses and community centers to pin my flyers to their announcement boards, but I did not recruit anyone this way.

#### 4.3.2. What makes Florida a good place to conduct this study?

The state of Florida is considered a ‘swing state’ with no clear preference between the Republican and the Democratic political parties. It means that political attitudes in Florida vary

and recent immigrants are not necessarily exposed to a one-party preference setting. Florida is also a place of diversity. As of 2012, only 36 percent of Florida residents were born in Florida<sup>12</sup>. For the remaining 64 percent, the breakdown was as follows: 23 percent came from outside of the United States; less than 3 percent came from the Western region of the US; approximately 10 percent were from the Midwest; around 20 percent – from the Northeast; and 10 percent – from Southern states. Such diversity makes Florida a good place to study immigrants' political views due to the exposure to a variety of political attitudes and beliefs.

The US Census Bureau estimated there are close to 36 thousand Russian speakers (age 5 and over) residing in Florida. Nearly half of them, or 16,148 individuals, speak English poorly or not at all<sup>13</sup>. For this study I recruited my participants from four Metropolitan areas of Central and South Florida:

- Miami-Ft. Lauderdale-West Palm Beach;
- North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton;
- Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford;
- Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater.

Together these geographic areas are home to a little over 25 thousand (25,048) Russian speakers<sup>14</sup> and six Russian Orthodox churches<sup>15</sup> (as of 2010). Also, there are three Russian-American Cultural Centers located in St. Petersburg and Winter Park (Central Florida) and Sunny Isles Beach (South Florida).

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/16/upshot/mapping-migration-in-the-united-states-since-1900.html?\\_r=1&abt=0002&abg=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/16/upshot/mapping-migration-in-the-united-states-since-1900.html?_r=1&abt=0002&abg=0)

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.census.gov/data/tables/2013/demo/2009-2013-lang-tables.html?eml=gd&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](http://www.census.gov/data/tables/2013/demo/2009-2013-lang-tables.html?eml=gd&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> [www.usreligioncensus.org](http://www.usreligioncensus.org)



#### 4.3.3. Protecting respondents' identities

To protect my respondents, I used pseudonyms instead of real names. Every time I mention or quote a respondent, I list his or her pseudonym and, in parentheses, I indicate a gender group and the language group. For example: Aristarch (m/ne). Aristarch is a male respondent ('m' for male), and he either does not speak English or speaks it poorly ('ne' for no English). Yana (f/e) is a woman ('f' for female), and she speaks English well ('e' for English proficiency).

To protect my respondents even further, I do not specify their metro areas of residence. Instead, I simply indicated a general area (Central or South Florida).

A more specific information about data in Appendix B. I divided the respondents into four clusters: M/E, M/NE; F/E; and F/NE. All data in Appendix B are sorted this way.

#### *4.4. Grounded Theory method of data collection and analysis*

Grounded theory is a qualitative method introduced by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967. Unlike other methods, grounded theory relies on data and has two main criteria: constant comparison and category saturation. Coding and data interpretation are used to ensure systematic theory generation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 102). Grounded theory opposes the use of any previously developed theories, it is always traceable to data, and it is 'fluid' because it embraces interaction, temporality, and process (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 279). At the same time, it could be used to test or expand an existing theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2015, p. 53).

The original approach to grounded theory suggests the use of constant comparison to break data into manageable pieces based on their similarities and differences. Similar data are to be grouped into categories where the core category incorporates the major theme of a study.

Kathy Charmaz proposed a constructivist grounded theory method. It prioritizes data interpretation over data verification. Constructivist grounded theory adopts inductive, comparative, emergent, and open-ended approach to the original theory. It emphasizes different values, views, beliefs, and feelings. Charmaz argued that one constructs grounded theory through his or her past and present experiences. As follows, her version of grounded theory offers an interpretation of a studied phenomenon and not its exact picture (Charmaz, 2014, p. 17).

I consider constructivist grounded theory to be more fitting for my research. The blueprint proposed by Charmaz includes the following steps (Ibid., p. 18):

1. Research question;
2. Recruitment and sampling of participants;
3. Data collection (interviews and a survey);
4. Initial coding;
5. Focused coding and categorizing;
6. Theory building;
7. Writing up/dissemination.

#### *4.5. Personal disclaimer and ethical issues*

Theoretical coding depends on many aspects including disciplinary knowledge and professionalism; research and personal experiences; sensitivity to social issues; and relationships with participants (Strauss & Corbin, 2015, p. 280). Charmaz emphasized that researchers use their past and present experiences to filter and interpret the data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 17). With that said, it is necessary to provide some relevant information about myself. I am too a first-generation ethnic Russian immigrant. I came to the United States in 2004 as a student, at the age of 22. My whole family lives in Russia. I experienced exposure to the following political

socialization agencies: American education system; an American spouse; American peers and employers; the US media and social networks. I casually communicate with people who live in Russia, and I pay attention to Russian cultural media and news agencies.

There were three people who I knew personally, and invited to participate in my study – Rina (f/e), Victoria (f/e), and Pavel (m/ne). I did not know the rest of respondents before conducting my interviews.

There are certain shortcomings when a researcher and respondents belong to the same ethnic and/or social group. Alfred Schuetz argued that the researcher who belongs to the researched group does not question ‘normal’ surroundings as he/she takes them for granted. A ‘stranger,’ on the other hand, might have less biased perspective and might want to go into more details about something very obvious to the group but puzzling to an outsider (Schuetz, 1944, p. 501). As follows, a stranger, due to his/her lack of familiarity with the group, might present a more detailed analysis as opposed to an insider who omits many things because they are obvious and, hence, do not require additional explanation. I do recognize this shortcoming. Since I am aware of this potential problem, I attempted to minimize this bias by not initiating and discussions and only asking follow-up questions when I felt a clarification was needed.

I believe it was easier for me to establish trust with my participants, especially those who do not speak English and rarely communicate with Americans or any other group except of their own. Patricia Hill Collins argued that providing an inside voice to a group might produce distinctive analyses of numerous issues that are not visible to outsiders (Collins, 1986). An outsider might not be aware of certain issues and instead, concentrate on obvious things and experiences. As a result, he/she can provide a flawless descriptive analysis but has no way to channel from within. An outsider is certainly capable of becoming a member of the group, but it

takes time and would never be complete because we all carry parts of our history with us no matter what we do.

After completing the process of recruiting and interviewing I can say with confidence that my respondents were willing to participate in my study because I was one of them. They trusted me with their views and opinions because I was a fellow ethnic Russian immigrant. For the convenience of my respondents, I offered a choice between Russian and English language for both an interview and a survey. Thirty-nine out of forty preferred Russian.

#### *4.6. Data collection*

I collected my data in the second half of 2016 and the first half of 2017. It was an interesting period because in November 2016, the 45<sup>th</sup> American president was elected. There was a lot of tension and controversy in mass media and the American society in general before and after the elections. I included several questions about the elections in the interview questionnaire to address current events. However, I did not ask my respondents about their personal preference between Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton because such questions may be perceived as intrusive.

I used two methods of data collection: open-ended interviews and a closed-ended survey. Interviews were designed to learn about respondents' individual experiences. A survey was added to classify respondents based on their political preferences.

##### 4.6.1. Interviews

Charmaz argued in favor of intensive interviewing. This technique allows respondents to express their opinions and share personal experiences. An interviewer should ask open-ended questions, obtain detailed responses, and try to understand participants' perspectives (Charmaz, 2014, p. 56). I also relied on the advice of James A. Holstein and Jaber F. Gubrium who

developed an active interviewing approach. Active interviewing is storytelling with two main participants: a researcher and a respondent. This approach encourages interviewers to “converse with respondents in such a way that alternate considerations are brought into play” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 17). It requires an interviewer to be active and engaged. He or she should try to activate a respondent's stock of knowledge but avoid possible contamination.

I conducted thirty-one face-to-face interviews. Eight people were interviewed through Skype and one over the phone. Interview data were later combined with the survey results in a separate folder for each respondent. 39 interviews were conducted in Russian and later translated into English.

During all my interviews I took notes and recorded field observations and spontaneous thoughts and ideas. While transcribing the data, I incorporated those notes into analytical memos for each interview. Memo writing is an essential element of grounded theory. Non-verbal behavior, a tone of voice, and a general ethnographic setting are very helpful for data analysis and a theory generation (Charmaz, 2014, p. 111). According to Johnny Saldana, a memo is “a place to ‘dump your brain’ about the participants, phenomenon, or process under investigation by thinking and thus writing and thus thinking even more about them...” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 44).

#### 4.6.2. Surveys

I used Political Typology Quiz created by the Pew Research Center (PRC), a nonpartisan fact tank<sup>16</sup>. Their Political Typology Quiz is a part of Political Polarization series. It categorizes respondents into eight groups from the Right to the Left (Pew Research Center, 2014). Here is the groups’ breakdown:

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.people-press.org/quiz/political-typology/>

- Strongly ideological:
  - Steadfast Conservatives (Right)
  - Business Conservatives (Right)
  - Solid Liberals (Left)
- Less opinionated:
  - Young outsiders (more to the Right)
  - Hard-pressed skeptics (dead center)
  - Next Generation Left (more to the Left)
  - Faith and Family Left (more to the Left)
- Bystanders.

The PRC survey consists of 23 questions each with two options to choose from. For this study, an extra choice ('no opinion') was added to provide respondents with all the possible options (see [Appendix A](#)).

Each respondent was asked to complete the survey. Initially, I intended to email the survey to each respondent before the interview, but it was not a successful strategy because respondents often forgot about it and I had a hard time obtaining surveys after interviews. I changed my strategy and asked respondents to complete the survey right before the interview. [Appendix C](#) contains the survey results. The political typology quiz was administered forty times with answers provided by my respondents to generate results. When a third, a 'no opinion', option was used, I simply skipped the question. Only one survey did not yield a result – Yana (f/e) answered 'no opinion' so many times, it made it impossible to identify her political typology.

#### 4.6.3. Sample size

The number of interviews depends on many factors including complexity, novelty, and controversy of a studied phenomenon. The more controversial the topic, the more interviews it requires. The use of interviews as a sole source of data also obliges the researcher to increase the number of interviews (Charmaz, 2014, p. 108). For a grounded theory research, John W. Creswell recommends conducting between 20 and 60 interviews (Creswell, 2013, p. 89). I conducted the total of 45 interviews. Five interviews were not used because they did not fit the parameters of the study (it was usually revealed during interviews). The 40 remaining interviews are divided into four clusters based on two characteristics: gender and English language proficiency (refer to Appendix B). The average age of the sample is 39, with the youngest being 23 and the oldest – 60. The study respondents are discussed next.

#### *4.7. Who are they?*

The first cluster is coded ‘m/e’ and consists of seven men (m) who speak English (e) well. All of them came to the United States with an average to good knowledge of English. Timur and Nick immigrated at the age of 18. Timur, Nick, John, and Bill obtained their highest college degrees in the United States. Yuri, Jason, and Valentin did not receive education in the US. Instead, they relied on their college degrees earned in Russia. This group has two people with doctoral, three people with masters, and two with bachelors degrees. All of them, except Nick who has his own business, work for American companies. Only two members have (had) romantic relationships with American partners: Timur is dating an American girl, and John (at the time of our interview) was divorcing his American wife. All seven members have American friends. Six out of seven have Russian friends both in the US and in Russia. Yuri prefers not to communicate with Russian-speaking immigrants in the US but converses with people in Russia.

The second cluster (m/ne) consists of nine men (m) who speak poor or no English (ne) and do not use it every day. Semion is the only person in this group who obtained some education in the US – post-doctorate credits at several universities. The rest did not receive any education in the United States. Five members (Ivan, Semion, Aleksandr, Pavel, and Nikita) work for American companies. All of them but Aleksandr try to interact with their American co-workers, but poor language skills is a major limiting factor in both communication and career advancements. Three men (Aristarch, Alexey, and Andrei) started their own businesses, and one (Vladislav) works for a company created and staffed by Russian-speaking immigrants from former Soviet republics. None of the group members have American partners, and some do not even have American friends: out of nine people, only three (Semion, Alexey, and Pavel) stated they have American friends. All of them have Russian and Russian-speaking friends in the US. Within this group, Alexey is the only one who volunteers – it is a large part of his job – he is a priest in the Russian Orthodox Church. The rest of the members of this group had never thought of volunteering either in Russia or in the US.

The third cluster – f/e – includes twelve women (f) who speak English (e) and utilize it in their daily lives. Most of these women are married to American men except Sessi (single), Yaroslava (her Russian spouse does not speak English), and Yana (her Russian spouse speaks English). These ladies tend to have both American and Russian friends, except for Sveta who prefers to communicate with European immigrants only. Sessi does not have any Russian friends. Rina and Victoria do not have any American friends.

Finally, the fourth cluster (f/ne) are twelve women (f) who do not speak English (ne) or know it poorly. Out of this group, only three – Chepe, Olga, and Marianna – work for American companies and have American colleagues. Maria, Margarita, and Olga have American spouses,



while the rest of them are married to Russian (Anna, Marianna, Tapolina, Marina, Belka, and Lukeria) and Ukrainian (Chepe and Korina) immigrants. Alevtina is single.

#### *4.8. Why did they come to the US?*

Academically, this question was neither asked nor answered. The majority of the research on immigrants from the former Soviet Union and the post-Soviet Russia concentrated on the Russian-speaking Jews whose main reasons for immigration were to move to the promised land (Israel) and escape oppression (Inkeles & Bauer, 1961; Isurin, 2011; Lewin Epstein et al., 1997; Morawska, 2004; Shasha & Shron, 2002).

What about ethnic Russians? What are their reasons to leave Russia? Based on the answers, I divided respondents into six groups.

##### 4.8.1. Group #1 – Better Job Opportunities

Five people moved to the US to advance their careers. Valentin (m/e), Semion (m/ne), Yana (f/e), and Chepe (f/ne) are scientists with advanced academic degrees. Katya (f/e) is an athlete. All of them felt that in Russia there were not enough opportunities for them to pursue their passions. As stated by Semion (m/ne),

*“I left Russia because I wanted to pursue a career in academia and it was not possible to survive doing only this. My salary at the university was not enough to even buy a bus pass. The compensations were so small that we were encouraged to go to different countries. Why would I want to stay in Russia, if countries like the US offer me a stable salary and research opportunities?”*

According to him, even bureaucratic procedures became easier after he mentioned he was going to work in the US: *“it was a particular mindset – if you are going to the US, you are not considered a traitor. It meant that you'd done something with your life.”*

Valentin (m/e) mentioned that the collapse of the Soviet Union made it difficult for scientists to continue their research:

*“There was a large gap between the Soviet scientists and young aspiring scientists who were just starting in the field. Old scientists did not have to start over; they had good reputations and social privileges while for younger scientists it was very difficult to enter the field. If I wanted to stay in academia and continue my research, I had to look elsewhere.”*

Chepe (f/ne) came to the US to gain experience necessary to secure a better job in Europe. *“After I got my Ph.D., I went to France for a postdoc program. I met a person there who told me to look for a job in the US because it is the top country in sciences. After working in the US, I was guaranteed to find permanent employment in academia anywhere in Europe.”*

Katya (f/e) came to the US because she wanted to become a professional athlete. *“In Russia, the government had never supported sports. In Moscow, tennis courts were given away to some businessmen instead of supporting local sports initiatives to encourage children to play tennis.”* Katya was able to secure a full athletic scholarship for both undergraduate and graduate studies in one of Florida’s colleges. She admits that none of that would be possible if she stayed in Russia.

This group includes both men and women. Two of them do not speak good English, but it did not stop them from pursuing their careers. Semion (m/ne) and Chepe (f/ne) both admitted their English is lacking, but their research fields are specific enough to conduct and publish research without any difficulties.

#### 4.8.2. Group #2 – “I followed my family”

Nick (m/e), Timur (m/e), Jason (m/e), and Sessi (f/e) came to the US following their parents. All of them immigrated at a young age: Nick and Timur were 18, Sessi was 19, and Jason was 20. They spoke good English before moving to the US. Their parents spoke English, and all of them studied English in Russia before coming to the US. Sessi lived in New Zealand for a year before joining her parents and two younger siblings in the US. As Timur (m/e) pointed out: *“I studied English at school. My mom spoke good English. We had an American teacher at my school. I was one of his best students. When I came to the US, I understood America fairly well.”*

Upon his arrival to the US, Nick (m/e) did not have any intention to stay for good. *“Initially, I wanted to enter a university here and see where it will take me. I was expecting to get an American education and go back to Russia where I would be in demand as an employee.”*

The oldest cohort, Aleksandr (m/ne), Tapolina (f/ne), and Alevtina (f/ne), came to the US to rejoin their children. Aleksandr shared: *“I moved here mostly because of my children and grandchildren, I wanted to be close to them, so I can see them and help them.”* All three speak little to no English. Tapolina does not want to learn English at all as she does not need it. They are the least opinionated people in the study. All three acknowledged their limitations when comparing Russia and the US. Tapolina and Alevtina expressed a desire to learn more about the US political system.

Ivan (m/ne) and Pavel (m/ne) moved to the United States to reunite with their sister and mother respectively. They both stated they took advantage of the situation because things were bad at home. Ivan said:

*“My sister moved here a long time ago, and I finally decided to come here. For the past 20 years I worked as a lawyer, and recently, it became very difficult. To win a case, you need to negotiate instead of making your case. Also, standards of living were deteriorating: everything was fake – especially medications.”*

Finally, Lukeria (f/ne) followed her husband to the United States. If not for him, she would’ve never even thought about emigrating from Russia.

#### 4.8.3. Group #3 – “I got married!!!”

Thirteen respondents (all women) moved to the United States because they got married. Elena (f/e) and Victoria (f/e) came to the United States for the ‘Work and Travel’ summer student exchange program.<sup>17</sup> As Elena put it: *“I came here through the Work & Travel program. I’ve met my husband on the second day I was here. After that summer I went back home, finished my college studies and came back on a bride’s visa – my husband does everything by the law.”* Victoria had a very similar experience.

Korina (f/ne), Maria (f/ne), Marianna (f/ne), Anna (f/ne), and Belka (f/ne) immigrated to the US after marrying former compatriots – long-term Russian-speaking immigrants. Here are some of their recollections: *“My first love invited me for a visit. I came on a New Year’s Eve, we hadn’t seen each other for 10 years, and we fell in love again. I went back to finish all my business in Russia and came to the US for good - we got married right away”* (Marianna). *“I came here on a fiancé visa. My husband and I knew each other for over 20 years. We went to the same high school. We met again online and later decided to get married”* (Belka). *“I met my husband in Russia; he was there for some personal business. I went back and forth as a tourist.*

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.interexchange.org/travel-abroad/work-travel-year-usa/>

*On my last trip, I got pregnant and stayed. We got married, and I applied for a green card”*

(Anna). All four of these women do not speak English. There is no need to speak the language to immigrate. Marianna and Belka picked up some English language skills: Marianna works for the same company as her husband and Belka studies in college. Anna and Korina are both stay-at-home moms and do not have many opportunities to socialize outside of their families.

Finally, six women met their husbands, American men, online: Abigail (f/e), Alisa (f/e), Rina (f/e), Stephanie (f/e), Margarita (f/ne), and Olga (f/ne). Rina shared her experiences:

*“When I celebrated my 47<sup>th</sup> birthday, I realized that I had nothing holding me in Russia – I raised my children and had a good job as a freelancer. I decided to test myself – I went on a trip to Europe to see if I can find my way in a foreign country. My trip was a success, and I went even further: I joined several online dating groups and started talking to American men. It was fun! I was interested in everything and asked many questions. Once I was even labeled a spammer, but I used it to my advantage. That is how I met my husband.”*

Stephanie explained: *“My husband and I met online and traveled to see each other several times. Before my move, we met in Europe, rented a car, and spent 21 days together to see if we were a good match.”* Olga shared: *“My husband and I got married in Russia. After that, I waited for two years before coming here. When I finally arrived, I received my social security number and my green card right away – we did it the smart way.”* Margarita told me that she hesitated at first:

*“My close friend found a website where we could meet people from the US. I did not have an aim to find someone – my friend encouraged me. When I met my husband, I*

*did not want to move here, but I did it for my children. Otherwise, I would probably be very happy with long distance relations.”*

All the ladies who came here after meeting their husbands online are still happily married, except for Maria – after two years of marriage, Maria and her husband decided to part ways.

#### 4.8.4. Group #4 – “I won a Green Card!!!”

Five people came to the United States after winning in the Green Card lottery: Yuri (m/e), Nikita (m/ne); Marina (f/ne), and a married couple - Yaroslava (f/e) and Aristarch (m/ne).

Yuri heard about the lottery from an acquaintance:

*“I had thought about moving, but we did not have a good opportunity. An acquaintance during a business trip to enter the Green Card lottery. We did, and my wife won.”*

Nikita came to the US because of his wife: *“It was not my decision. My wife went to the US in 2008, and she liked it a lot. She decided to apply for the Green Card lottery, and I supported her decision. We won and decided to move.”* Aristarch and Yaroslava had a different reason:

*“We won our Green Card, but we had never been here before. We took it as our chance to try something new and test ourselves in a new place. We won in 2009, and at that time, there was a crisis and no job stability in Russia. If not for that economic crisis, we would remain in Russia.”*

Marina won her Green Card while she was in the US:

*“My boyfriend and I came here as students on J-1 visas. We wanted to work, make some money, then go back home, finish our universities, and get married. Our contact in America scammed us by providing fake job contracts. We decided to stay illegally for some time. After one year, we found ourselves surrounded by people who lived in the US illegally for ten-fifteen years. I was afraid to get stuck among those people. We applied for a Green Card, and I won.”*

#### 4.8.5. Group #5 – “Let’s come for a visit and stay forever!”

Father Alexey (m/ne) and Vladislav (m/ne) admitted that they had never planned to emigrate from Russia. They both decided to come to the US out of curiosity. *“I did not expect to stay. I came to talk to a bishop in New York. After that, I started to think about moving here. It was a difficult choice because I served in a good church in Moscow”* (Father Alexey). *“I studied in a university and had an older friend who went to the US every summer. He persuaded me to go with him the next time, but he warned me that we are going for a long period, not just for one summer”* (Vladislav).

John (m/e) and Bill (m/e) came to the US to receive an education and later decided to stay. As John put it: *“in Russia, I worked in a bank for nine years, and I had a very good position. But then my boss told me that I would not get a promotion because I did not have good connections. I started looking elsewhere and realized that I need to learn English, get an MBA, and all the doors will open for me.”* Bill went through a similar thinking process before obtaining his Master’s degree in the US.

Sveta (f/e) intentionally stayed in the US after she participated in the ‘Work and Travel’ program. *“I came here for the first time in 2007, and I was under the impression that everything*

*is easy in the US. I came again in 2009 on J-1 visa, then I got a tourist visa, and later I got my Green Card.”*

Andrei (m/ne) came to the US specifically to make some money and found a way to stay here. Later his wife, Lukeria (f/ne), joined him.

#### 4.8.6. Group #6 – “Economic crises had affected our business”

Finally, Kristina (f/e) and her American husband met and got married in Russia. Together they started their business in Kristina’s hometown. *“We decided to move because we felt the economic crises [the result of sanctions imposed in 2014] was affecting our business. When it started, we did not think it will last. So our reason to move was purely economic.”* If not for sanctions, Kristina and her husband would have remained in Russia.

#### *4.9. Exposure to American political socialization agencies*

Table 2 in Appendix B summarizes the respondents’ experiences with political socialization agencies in the US. In some cases, it also indicates an on-going exposure to Russian agencies (mainly the church and mass media). Overall, there are four most exposed respondents: Yuri (m/e), Nick (m/e), Rina (f/e), and Katya (f/e). The respondents with the least exposure to the US socialization agencies were: Andrei (m/ne), Vladislav (m/ne), Tapolina (f/ne), Alevtina (f/ne), and Lukeria (f/ne).

The general tendency is consistent with one of the initial hypotheses: English language proficiency is a very influential factor in the process of political socialization in a host society.

Based on data, the church is an effective political socialization agency. While many participants declared they go to a church, only five people preferred English-speaking churches: Yuri (m/e), Victoria (f/e) and Yaroslava (f/e) regularly attend Baptist churches; Sveta (f/e) and Ivan (m/ne) prefer Roman Catholic churches. The rest of the churchgoers attend Russian



Orthodox Churches with services performed in Russian. One respondent – Father Alexey (m/ne) started a Russian Orthodox church in South Florida.

Another important agency is marriage. Twelve women in the sample have American spouses and consider them to be the most influential agency of their political socialization. No men in the sample are married to American women: Timur (m/e) is dating one, and John (m/e) is divorcing one.

All respondents in my sample communicate with people in Russia. With contemporary technological advances in communication, it is almost unavoidable. Communication with family and friends occurs on a regular basis. Nine people (Timur (m/e), Nick (m/e), John (m/e), Semion (m/ne), Pavel (m/ne), Andrei (m/ne), Stephanie (f/e), Anna (f/ne), and Lukeria (f/ne)) stated they still care about politics in Russia. Constant communications with the home state could suggest a transnational immigrant behavior due to simultaneous attachments and active participation in both a home and a host state (Basch, Schiller, & Szanton Blanc, 1994).

#### *4.10. Data Coding*

Grounded theory coding process is used to identify the main themes and generalizable statements. Coding should be simple, direct, and spontaneous. Unlike other qualitative methods, grounded theory does not use preconceived codes to categorize data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113).

There are two cycles of coding. Johnny Saldana specified three types for each of the cycles in grounded theory applications (Saldaña, 2016, p. 55):

- First cycle: In Vivo, Process, and Initial (or Open) coding;
- Second cycle: Focused, Axial, and Theoretical (or Selective).

For the first coding cycle, I used the combination of In Vivo and Process coding. In Vivo coding refers to a word or a short phrase that is repeated many times within a sample. “Folk or indigenous terms indicate the existence of the group’s cultural categories” (Ibid., p. 105). As for the Process coding, it is more suited for studies that “search for the routines and rituals of human life” (Ibid., p. 111). The Process coding is also appropriate for movement and changes that occur over time. Political socialization is a ritual of adjustment to a new environment. It takes time and depends on many factors.

All respondents have different interpretations of the United States based on exposure to different agencies of socialization. They came to the US at different stages of their lives with different amounts of human capital and experience. Their impressions of the US as a country and as a political system were very different, but all of them are important to acknowledge. The combination of In Vivo and Process coding is perfect for capturing a wide variety of codes and themes.

I created a color-coding system to mark similar responses and ideas. There was a total of 23 different colors marking similar responses. I also filled 40 pages of notes and 17 flash cards with codes. The first cycle coding was very helpful to organize my thought process. Some of my interviews were over three hours long, and transcripts had an overwhelming amount of information, facts, emotions, etc. Coding helped to weed out secondary things and highlight interesting responses, commonalities, and differences.

For the second cycle, I used focused coding which consists of the initial codes’ assessment through comparison. Charmaz advised developing categories and subcategories to make sense of all the data. Analytic strategies usually emerge during the categorizing (Charmaz, 2014, p. 148). In my case, in the second coding cycle, I identified the most used codes first and

listed quotes relevant to each code. It helped to organize opinions on different issues. The second cycle coding resulted in a 60-page document.

Since this study is about political socialization, interviews were specifically made to ask questions about different socialization agencies. Political socialization involves the following agencies: a family; a community; peer groups; the church; school systems; a workplace; formal organizations; mass media; specialized political input structures (interest groups and political parties); specialized output structures (a legislature, bureaucracy, and court systems); and social, economic, and political outcomes (Almond & Powell, 1978, p. 79). Because I used the political socialization concept as a framework, most of the general themes (but not categories) were predetermined: education, marriage, family and friends, a place of work, a place of leisure, mass media, and a place of worship. During my coding cycles, I was able to gather enough codes for additional categories that became very important. I will discuss my findings about relevant and unexpected political socialization agencies in chapter six where I develop a model of political socialization of ethnic-Russian immigrants based on the experiences of those respondents who successfully socialized into American society and its political environment.

#### *4.11. Summary*

There are two research questions in this study:

1. What are the most effective political socialization agencies with ethnic Russian immigrants?
2. How do Russians who permanently reside in the United States perceive American democracy and why do they have the views they do? Do English language proficiency and exposure to multiple socialization agencies make a difference?

To answer these questions, I conducted forty interviews accompanied by surveys and divided my sample into clusters, based on English language proficiency and gender; and groups, based on their reasons to immigrate to the US. Constructivist grounded theory was chosen as the data analysis method. It is grounded in data and emphasizes data interpretation. Since the main concept of the study is an immigrant political socialization, general themes were predetermined, but categories were developed after the data analysis.

## **Chapter 5 Economic and Social Adaptation**

An Immigrant political socialization into a host society, does not happen in isolation but together with an economic and social integration. After all, immigrants' economic and social adjustments affect their perception of the host government and its political system overall. In this chapter, I address how ethnic Russian immigrants adapted to their new economic and social environments in the US. As Gitelman eloquently put it, the main objective of this chapter "is to describe the road and the scenery around it...when we take up political integration and absorption, we will be concerned with 'final destination,' but here we shall try to describe the social and economic experiences of the immigrants, without making judgments about final outcomes" (Gitelman, 1982, p. 128). The process of economic and social adaptation can be defined in many ways. To narrow the scope, I will use the following definition: immigrants' integration is "primarily concerned about individual outcomes such as language acquisition, educational attainment, labor market participation, and health behavior" (Ramakrishnan, 2013, p. 31).

There are objective and subjective measures of immigrant integration. From the government's perspective, the integration success can be measured by immigrants' satisfaction with their physical needs. There are several questions to consider: Are you satisfied with your life in the US? Are you proud of your job, achievements, and material possessions?

From the societal perspective, an integration can be measured by the degree and nature of immigrants' contacts with Americans. Do you have any American friends? Is your spouse an American? How often do you communicate with Americans?

As for subjective measures of assimilation, there is an absorption of the host's values, norms, and behavior patterns by immigrants themselves (Gitelman, 1982, p. 135). Did you find your place in American society? Do you think you've Americanized?

The following subsections address immigrants' economic and social adaptation as well as their satisfaction rates. More specifically, an economic integration includes employment, education, healthcare, welfare, and dealing with infrastructure and services. A social integration occurs through developing different kinds of relationships. The overall satisfaction rate is based on immigrants' subjective opinions about their lives in the US.

### *5.1. Economic integration*

An economic activity is an important component of a person's wellbeing. For many people, economic security is a primary reason for immigration. When asked about their pre-emigration image of America, all forty respondents mentioned things like great opportunities, prosperity, financial might, and economic security. When talking about economic opportunities, respondents emphasized employment prospects and good quality education.

#### 5.1.1. Employment

Out of forty respondents, only four are not employed: Maria (f/e) was looking for a job at the time of the interview, Anna (f/ne) is a stay-at-home mom, Tapolina (f/ne) and Alevtina (f/ne) are retired. The rest of the respondents' employment is listed in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Employment status**

<b>Type of employment</b>			
An American Company	A Russian-speaking company/employer	Self-employment	Part-time employment
Timur (m/e) Yuri (m/e) John (m/e) Bill (m/e) Jason (m/e) Valentin (m/e) Ivan (m/ne) Semion (m/ne) Aleksandr (m/ne) Nikita (m/ne) Sessi (f/e) Rina (f/e) Katya (f/e) Sveta (f/e) Victoria (f/e) Stephanie (f/e) Elena (f/e) Yana (f/e) Chepe (f/ne) Olga (f/ne) Marianna (f/ne)	Pavel (m/ne) Vladislav (m/ne) Korina (f/ne) Belka (f/ne)	Nick (m/e) Aristarch (m/ne) Alexey (m/ne) Andrei (m/ne) Abigail (f/e) Alisa (f/e) Yaroslava (f/e) Kristina* (f/e) Margarita (f/ne) Lukeria (f/ne)	Marina (f/ne)
Total: 21	Total: 4	Total: 10	Total: 1
* Owns business in Russia			

Respondents who work in American companies talked about both the advantages and disadvantages of their employment. The most common approvals of American companies include high salaries and good work ethics. Jason (m/e) does not like the benefits his company provides but he is satisfied with his earnings: *“I like the size of my salary. It is very competitive compared to Russia. I can afford to buy health insurance of my choice as opposed to relying on my company’s coverage.”* Katya’s (f/e) starting salary was higher than her mother’s earnings in Russia. Even though her mother has 30 years of experience, Katya’s first job paid considerably more. The general impression of the US labor compensation is very positive among respondents. Marianna (f/e) summarized it as follows: *“the US is ahead of Russia by about 50 years when it comes to people’s earnings.”*

Rina (f/e), who works at a retail store, is very appreciative of managers' approach to workers: *"Our managers will never remind us of their superiority. They know all our names and always show respect. If something needs to be done, they will do it instead of ordering us around. One of our managers cleaned the toilets when we were understaffed."* In Rina's opinion, managers in Russia are less personable. Elena (f/e), who works for a large financial company, feels secure to work in the US because of employees' rights and a great support system (unions and associations). Sveta (f/e) talked about merit systems: *"In Russia, your job is as good as your social connections and networking abilities. Even though there is some nepotism in the US, it is possible to make a great career based on merit alone, especially if you are willing to work for less money."*

Alexey (m/ne), Yaroslava (f/e), and Marianna (f/ne) are very appreciative of American employment programs for people with disabilities. As Alexey put it: *"my youngest son has Down syndrome. In Russia, his prospects are very glum. In the US, however, there is hope for people like him. I see people with Down syndrome working in supermarkets. The US society is more accepting and the American government pays a lot of attention to people with disabilities."*

The main disadvantage of working in the US is a lack of benefits. Both men and women in the sample criticized the absence of maternity programs and benefits. Yaroslava (f/e) and Chepe (f/ne) are both mothers. Yaroslava's oldest son was born in Russia, and the youngest daughter was born in the US. All three of Chepe's children were born in the US. The two mothers related to the absence of maternity benefits to bigger societal issues.

*"In the US, there is no maternal leave and no guaranteed return to employment after it is over. There are no public daycare centers, and private ones are very expensive. There is no preventive medical attention for pregnant women in case of pathology. Thus,*



*there is no culture of mothering - the system is created to separate mothers and children as early as possible. As a result, children are growing up without developing a close connection to and appreciation of their parents - that is why too many people end up in retirement homes” (Yaroslava). “Mothers have to leave their children to the care of strangers at a very young age. Some children cannot develop properly because they do not receive necessary attention in daycare centers” (Chepe).*

Olga (f/ne) was sure that aside from the US, no other developed country deprives young mothers of time to spend with their children. In her opinion, women should have an opportunity to devote attention to their newborns without being threatened to lose their jobs or run out of money. Maternity leave and a culture of mothering both benefit a society by preventing any possible developmental concerns and strengthening connections among different generations within families.

Another issue raised by respondents was a small number of vacations days. Timur (m/e) mentioned: *“I would’ve been better off working in Russia because there is more vacation time, healthcare and maternity benefits, especially for government employees.”* Sveta (f/e) shared that in the past she worked for a European company: *“I worked in their American branch, and our benefits were very different from the headquarters: in Italy, they have 28 days of paid vacation time, but we did not have it here. My present job provides no benefits at all.”* Most respondents agree that the lack of benefits is a systemic issue. The US is behind Russia and the European Union because it does not guarantee adequate benefits to American employees.

Aside from the advantages and disadvantages of the US employment, respondents talked about challenges they faced while job hunting. Six people, or 15% of the sample, admitted their economic and social status diminished in the US. The two main reasons include a poor

knowledge of English (Nikita, Margarita, Maria) and a non-citizen status (Chepe, Ivan, Aristarch). Nikita (m/ne) moved to the US because his wife won a Green Card. They immigrated shortly after their daughter was born and his wife is now a stay-at-home mother. Because Nikita does not speak English, his employment choices are very limited:

*“I work as a delivery guy in the US, and I would never work in a restaurant in Russia. I had a much better job there; I am not used to this type of work. It was the main reason I did not want to emigrate in the first place - I do not know the language, and I knew it would be impossible to find a decent job. Maybe down the road, when I learn the language, it will get better. They say it is easier here, but I did not notice it yet.”*

Nikita’s wife dreamt of living in America and Nikita wanted her dream to come true. However, the economic burden rests on his shoulders, and his main objective is to learn English as fast as possible so he can find a better job. He splits his time between his work and his family, so the only way he can learn English is through interaction with his co-workers. At the same time, Nikita admits that his dream job is to work for an American company in Russia. That way he can enjoy both an American salary and Russian benefits.

Margarita (f/ne) had always been very independent. In Russia, she had her own business and raised two children as a single mother. Even though she was very successful, she decided to move to the US after she met an American man online. She does not like a lot of things about her life in the US, mostly because she lost her independence due to the language barrier. Nonetheless, she decided to stay. Her husband owns a landscaping company and she works as an accountant for the family business: *“I had a lot of things in Russia including my apartment and a car. This move was mostly for my children. They were 16 and 20 at that time and if I waited for several more years, they would establish their lives in Russia and would not want to move.”*

Another obstacle to acquiring the desired job is citizenship status. Green card holders/residents cannot pursue careers in civil service. Aristarch (m/ne) worked as a fire-fighter in Russia. He planned to find a similar job in the US but realized he needed to be a citizen. Similarly, Ivan (m/ne) has an advanced degree in natural sciences, but he must obtain the US citizenship to be considered for a job in his field. He also feels the difficulties would not stop there: *“there is an attitude toward immigrants, especially Russians. With everything else equal, an average American company will hire an American and not an immigrant. To be fair, I think it is a worldwide trend.”* There are only two people in the sample, Ivan (m/ne) and John (m/e), who experienced employment discrimination. The rest of the respondents did not mention the issue.

For Maria (f/e) it proves to be very difficult to compensate for the loss of the economic and social status she once enjoyed: *“in Russia, I was a medical doctor. I cannot set my practice here because I need to go through complete recertification. It will take years and will be very expensive. Even if I wanted to go to school, I have difficulties gathering all the necessary documents. For example, they want my high school diploma, and I do not have it, so everything stops there.”*

While both expected and unforeseen challenges make their job-search difficult, many immigrants are optimistic and continue searching for their place in America. None of the respondents was disappointed or discouraged by their often bitter experiences including Abigail (f/e), who is self-employed. She applied many times for different jobs but was never invited even for an initial interview. Nevertheless, she is optimistic: *“I still believe in the American dream: if I get my education and work hard, I will be a millionaire.”*

### 5.1.2. Education

Twelve out of forty, or 30% of respondents, acquired their high education in the United States. Timur (m/e), Nick (m/e), and Katya (f/e) received their undergraduate and graduate degrees in different Florida universities. Marina (f/ne) got her Bachelor's, while John (m/e) and Bill (m/e) Master's degrees in the US. Semion (m/ne) and Chepe (f/ne) came to the United States for post-doctoral opportunities. Sessi (f/e) and Belka (f/ne) are currently in school. Finally, Rina (f/e), Yaroslava (f/e), and Yuri (m/e) received various educational certificates and licenses.

Opinions about American education are divided between the two extremes: some respondents praised it, while others criticized. Even those who did not experience an educational system first-hand had something to say about it. Yaroslava (f/e), Sessi (f/e), Belka (f/ne), and John (m/e) agreed that the US educational system is much better than the Russian one.

According to Yaroslava (f/e):

*“There is an assistance for those who want to do something with their lives. I attended a cosmetology school, and they paid additional attention to international students. The school assigned an American student to make me comfortable and answer any question I might have during my program.”*

Yaroslava was sure that such a ‘companion’ program is wide-spread throughout all American secondary education establishments. Belka (f/ne) gained a lot of respect for the educational system because *“if you want to study in the US, you can certainly find the right way to do it. There are many resources to help students in any way possible.”*

John (m/e) is very proud of his graduate degree. There is a very small percentage of immigrants who receive graduate degrees in the US, and he is one of them: *“In the US, education opens doors, and everything becomes possible. People talk to you differently, they respect you*

*more. Respect is everything.*” Tapolina (f/ne) also thinks that when it comes to education in the US *“there are opportunities for everyone, if you have a desire to learn, you will achieve it.”* Tapolina’s oldest daughter is in a nursing school. Based solely on her daughter’s experiences, Tapolina is sure that education in America is much better than in Russia.

On the other hand, some respondents consider American education to be inaccessible, expensive and, at the same time, insufficient and even mediocre. As Stephanie (f/e) put it:

*“I do not like that education is so expensive here. Not everyone, who deserves it, can afford it. People with potential might not have access to high education. The main reason for it is the fact that schools in different areas receive different funding. I do not think it is fair. All schools should receive the same funding and equal government attention, so all children receive the same education and a chance to go to college.”*

Sveta (f/e) thinks that Americans are only interested in majors that guarantee them high salaries after graduation. They follow the money and not their passions. At the same time, according to Maria (f/e): *“there is no education cult in the US. A lot of people are happy with vocational school education or an associate degree. Americans are not ambitious; they are not encouraged to push themselves and achieve more.”*

Jason (m/e), Semion (m/ne), and Pavel (m/ne) argued that curriculums in American schools and college are weak. During his post-doctoral studies, Semion (m/ne) felt superior to his American counterparts. Pavel (m/ne) pointed out that *“education in the US is very egocentric and weak. They teach only American history and only American geography. There is a periodic table of elements, but no one knows that it was named after its inventor – Dmitri Mendeleev.”*

When it comes to K-12 education, Korina (f/ne) likes school buses that pick up children in the morning and bring them back after their classes are over. She also appreciates safety in schools. At the same time: *“the school program is way too easy, I wish it was more challenging for children. Also, the US is not a good place to teach discipline – they give too many choices to little kids who are too young to have a good sense of judgment.”*

Kristina (f/e) does not have children yet, but she and her American husband agreed that their future children should go to elementary and middle school in Russia, because it is more structured, and come to the US for a high school and college education because they provide more choices and opportunities.

Overall, opinions about an American education are split. It is very interesting that people who did not receive any education in the US consider it to be, by a default, much better than the Russian alternative. Only one person – Stephanie (f/e) – criticized the cost of education. As for the rest of the respondents, who commented on the topic, they mostly addressed education quality and accessibility.

### 5.1.3. Healthcare

Every respondent in this study had something negative to say about the US healthcare system. The three most mentioned issues were the cost of healthcare, over-medication, and the lack of preventive medicine:

- Some respondents complained about the high costs of medical care and its accessibility. *“Healthcare in the US is the most pressing issue. It should be more affordable. It is inaccessible and expensive. We did not expect to come here and face our healthcare needs without an insurance”* (Nikita (m/ne)); *“Healthcare insurance is very expensive, and it is not clear what you are paying for”* (Chepe (f/ne)); *“the US healthcare is*

*expensive and less accessible than in Russia and Europe. People are afraid to go to a doctor and sometimes neglect first signs of illness”* (Nick (m/e)). High healthcare bills were one of the most popular answers on the question about difficulties and challenges immigrants faced after they moved to the US.

- On the issue of overmedication: *“I realized that people in America use lots of medications. They never get better, they just get addicted to more pills”* (Korina (f/ne)); *“Americans use too many medications which is both a cause and the effect of an aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical companies”* (Margarita (f/ne)). *“The average American is very sick. It is due to the poor diets and overmedication”* (Katya (f/e)). Respondents also pointed out that many kinds of medications are not accessible without a doctor’s prescription and you end up paying twice: for a doctor’s visit and your prescription medication.
- Several respondents commented on the lack of preventive care in the US. *“For some reason, there is no preventive medical care here. It is a cheaper and more effective option as opposed to treating a disease when it is already developed and has consequences”* (Margarita (f/ne)). *“In Russia healthcare is cheap because it is preventive before anything else. I am grateful I grew up in a country where preventive care was a staple”* (Maria (f/e)).

While the majority of respondents admits that American hospitals are equipped better, they are not more efficient compared to hospitals in Russia. In sum, healthcare issues was the most popular topic when asked about negative experiences. It is the most pressing for families with small children and the elderly. Marianna’s (f/ne) husband wanted to bring his grandmother to live with them, but they decided against it because she has type II diabetes and it would be

very expensive to care of her in the US. As she put it: *“you need to be very healthy to live in the US.”*

#### 5.1.4. The Welfare State

There is only one person in the sample who took advantage of the American welfare system. Sessi (f/e), who is a single mom, receives food stamps. She goes to college and works at a bar at night but does not earn enough to take care of her little son. Aleksandr (m/ne) plans to become a citizen to retire in the US. *“In Russia, my retirement would be too small, and in the US it will be much bigger, you can survive on it.”* Jason (m/e) pointed out that he feels more secure about his retirement in the US: *“Russian salaries are not stable and it is not clear what size retirement you will get, it was always one thing that bothered me when I lived in Russia.”*

Eight people, or 20% of respondents, criticized the American welfare system for being too generous. In Marianna’s (f/ne) opinion, the welfare system is very unbalanced: working people pay unfairly high taxes so the poor can live well. Andrei (m/ne), Chepe (f/ne), Lukeria (f/ne), Mariana (f/ne), and Elena (f/e) all agreed that American unemployment benefits are too significant and last for a long time. It discourages people to go back to work. Americans are not motivated to work because they can comfortably live on a welfare without lifting a finger.

Sveta (f/e) and Yaroslava (f/e) both argued that free healthcare and expansive welfare programs are detrimental to any state. Healthcare should not be free, but it has to be accessible and reasonably priced. The welfare state should exist to sustain people only for short periods of time like immediately after a job loss but limited to several months as opposed to several years.

#### 5.1.5. Infrastructure and services

*“One of the first things every immigrant has to deal with in America is to learn how to drive a car. I had never driven a vehicle before, so I had to learn very fast if I wanted to be self-*



sufficient” (Abigail (f/e)). The lack of public transportation was an initial temporary downturn for many respondents in the study: they did not expect to see so many cars and very few people walking on the streets. An average American city spans across a large geographical territory. One cannot simply walk to work or to a store from home. Having a mode of transportation is a must. With that said, most respondents appreciate the American transportation system for wide roads and a well-planned infrastructure. Traveling from city to city and state to state is fast, easy, and safe. Many respondents also commented on streets and public amenities in the US: *“I was impressed by everything: good roads and clean streets. Everything here is well-organized and comfortable. I like clean public toilets which are a big problem in Russia”* (Belka (f/ne)). *“In the US, infrastructure is very accommodating to people with disabilities and families with small children. There are toilets in every store and large parks with many attractions. You pay up front and do whatever you want all day. There is nothing like that in Russia”* (Marianna (f/ne)).

At first, Margarita (f/ne) could not understand many things about driving and parking in the US:

*“Americans stay in traffic even if they can use different ways through neighborhoods to save time. Also, we live next to the beach, and I usually leave my car in the grocery store parking lot and walk to the beach. Why would I pay \$8 for a beach parking if I can walk there? Americans pay without even considering other options. After living here for two years, however, I realized that if you follow the rules you have more order. If you pay for a beach parking, you will get clean functioning amenities on the beach. In Russia, people always look for ways to make things easier and cheaper. But when you follow the rules and pay small convenience fees, there are more opportunities for the state to provide services and to ensure order.”*

Such realizations make immigrants appreciate infrastructure and services provided for the American public. It also allows them to see how the system works and that the general public plays an important role. Several people had also commented on the American banking system. Sveta (f/e/) was very impressed with banking and insurance services in the US: *“If you get into an accident here, insurance will take care of it. Banking services are very convenient and stable; there are no banks that exist today and disappear tomorrow. They are way more developed compared to banks in Russia.”*

On the other hand, Stephanie (f/e) and Alisa (f/e) criticized American credit card system and usage:

*“The banking system is not logical here. For you to have a good credit score, you actually need to have a debt. If you have a debt and make minimum payments, they charge you some crazy interest. Either way, you pay more than you owe - I do not understand it”* Alisa (f/e). *“Here people rely on credit cards, and it is not wise. If you lose your job, you still have to make payments. In Russia, I never used credit cards. I simply did not buy things I could not afford”* Stephanie (f/e).

Overall, the American infrastructure was praised by everyone in the study for being convenient, user-friendly, and clean. With that said, many respondents clarified they talked specifically about Florida’s infrastructure. Some had never been outside of Florida and cannot speak of the US as a whole.

#### 5.1.6. How do they compare to other immigrants?

Economic integration of Russians in the sample is consistent with a general trend of recent Eastern European immigrants in the US. They tend to be very well educated: 69 percent of Eastern Europeans in the US have a college education and 22 percent possess advanced degrees

(Michalikova, 2017, p. 100). Among Eastern Europeans, there is another trend: females are better educated and more economically active than males. This particular gender gap is prevalent among Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian immigrant groups (Ibid., p. 105). In my sample, there are several female respondents who are or were breadwinners in their families (Yaroslava (f/e), Stephanie (f/e), Chepe (f/ne), Rina (f/e), Maria (f/e), and Margarita (f/ne)). All Eastern European immigrants have a hard time successfully transferring their skills and experiences into the American labor market (Ibid., p. 118). This is also true with the Soviet and post-Soviet Jewish immigrants in Israel (Gitelman, 1982; Isurin, 2011). Eastern Europeans often opt out for a low-pay physical labor in both the US and Western Europe despite having high education and professional credentials that could qualify them for white collar well-paid jobs (Michalikova, 2017, p. 120). As an example of this trend, Ivan (m/ne) joked about his job: “*I am a taxi driver with two Masters Degrees.*” At the same time, among Eastern Europeans, Russians have higher educational attainment and a higher likelihood of professionalization in the US, followed by Ukrainians and then Polish (Ibid., p. 110).

There is a certain continuity of expectations when it comes to the economic and social welfare systems in a host country. Respondents were very critical of American privatized and inaccessible healthcare. Similarly, Soviet immigrants to Israel disapproved of its state-sponsored healthcare system (Gitelman, 1982, p. 132). It could be an indicator that even after the collapse of the socialist system, Russians expect the state to provide healthcare services for them. Privatized medicine is not uncommon in contemporary Russia, but the majority of services can be received through state-funded clinics and hospitals.

## 5.2. Social integration

In this study, social integration is understood as interactions with American people in the following capacities: friends, colleagues, and romantic partners. The overall impression about Americans is very uniform: they are friendly, kind, attentive and always ready to help. At the same time, they lack substance and keep their distance.

### 5.2.1. American friends

Very few respondents have American friends. Bill (m/e) made some American friends in graduate school, but he does not keep in touch with them. He socializes mostly with Americans at work. He prefers to communicate with Americans as opposed to Russians because “*Americans are more rational and I feel more comfortable with them compared to my emotional Russian friends.*” Yuri (m/e) likes Americans because “*they respect others and do not try to force their opinions on you.*” Yana (f/e) argued that Americans are “*open-hearted and good*” and they are much kinder to each other than Russians.

On the other hand, nine people, or 22.5% of the study, insisted that there is no such thing as friendship in the US. At least not in a way it is perceived in Russia. For Russians, a friend is a part of the family. Americans distinguish between family and friends and prefer to socialize with two groups separately. Victoria (f/e), who is married to an American, admitted she has no American friends and here is why:

*“Americans are talkative and superficial. Slavic people are much deeper.*

*Americans are open and ready to help. They are unrestrained and aren't afraid to do what they think is right. They are ready to defend their points of view. At the same time, they are very presumptuous and prefer to rely only on themselves. It is very challenging to befriend an American. I do not have American friends, only acquaintances.”*

Sessi (f/e) and Elena (f/e) argued that Americans have a different mentality: *“in Russia, we have a different understanding of friendship. In the US, if someone tells you: ‘we need to catch up soon,’ and then you never do, it is normal. It would not be normal in Russia”* (Elena); *“Americans are not bad. I just do not like when they promise something and never follow through. There were several people who promised to help me to find a job, but nothing ever came out of it”* (Sessi). Valentin (m/e) described Americans as mundane and unmotivated: *“They are not interested in anything outside of their routines. Work, family, and religion are all they think about. Russians are very different - they are interested in all things tangible, intangible, and everything beyond this universe.”*

#### 5.2.2. American colleagues

Ethnic Russian immigrants perceive their American colleagues in different ways. When asked about his interactions at work, John (m/e) immediately stated: *“there are five topics you are not supposed to discuss with your officemates: politics, religion, personal health, sexual relations and I forgot the fifth.”* Expressing your opinions on different issues might be detrimental to your career. John does not share his personal opinions at work and tries to keep his distance in the office and occasional social gatherings. Marianna (f/ne) also tries to separate her work and social environments.

Just the opposite, Yuri (m/e), Yaroslava (f/e), and Nikita (m/ne) use work as a socializing agency. All three ask co-workers about different things including political preferences and opinions. All three find such interaction to be very educational. They learn a lot about the US through their colleagues. Olga (f/ne) and Marina (f/ne) do the same thing, but both make sure to agree with their American co-workers’ opinions for different reasons. Olga is afraid to lose her

job, and Marina does not want to stick out like a sore thumb – she tries to become an American and perceives her workplace as a learning environment.

### 5.2.3. American spouses

In my sample, there are eleven women married to American men and only one man who is dating an American woman – Timur (m/e). At the time of our interview, John (m/e) was divorcing his American wife. Table 5.2 summarizes respondents' romantic relationships.

**Table 5.2 Relationship status**

<b>Relationship type</b>			
Married to an American	Married to a long-term Russian-speaking immigrant	Married to a Russian, emigrated together	Single
Abigail (f/e)	Jason (m/e)&Marianna (f/ne)	Yuri (m/e)	Nick*(m/e)
Alisa (f/e)		Valentin (m/e)&Yana (f/e)	Bill (m/e)
Rina (f/e)	Ivan (m/ne)	Semion (m/ne)	Pavel (m/ne)
Katya (f/e)	Vladislav (m/ne)	Aristarch (m/ne)&Yaroslava (f/e)	Sessi (f/e)
Sveta (f/e)	Anna (f/ne)	Alexey (m/ne)	Maria (f/e)
Victoria (f/e)	Belka (f/ne)	Aleksandr (m/ne)&Tapolina (f/ne)	Alevtina (f/ne)
Stephanie (f/e)		Nikita (m/ne)	
Kristina (f/e)		Andrei (m/ne)&Lukeria (f/ne)	
Elena (f/e)		Marina (f/ne)	
Margarita (f/e)		Chepe** (f/ne)	
Olga (f/ne)		Korina**(f/ne)	
* dating a Russian-speaking immigrant			
** married to a Ukrainian immigrant			

When talking about their American husbands, all eleven women agreed that there are some cultural differences. Russians and Americans are raised in different cultural settings, and it is particularly visible when they live under one roof and raise children together. Victoria (f/e) met her husband in 2005 when she came to the US for a summer exchange program. She came back in 2007, and they got married. Today they are a happy family of five. Having a solid marriage and raising three children does not mean they had overcome their differences.

According to Victoria:

*“I tend to save more, and he is a spender; I am more thoughtful and sensitive, and he is superficial. I am hard-working, and he is a slacker sometimes. Those are the differences due to different upbringings, not cultures as much. My husband is a Republican, and we had similar religious views. For the most part, it was like I found my soulmate.”*

Abigail (f/e) met her husband online, they dated for three years before getting married in 2013: *“Except for the money questions, my husband and I do not have any differences. He views the family budget as a sum of equal inputs from a husband and a wife. I still expect him to make the majority of our payments like mortgage and the utilities. In Russia men usually pay for things like that.”*

Stephanie’s (f/e) husband expects her to do as much as he does. It bothers her sometimes because she does not mind him stepping in to help her: *“Russian men are more attentive compared to American men. For example, last time we were in Moscow, my husband and I both carried heavy bags. He was waiting for me down the stairs to a metro station when a young man stopped and offered to help me with my luggage while my husband just stood there waiting. He did not think about helping me to carry my luggage downstairs. It is a different mentality.”*

Alisa (f/e) shared that she is more straightforward compared to her husband and sometimes he perceives it as arrogance. According to Elena (f/e), her husband is individualistic and keeps it to himself while she is more communicable and makes friends easily. For Margarita (f/ne), in the beginning, it was difficult to understand her husband’s reasoning:

*“For my husband, it is important to follow the rules while I sometimes find them unnecessary and easy to avoid. In general, we were raised in different conditions, so we*

*are different. At the same time, we have some things in common. Otherwise, we would not be married.”*

Sveta (f/e), whose husband is Hispanic, is a responsible one in their marriage:

*“If I cannot afford something, I will not get it even if I really want it while he has no problem with having debt. Unlike him, I cannot come to a birthday party without a gift, and I cannot invite people over and ask them to bring their own drinks. Nevertheless, I chose to marry a Hispanic guy because I feel their family values are closer to ours.”*

Kristina (f/e) met her husband in Russia: *“before we met, my husband lived in Russia for seven years. He is very ‘Russified.’ He thinks that there are more freedoms in Russia because you can go outside and do what you want at any time. He likes BBQing, and he likes that in Russia you can go to a park and cook your meal. In the US you can do it only in certain areas. Since we came to the US, I started to see differences in our opinions; it was not like that when we were in Russia.”*

Russian men do not seem to be as open to cross-cultural marriages. This tendency is not unique to my sample. There are many Russian men (and some are very famous) who live in the US but have Russian spouses. The most famous examples include hockey players Pavel Bure (The New York Rangers, retired) and Alexander Ovechkin (Washington Capitals). The former married a Russian model Alina Khasanova in 2009, and the latter married the daughter of a famous Russian actress, Vera Glagoleva, in July 2017. Furthermore, Tampa’s very own Tampa Bay Lightning players Andrei Vasilevsky and Nikita Kucherov are both married to fellow Russians.



Why do Russian men prefer to marry Russian or Russian-speaking women? I received a variety of explanations from my male respondents. For example, John (m/e), who is divorcing his American wife, argued that American women act like consumers when they are in romantic relations:

*“They think a man has to provide for them. My wife did not want to do anything. She wanted to sit at home and do nothing but shopping. She did not even want to have children. Russian women are loyal - they would never betray. American women are individualistic and look out only for themselves.”*

Bill (m/e), who is currently single, admits he would not mind dating an American girl, but *“it would be easier to date a Russian because we have the same mentality. I think it is about cartoons you are watching while growing up. Our cartoons are like social codes; they are part of our upbringing. It is easier to get along with someone who grew up watching the same cartoons.”* While this is an interesting theory, it is not plausible since Russian women often marry American men despite their exposure to different types of cartoons.

Timur (m/e) is dating an American woman but admits he would probably understand a Russian girl better. *“Russian guys tend to marry either Russian or foreign girls, but not American. One possible reason is that there is a selection bias, partly it is cultural: they have different priorities.”*

Andrei (m/ne) who emigrated from Russia together with his wife, Lukeria (f/ne), was very categorical about cross-cultural marriages:

*“In any case, a marriage between a Russian and an American would not work. Even if there are a lot of Russian women who are married to Americans, their marriages*

*will not last: sooner or later they will end up in a divorce. You cannot escape differences in mentalities. They will bury any marriage, no matter how strong it might seem!”*

Overall, Russian women acknowledge there are some cultural differences between them and their American husbands, but it does not stop them from having good marriages. They tend to overlook the differences and concentrate on something they have in common. Men seem to be more intolerant of the idea and unwilling to look past cultural differences.

#### 5.2.4. How do they compare to other immigrants?

There isn't a lot of information about the social interactions of recent Eastern European immigrants. Michalikova mentioned relations with neighbors which are typically weak between Eastern Europeans and Americans. “Immigrants from Poland, Russia, and Ukraine tended to talk to their neighbors ‘few times a week,’ but they were unlikely to do favors for neighbors” (Michalikova, 2017, p. 161). Eastern European males are less likely to interact with their American neighbors than females. Married couples tend to interact more often with their immediate surroundings (Ibid., pp. 162-165). Gitelman talked about social experiences of Soviet Jews in Israel where they struggled to befriend locals claiming that Israelis do not like close contacts or friendships (Gitelman, 1982, p. 141). Gitelman theorized that compared to American Jewish immigrants, their Soviet counterparts were not as affluent in Hebrew and had lower social statuses. These characteristics in addition to having higher expectations of their social lives in immigration prevented Soviet immigrants from developing stronger social bonds with the natives (Ibid., p. 152). Russian Jewish immigrants in the US, according to Morawska, were absorbed into local American Jewish communities. Their settlements patterns and socialization processes were predetermined by the assisting ethnic agencies. Recognizing themselves as members of

American Jewish ethnic groups was a matter of prestige since those are highly successful and recognizable social groups (Morawska, 2004, p. 1389; E. T. Morawska, 2009, p. 132).

The overall impression is that immigrants from Eastern Europe (present and past) have limited social circles that include either their own group or larger ethnic community (American Jews). In the case of ethnic-Russians in Central and South Florida, their social circles predominantly consist of Russian-speaking immigrants from former Soviet republics. Few of them had mentioned difficulties befriending Americans due to cultural differences and interests. Inability to venture outside of ethnic social circles might indicate a certain inferiority complex typical for immigrant groups. In case of Eastern Europeans, they were economically and culturally isolated by the Iron Curtain for 70 years. For generations, they existed in their own social and economic realities which affected their perceptions of societal norms. This same isolation led to weak or nonexistent social capital in the US compared to other immigrants groups. Also, they tend to be too humble and lack self-confidence (Michalikova, 2017, p. 120).

### *5.3. Immigrants' identification and satisfaction*

Immigrant identification can be analyzed from different angles. For example, Ludmila Isurin addressed immigrants' identification through their sense of belonging and the way they talked about home and which country they called 'home' (Isurin, 2011, p. 168). In my study, each respondent was asked to identify as a Russian or an American. Table 5.3 shows the summary of their replies.

**Table 5.3 Immigrants Identification**

<b>What is your identity?</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
I will always be Russian	John (m/e) Bill (m/e) Valentin (m/e) Ivan (m/e) Semion (m/ne) Aristarch (m/ne) Alexey (m/ne) Vlad (m/ne) Aleksandr (m/ne) Pavel (m/ne) Nikita (m/ne) Yaroslava (f/e) Sveta (f/e) Katya (f/e) Victoria (f/e) Maria (f/e) Belka (f/ne) Marianna (f/ne) Chepe (f/ne) Lukeria (f/ne) Olga (f/ne) Tapolina (f/ne) Margarita (f/ne)
I am an American	Yuri (m/e)
I am both a Russian and an American	Jason (m/e) Andrei (m/ne) Stephanie (f/e) Rina (f/e) Anna (f/ne)
Already not a Russian, but not yet an American	Abigail (f/e) Alisa (f/e) Kristina (f/e) Sessi (f/e) Marina (f/ne) Alevtina (f/ne)
I am cosmopolitan	Timur (m/e) Nick (m/e)
I am just a human	Yana (f/e)
I am a child of God	Elena (f/e)
I consider myself a Ukrainian	Korina (f/ne)

Twenty-three respondents (eleven men and twelve women), or 57.5 percent of the sample, identify themselves as Russians. Yuri (m/e) is the only respondent who identified

himself as an American. Identifying as both or neither depends on citizenship status. The most original group consists of respondents who identify with either a global society (Timur and Nick), a biological species (Yana), or a religious belief (Elena). All four are fully integrated into American society and, as all of them admitted, had never experienced difficulties fitting in. They speak English and work for American companies. Timur and Nick received their college education in the US. Nevertheless, they do not attach themselves to a particular country. It could be the evidence of globalization that makes borders transparent and blurs cultural and social differences among people from different continents.

While identifying as Russians, John (m/e), Yaroslava (f/e), and Sveta (f/e) admitted they had Americanized in some aspects:

*“After 12 years in America, I feel partially Americanized. Just like Americans, I do not like to listen to people’s problems, and I like to interact with people of my level”* (John); *“I am Americanized in some aspects: I do not put on heels and makeup for a shopping trip to Walmart. When I visited my mom in Russia, she refused to go to a market with me unless I apply some mascara and put on a nice dress”* (Sveta); *“I am Americanized. I will not be able to live in Russia anymore. I like my lifestyle here”* (Yaroslava).

For Abigail (f/e), who identified as neither Russian nor American, Americanization is a path that leads to a new identity: *“Americans smile and have small talk with strangers. It was something I had to get used to, but now I do the same thing.”*

According to the overall responses, nineteen respondents, or 47.5 percent of the sample, are satisfied with their lives in the United States. Table 5.4 breaks down the group of satisfied immigrants by gender and language skills.

**Table 5.4 Satisfied immigrants by groups**

<b>Respondents with a high satisfaction level</b>			
Males, speak English	Males, no English	Females, speak English	Females, no English
Timur	Aleksandr	Abigail	Margarita
Yuri		Alisa	Anna
Nick		Sessi	Marina
John		Rina	
Bill		Victoria	
Jason		Elena	
Valentin		Yana	
		Katya	

All men who speak English are satisfied with their lives in the US. In comparison, only one out of nine men who do not speak English is satisfied. A similar tendency can be seen with the ladies: over half of those who speak English are happy. Three out of eleven women who do not speak English are glad they moved to the US. Those who speak English are more comfortable and feel more accomplished in their new country.

#### *5.4. Summary*

This chapter covered economic and social aspects of immigration. Respondents identified both strengths and weaknesses of employment, education, healthcare, and welfare in the United States. They also talked about the challenges every immigrant faces after coming to America. The most common problems were to find employment and get used to expensive healthcare. While talking about shortcomings of life in the US, respondents did not make any parallels between their criticisms and those of any American political institution such as political parties. On a positive note, the American infrastructure and the service sector is much more developed (compare to the one in Russia) and designed with people's comfort in mind. Russian immigrants

are very appreciative of it. Only few respondents have American friends, and many agree that Russians and Americans perceive friendship differently: Russians consider friends as parts of their families, while Americans separate friends and family members. Russian women are more open to marrying Americans. Russian men prefer to marry Russian or Russian-speaking women only.

Despite living in the US, most of the sample (57.5%) identifies as Russians with a small number of respondents admitting to their Americanization. The overall immigration satisfaction rate is 47.5%. Respondents who speak English tend to be more satisfied with their lives in the US.

## Chapter 6 Theoretical Modeling

This chapter answers the research question #1: What political socialization agencies are the most popular and the most effective with Russian immigrants? Based on my data, I developed a model of political resocialization which consists of general factors (legal status and output structures), triggers (language proficiency, spousal support, and parenting), and main political socialization agencies (ESOL classes, a spouse, volunteering, and the church). Each of the components plays a certain role in the process of political socialization. The model incorporates the most common triggers and agencies mentioned by respondents.

### *6.1. A brief note on a Grounded Theory-building*

A qualitative inquiry, while it deals with a small number of cases, attempts to shed the light on big social phenomena. The main priority of a qualitative approach is to understand in detail unique social patterns as opposed to generalizable ones. Qualitative “theories do not suggest how to explain this or that phenomenon, but they provide different viewpoints to social reality” (Alasuutari, 1996, p. 372). The constructivist grounded theory analyzes data through interaction. It is a process where all the generalizations are partial, conditional, and situated in time and space. It acknowledges the subjective nature of interaction and data analysis. “The theory depends on the researcher’s view; it does not and cannot stand outside of it” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 239). Constructivist grounded theories serve as frames to look at the reality but do not claim to have a power of generalization. “We build from specifics and move to general statements while situating them in the context of their construction” (Ibid., p. 232). Such an

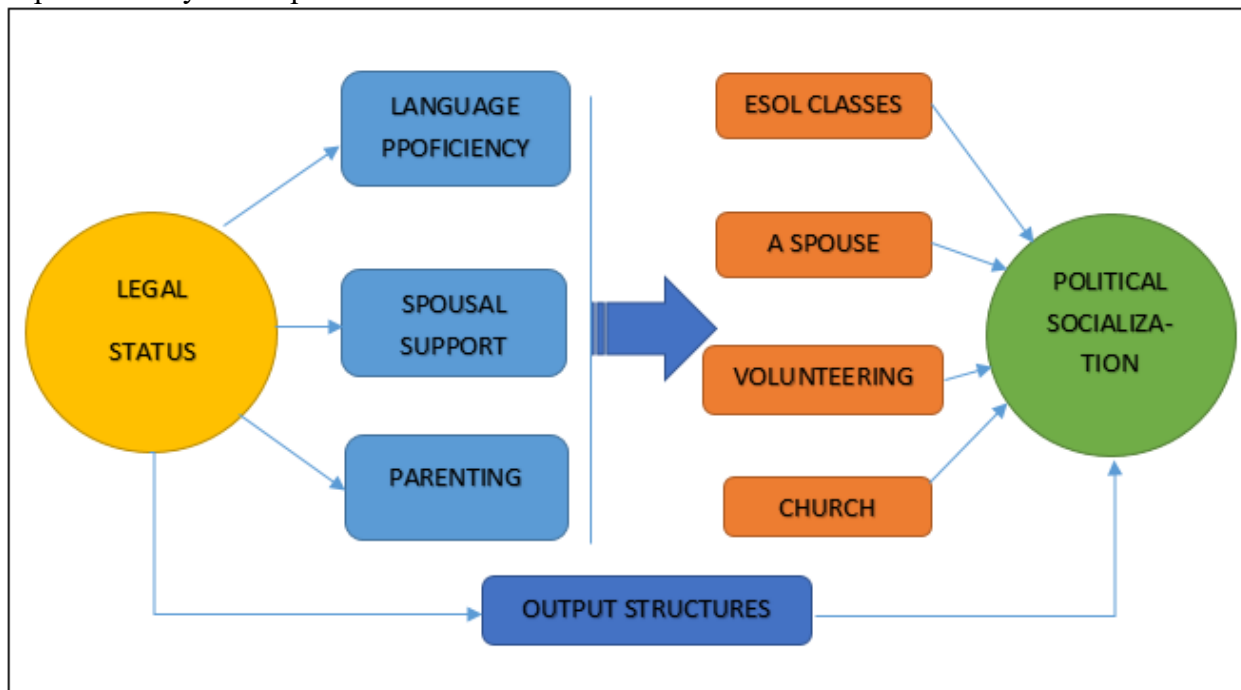


approach leaves some room for interpretation and considers researcher's involvement and judgment.

### 6.2. *A theoretical model of the political re-socialization process*

According to Michael Riccards, there are three kinds of learning: situational, social, and symbolic. The latter one is exclusive to humans and “characterized by the development, aggregation, and manipulation of symbolic forms and representations. It is at this stage that knowledge is codified and passed on; the foundation of culture itself is laid down”. (Riccards, 1973, p. 7). Political socialization is an example of a symbolic learning. For this study, I used Riccards’s definition of political socialization: “the inculcation in the uninitiated of those attitudes, beliefs, and values which explain the political world” (Ibid., p. 8).

Based on the obtained data, I developed the following theoretical model (see Figure 6.1.). It consists of a starting point, output structures, triggers, and agencies of political socialization experienced by the respondents.



**Figure 6.1** A visual model of political resocialization of first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants in the United States.

It is a process model. For everyone in my sample, permanent legal status in the US was the initial step of their political socialization. It does not mean that other forms of adaptation were stalled while securing a permanent residence. Just the reverse: an economic and social integration came first as looking for a job and making necessary connections were prioritized over developing political opinions.

Establishing a permanent legal status does not automatically lead to the development of political interests either. Data shows that certain triggers can ignite an interest in politics. I have identified three such triggers: language proficiency (makes it more likely to get exposure to a political discourse), spousal support (discussions with and encouragements from a spouse), and parenting (the desire to learn as much as possible about the host country for their children's sake). These triggers encourage immigrants to search for sources and outlets of knowledge which, in turn, serve as political socialization agencies.

The most popular and effective political socialization agencies identified in this study are ESOL classes, a spouse, volunteering opportunities, and churches. Finally, there is an additional process of political socialization – exposure to bureaucratic institutions and political system (output structures). It starts upon arrival to the United States and never stops. Every respondent is familiar with a variety of output structures regardless of their exposure to other socialization agencies. In this theoretical model, I propose it as a parallel process. Also, political socialization does not occur in isolation from other forms of immigrant adaptation. Some or all of the mentioned agencies are simultaneously used for cultural, social, and economic adaptations.

In the following subsections, I will elaborate on the elements of the proposed theoretical model, starting with the legal status.

### 6.3. Legal status

A legal permanent status in the United States serves as the starting point of an immigrant political socialization process. In chapter 4 I classified respondents based on their modes of entry to the US. Those who arrived to rejoin their families or after winning a Green Card did not have to worry about the legality and duration of their stay. Their adaptation and integration went smoothly because permanent status makes them feel secure about their future. As for the rest of the respondents, obtaining a legal status became one of the main priorities. The sense of uncertainty that accompanies the process prevents immigrants from political socialization because, compared to economic and social adaptations, it is not an immediate need. Only after gaining all appropriate documents, respondents felt they could expand their knowledge about the US political system and develop their own political opinions. With that said, all respondents in this study entered the United States legally. Some overstayed their visas but, eventually, all of them acquired a legal status (Green Card and, eventually, citizenship).

Consider the following responses. John (m/e) came to the US as a tourist but intended to stay:

*“I arrived in New York, and my friend took me to a Russian diner where she worked. It was a shock! It was located on a dark street with broken cars on sidewalks and no street lights. Some houses had no doors and others had nailed windows and doors. The neighborhood looked rough. The diner itself was dirty and foggy. My friend was in the US illegally, and it was good enough for her. That day I realized my dire situation – I was in a foreign country with no language and no prospects. I started panicking and thinking about what to do next.”*

John later was admitted to a college but had to work hard to keep his grades up as it was the only way to maintain a legal status. He was under constant pressure and had no time to think

about anything else. John received his Master's in Finance and is now a respected specialist in his field. He is very proud of his achievements. It also seems that he spent a lot of effort to reassure himself he deserves to be in the US and that he belongs here. After he obtained his permanent resident status, he relaxed and started paying more attention to his environment including a political discourse.

Sveta (f/e) and Anna (f/ne) both admitted being afraid to do simple things after they overstayed their non-immigrant visas. Sveta came to the US on a J-1 visa for the Work and Travel program and stayed after her visa expired: *"I was afraid of many things, some of them were ordinary: calling an insurance company or going to a bank. Thinking about it now: what was I afraid of?"* Anna had a tourist visa which she used to visit her boyfriend in the US. When she got pregnant, she stayed, got married, and eventually applied for a Green Card. She had a feeling she did not do it the right way: *"I was afraid of everything for six months. I was afraid to ask things in stores, getting lost and needing to ask someone for directions."* Fear of being caught after they overstayed their visas prevented Sveta and Anna from learning about their new economic, social, and political surroundings. Both admitted they did not feel it was their place to seek information and form opinions about American politics.

Katya (f/e) spent a lot of time and effort acquiring her working visa after she graduated from college: *"I wanted to stay in the US. I took OPT [Optional Training year] twice. I tried to get an H1-B visa, but it is very difficult to apply for a work visa. Moreover, my position was not specialized enough. Later I received a P1 visa, which was easier to get."* She was so busy with visa applications that she did not pay any attention to the 2012 US Presidential elections.

Marina (f/ne) stayed in the country illegally for over a year:

*“My boyfriend and I came here as students on J-1 visas... We decided to stay for one year. After a year had passed, we were surrounded by people who lived in the US illegally for ten-fifteen years. I was afraid we would get stuck among those people. We applied for a Green Card, and I won. We had to go back to Russia to claim it. We were terrified to leave our house and a car. The trip was unavoidable, and we spent seven grueling months not knowing what was going to happen to us.”*

Sveta, Anna, Katya, and Marina all mentioned that they did not think about anything long-term before becoming permanent residents. They tried not to make plans or get attached to anything. To politically socialize in a host society, they needed to belong. These respondents did not feel it was their place to get involved in the American political process.

On the other hand, people who came to the US as permanent residents did not experience such insecurities. Nick (m/e) had no difficulties and felt at home right away: *“I followed my parents here. Initially, I wanted to go to college in the US, get my degree, and return to Russia. I was able to blend in right away. I quickly made friends and even became a math tutor during my first year of college.”* Pavel (m/ne) speaks very poor English, but it was never a concern. Pavel is very critical of the US and, based on my observations during the interview; he does not see a point in compromising his principles to fit in. Pavel received his Green Card at the airport upon arrival to the US and had never experienced any insecurities. He critically assesses the US and its political system and shares his opinions without feeling inadequate. Alisa (f/e) came to the US after she got married to an American man and she feels the same way. She did not know English very well but felt no pressure to study it: *“I am still working on it, but not obsessing.”* She feels secure and free to do things that interest her. Almost immediately, Alisa developed a wide network of friends that included both Americans (through her husband) and Russian-speakers.

Even though she is never eager to initiate a political dispute, she can participate in a discussion without feeling out of place.

Having a permanent legal status in the US does not automatically mean that an immigrant is more inclined to engage in his/her host society politically. It simply puts them into a more appropriate position to do so. The sense of belonging and acceptance is important to everyone in the sample. Yaroslava (f/e), a Green Card holder, thinks it is not appropriate for immigrants to have an opinion about American politics unless they lived in the US for a long period: *“As immigrants, we need to concentrate on our children and their future. I do not think immigrants should have an opinion about something they did not experience or know little about.”* Yaroslava considers political participation as a privilege that one can gain only after finishing economic and social integration into the US society and gaining citizenship.

Legal status is an important foundation of the political socialization process. Political socialization might not start at all without it. For example, Vlad (m/ne) is in the process of getting his Green Card, but he wants to apply for citizenship as soon as he is eligible: *“I want to apply for the US citizenship because a Green Card can be revoked, I know many examples.”* It is evident that respondents need to feel secure about their status in the US. With the sense of security comes curiosity about different aspects of the host society, including politics.

#### *6.4. Political socialization triggers*

The next three blocks in Figure 6.1. (‘English Proficiency,’ ‘Spousal Support,’ and ‘Parenting’) act as triggers of political socialization. They are not agencies themselves. Instead, they serve as helpful, encouraging and sometimes, pressing conditions to start socializing politically.

#### 6.4.1. English language proficiency

Knowing the language makes it much easier to get familiar with a host environment.

Consider Aristarch (m/ne) and Yaroslava (f/e), a married couple. They moved to the US in 2011 after winning in the Green Card lottery. Aristarch does not speak English and feels very uncomfortable: *“I have a very limited circle of people I talk to – only Russian speakers. It is very difficult to communicate with others. Immigrants who speak English sometimes make fun of me. I feel isolated precisely because I cannot communicate freely with everyone. For example, I cannot go to a bank and properly explain what I need.”* Aristarch is very knowledgeable about Russian politics. He was born in Grozny and has a strong, educated opinion about the two Chechen wars. He shared his thoughts about Russia’s political and economic situation, emphasizing that the 2008 financial crisis became the main reason to emigrate from Russia. In the US though, Aristarch is a stay-at-home dad and depends on his wife for everything. His world had considerably shrunk as he has no exposure to economic, social, or political aspects of his environment. He stated several times during our interview that he has no interest in anything but his family.

Yaroslava (f/e), on the other hand, is a very busy esthetician with jobs in several beauty spas. She is out most of the day while Aristarch is at home with their small children. Yaroslava and Aristarch talk about their life in the US but come to different conclusions: *“we have different social circles – he communicates with Russians, and I interact mostly with Americans. I have a better understanding of the political process in the US.”* Yaroslava acts as the head of the household and deals with bureaucratic agencies, utility bills, insurances, etc. She has a lot of constructive criticism for the US social and administrative systems:

*“It is a country of many opportunities, but many things need to be fixed like unemployment security and maternal benefits. There are no public daycare centers. There is no incentive to work because it will be probably cheaper for me to stay at home caring for my children. People who work in bureaucratic institutions are not very smart – they do not even know the state law properly.”*

Aristarch did not offer any criticism: *“I only have good things to say about this country: it gives you an opportunity, all you need to do is take it.”* Aristarch does not speak English and suffers from occasional harassment because of it. Nevertheless, he thinks that his life in the US is better and more secure than in Russia. He is hopeful there are plenty of opportunities for him. His American dream did not shutter. He has no exposure to any political socialization agencies. As follows, he still operates with preconceived impressions of the US. His description of America remains consistent with the one he had before coming to the US. Yaroslava, on the other hand, told me that not everything she imagined she saw in real life. Aristarch and Yaroslava evaluate their common American life based on daily interactions, and they paint two very different pictures of America.

If an immigrant does not know the language of a host society, it becomes one of the main obstacles to his or her comfort level and, especially, to his/her political socialization. Knowing the language of the host society is crucial when attempting to learn about the political environment with its many nuances. Those who do not speak English either become more isolated or suffer from ill-conceived jokes and harassment.

On average, 85 percent of new Eastern European immigrants have some knowledge of English. Eastern European women are more proficient in English compared to their male counterparts (Michalikova, 2017, p. 63). Among the three largest Eastern European groups of



immigrants (Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian), Russian immigrants are the most proficient in English, while Ukrainians are more inclined to use their native language (Ibid., p. 89).

#### 6.4.2. A Spousal Support

More than half of women (13 out of 24) in my sample came to the US because they got married. Several women stated their husbands are very supportive and encouraging when it comes to political adaptation in the US. Rina (f/e) is very happy in her marriage, her husband makes her feel safe and encourages her in every way.

*“My husband is the best thing that ever happened to me. He pushes my limits, he challenges me but never criticizes. I spoke very elementary English when I came, and he was very patient with me at first. After some time had passed, he started encouraging me to do little things like answering our house phone by myself. Thanks to his encouragement, I started learning about American politics. I was very curious, and he was always very patient with all my questions. He explained to me about everything: from American state architecture to bi-partisanship.”*

Rina developed an interest in American history and politics because of her husband’s encouragement. Similarly, Stephanie (f/e) said that her husband is always willing to have a political discussion but had never imposed his opinions on her: *“My political opinions had just recently formed when I learned the difference between Republicans and Democrats. My husband explained the difference between them only when I asked. We have different opinions about politics in Russia, and in the US, we like to discuss it, but we never argue.”* Stephanie’s husband helped her to make sense of American politics without imposing his views. She emphasized that she formed her own opinion with his help and encouragement.

Olga (f/ne) and Marianna (f/ne) are examples of an opposite situation. Both know little about American politics and both mentioned that their husbands do not talk about politics at all. Olga shared: *“we talk about international developments and how it affects relations between the US and Russia. My husband likes Putin, and we agree there. He watches news about presidential elections, but he does not share it with me, and I do not ask, it is not interesting to me.”* Marianna stated that her husband is apolitical: *“I am not sure about his political party affiliation, we do not talk about it. We usually do not talk about politics. We discussed some of the developments between Ukraine and Russia in 2014, but it did not last. I am not even sure what he currently thinks about Russia.”*

Olga’s husband is an American and Marianna’s husband emigrated from Russia in the early 2000s. Both women do not interact with Americans because they do not speak English very well. While Rina (f/e) and Stephanie (f/e) developed opinions about American politics, Olga and Marianna had no knowledge of the US political system and did not express any interest in its political process. Part of it could be attributed to their personalities, but some of it depends on their surroundings, including their husbands. Olga’s husband does not share his thoughts about politics and Marianna’s husband is not interested in politics altogether. All four women stated that they spend most of their time with their husbands. A political learning for Rina (f/e) and Stephanie (f/e) started with their husbands’ encouragement. Olga (f/ne) and Marianna (f/ne) lacked such encouragement, and it affected their interest in and knowledge about American politics. Spousal support is a crucial trigger that can inspire an immigrant to learn more about politics.

Michalikova indicated that Eastern European women are more eager to naturalize in the United States if they are married to Americans: “having a spouse and children multiplies the

avenues for contact with American society” (Michalikova, 2017, p. 190). Being married to an American-born individual exposes an immigrant to a new social circle which can also trigger interest in politics if those social circles are politically active or hold strong political opinions.

#### 6.4.3. Parenting

Being a parent is a very challenging task. Being an immigrant parent adds some extra concerns. Parenting serves as a trigger to encourage immigrants to adapt and learn as much as they can about their new home. Several respondents in my sample have small children. Aristarch (m/ne) and Yaroslava (f/e) have a son who was born in Russia and a daughter born in the US. Aristarch mentioned that even though he does not feel comfortable in the US, he intends to stay for his family’s sake: *“I want to stay here and apply for citizenship because my children will have a better future in the US.”* He tries to do his best to provide for his family. Recently, he created his contracting firm and even asked some Americans to help make his company more appealing. *“They helped me to pick my company’s name and gave some tips on the nuances of business in Florida, and on how Americans process information and their preferences when it comes to hiring a contractor.”* Aristarch tries to provide for his family and learn about Americans and their preferences. It is an effort that he would probably not make if he did not have children. Being a parent forces you to have long-term plans that include learning as much as possible about your surroundings.

Nikita (m/ne) is in a very similar situation: his wife won a Green Card, and they moved to the US. He does not speak English, but he is the only provider in his family: *“between my wife and I, we have to take care of our child, she does not go to a daycare, so someone has to stay at home with her.”* Nikita delivers pizzas. The restaurant he works at is his only socialization agency. Talking to people at work helped him to get used to the language. Now it limits him and

serves as a ceiling for his growth. *“Maybe in the future, it will get a better job, I just need to learn the language.”* Nikita is under pressure to provide for his family. If he is not working, he spends time with his daughter; there is no time for anything else. He tries his best to learn the language so he can be a more eloquent parent and a good example for his daughter. Among other things, Nikita tried to talk to his co-workers about politics, especially ahead of the 2016 Presidential elections, but no one is interested in politics enough to give him any input.

Sessi (f/e) is a single mom. She came to the US to reunite with her parents. She has two younger siblings. Sessi was pregnant when she emigrated from Russia. *“My child was born here. I have some assistance from the government. I save a lot of money on his clothes; I get food stamps, I get financial aid to go to school.”* Sessi tries to be a good mother and provide for her child, she goes to college and works at a bar at nights. *“I want to concentrate on my studies and my English – I want to speak on the academic level so I would not feel like a stupid idiot. I started reaching out to people outside of a usual bar environment. I read many books, and I dive into the language and culture deeper and deeper.”* Sessi does it for two reasons – to provide for her son and immerse into American life. Her son is an American. As he grows up, he will get more exposure outside of his family, Sessi wants to make sure she could relate to her son as he grows older. *“I look at my son who was born here, my sister who came here at the age of six, and my brother who was only two years old upon arrival – they are all different. I think exposure to American values and mentality manifests in their personalities. The younger you were when you moved to the US, the less visible are your differences from the American kids.”* Sessi wants to learn as much as she can about the United States, including its political structure and process. She entered a college, and it is her main agency of political socialization. She also befriended

two Americans who are very savvy in American politics. It is obvious Sessi is under a lot of pressure to become an American herself because of her American child.

Marina (f/ne) has two children; both were born in the US. She believes it is easier to provide for a family in the US because of its high living standards. When our conversation took place, she was awaiting her citizenship interview. She considers the US her home: *“my children will live here, and I want to be next to them and, in time, next to my grandchildren.”* Marina’s children are her greatest motivation to integrate into American society so she could be the person to guide her children through their lives. She wants to know as much as possible about the US, including its economic and political systems, to be able to explain it all to her children as they grow.

Parenting seems to be a powerful stimulus for immigrant parents to learn the language and to socialize. The two main reasons are: to provide for their children and to be able to relate to them as they grow older - to be an organic part of their social and civic environments.

#### *6.5. Political socialization agencies*

So far, we’ve discussed the conditions that either make it easy and comfortable or force you to politically socialize in a host society. According to my findings, legal status is a starting point to a successful political socialization. English language proficiency, a supportive spouse, and parenting are all triggers that encourage an immigrant to actively pursue political socialization. What are the most effective agencies of political socialization? In my sample, I found four agencies that helped multiple respondents to learn about and start participating in the political process in the United States. These agencies are ‘ESOL classes,’ ‘a spouse,’ ‘volunteering in public organizations,’ and ‘an English-speaking church.’

#### 6.5.1. ESOL classes

The Hillsborough County Public Schools website provides the following description of the ESOL class: “This course is for adult students whose first language is not English. English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes are designed to teach students to listen, speak, read and write in English, and life skills. The goal is to prepare students to use English in their everyday lives. Also, this course supports and directs adult students toward career pathways that can lead to technical careers, colleges, and universities.”<sup>18</sup> An ESOL class is an affordable option to learn English, meet other people, and get exposure to American culture and history. Ten respondents, or 25% of the sample, took ESOL classes at least for one semester: Nikita (m/ne), Aleksandr (m/ne), Pavel (m/ne), Ivan (m/ne), Rina (f/e), Maria (f/e), Anna (f/ne), Margarita (f/ne), Belka (f/ne), and Marina (f/ne). A considerable learning success in a class depended on time availability and a teacher. For example, Aleksandr (m/ne) went only a few times – he did not like how his class was organized. Rina (f/e) and Margarita (f/ne) both took multiple semesters with different teachers until they found one they appreciated the most. At first, Margarita took ESOL classes to learn English, but she gained much more from it:

*“For the past two years, I was going to school to learn the language. I was lucky to get a very good teacher who taught us a lot about American history and holidays. Today I know a lot about the United States, and I feel proud to live in such a great country. I am proud of the American history. I admire the Founding Fathers who were able to organize such a great country in a short period.”*

ESOL classes provided a lot of information about American history and political structure. For Margarita, it was a perfect combination of a language and civic education. It

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<sup>18</sup> [Http://www2.sdhc.k12.fl.us/lynx](http://www2.sdhc.k12.fl.us/lynx)

became her most prominent political socialization agency. If she were to learn English any other way, she would not be as proud and grateful for the US political structure.

Pavel (m/ne) took ESOL classes for a year and a half. He admitted that sometimes he was overwhelmed with the diversity in classrooms:

*“My classmates were of different ages and nationalities. Some of them did not make any sense, and I felt like an expert of English language compared to them. I liked the ‘culture days’ when we all had to share something of our own and discuss the American culture altogether. It helped me to get comfortable with the language and use it without hesitation.”*

Classroom diversity exposes students to American heterogeneity and ethnic composition. After experiencing ethnic and national diversity in ESOL classrooms, Pavel realized that the US is a very complex and multicultural country. It prompted his interest in public policies concerning cross-ethnic interactions on local and state levels.

Rina (f/e) came to the US with very elementary English. Today she speaks well thanks to her husband’s support and ESOL classes.

*“I took ESOL classes for two years, went to three different schools and was able to compare several teachers. Living in the US without knowing English was not an option for me. I started to understand the American political system thanks to ESOL classes. We had classes that talked specifically about the structure of the American government – they prepared people for citizenship tests. Every time there was a national holiday, we had discussions about it. It allowed me to compare American and Russian systems. I learned about important parts of American history. I dealt with some immigrants from*

*Odessa, and I had a hard time understanding why they do not want to familiarize themselves with America. ESOL classes are such a convenient way to do it.”*

ESOL classes improved Rina’s language skills, provided information about the American political system and civil society, and encouraged to get a business coach license.

Belka (f/ne) attended ESOL classes as well. After completing several semesters, she “gained a lot of respect for the American educational system. There are so many resources to help a student in any way possible.” ESOL classes encouraged Belka to enter a nursing school. She also became aware of multiple civil opportunities like volunteering at her local City Hall.

ESOL class is one of the most accessible socialization agencies, and people who took advantage of them learn not only how to speak English but also about American history, geography, culture, and its governmental structure. The idea and mechanism of ESOL classes are similar to those of the Na’aleh project implemented in Israel in the 1990s during the second big wave of immigration from the Former Soviet Union. ESOL education could be considered a simplified version of Na’aleh project that combined “ideological mandate as a national project of the absorption of newcomers, along with its ‘therapeutic policy of absorption’ intended to grant a sense of belonging, identity backing and support” (Plotkin-Amrami, 2008, p. 742). At the same time, while Na’aleh was developed for adolescence, ESOL curriculum is developed for people of all ages. In my sample, people that benefitted from ESOL classes the most were Belka (f/ne), Margarita (f/ne), and Rina (f/e). They emigrated from Russia at ages 37, 40, and 46 respectively. As follows, ESOL classes are effective at providing language and civic education to people of any age and proficiency level.



### 6.5.2. A Spouse

Spousal support was identified as one of the political socialization triggers. It is true in situations when spouses encourage curiosity about American politics and help his/her partner to develop their own political opinions. Husbands and wives often have similar political preferences. It is usually the result of ‘assortative mating’ or having similar political ‘inheritances.’ The former implies that people select their mates based on several factors including homogenous political views. The latter suggests that people interested in similar things will eventually develop similar preferences in other aspects of their lives. In this case, the spouses themselves become political socialization agents and influence their partners to achieve political homogeneity (Weiner, 1978, p. 209). In my sample Abigail (f/e) and her American husband seem to fit into the first category: *“After coming to the US, my liberal views had morphed into a more conservative political outlook. But I did not change my views because of our marriage. In fact, we are very alike regarding politics. We tend to agree with each other on many political topics.”*

Victoria (f/e) and her husband ground their political inclinations in religion. They met in a church as both are religious and devoted individuals. Eventually, they synchronized their political preferences based on their religious beliefs. They fit into a second category proposed by Terry Weiner *“My husband is a Republican. I also identify as a Republican. I will never vote for Democrats because some of their views contradict mine. I am pro-life, I believe that a child is a human being at the conception. I support capitalism, not socialism. My political views became more conservative. I think it is because of my religious beliefs. Also, I have children, so parenting made me more conservative as well.”*

At the same time, there are several people in my study (all women) who adopted political preferences of their spouses: Alisa (f/e), Katya (f/e), Victoria (f/e), Elena (f/e), Margarita (f/ne), Anna (f/ne), Belka (f/ne), and Korina (f/ne). The total of eight respondents, or 20% of the sample, adopted the political preferences of their spouses. Alisa (f/e) and Margarita (f/ne) do not care about politics because it is not interesting. At the same time, they both admitted to copying political opinions of their husbands. Alisa: *“I am pretty much apolitical. I just accept whatever political views my husband has. He is a man; he was born here, so he has to have some strong political opinions.”* Margarita (f/ne) thinks that she needs to accept not only her husband’s views but also support them:

*“He is my husband, and I need to support him. I changed some of my views under his influence. For example, I was a little concerned about the gun ownership law at first. My husband is much in favor of this law because it allows him to feel like a man and a protector of his family. Now I agree with him: it is a little scary but probably necessary.”*

For Alisa and Margarita, first, men have to have political views; and second, a good wife must support those views.

Anna (f/ne), Belka (f/ne), Korina (f/ne), Elena (f/e), and Katya (f/e) adopted political views of their husbands for different reasons: all of them described their husbands as smart, savvy, and educated. Anna and Belka are married to long-term immigrants from Russia; Korina is married to a Ukrainian immigrant; Elena and Katya are married to Americans. In all cases, husbands lived in the US much longer than their wives, and this seems to be the main source of their credibility. Consider the following responses:

*“My husband is originally from South Africa and came to the US when he was very young. He travels a lot for his job, and he is very cosmopolitan. He is very smart, and he enlightens me about politics. I trust his judgment and agree with his opinions. I did not have any thoughts and opinions about politics before we met” (Katya). “I asked my husband a lot of questions about everything including American politics. Thanks to him I understand the difference between the parties. He formed my opinion about American politics” (Elena). “I grew up on my husband’s political views. He emigrated from Russia to the US in 1992 when he was 22 years old. He is very smart, and he knows much more about American politics than I ever will. Even if I am on the fence about some of his views, in time, he will convince me. He does not know a lot about Russian political process, so he asks me, and I have nothing to say because I never paid attention to politics when I lived in Russia. I am such a political illiterate compared to my husband” (Anna).*

Korina (f/ne) is married to a Ukrainian citizen, and they came to the US together on his working visa: *“My husband likes to talk to Americans about politics, I do not care for it at first. I developed my political opinion thanks to him; I did not have any of my own. I started to understand more as I listen to him and watch some videos he posts on his Facebook page. I reconsidered some of my previous opinions about the Chechen wars, for example.”*

A spouse is an effective agency of political socialization. It can work three different ways: a result of assortative mating where both spouses have similar views from the start; a product of common political inheritance which eventually alters other aspects of marriage; and, finally, one spouse (usually a wife) adopts political preferences of his/her partner. In my sample, the third option was the most common.

### 6.5.3. Volunteering and voluntary associations

For many respondents in my sample, volunteering is a strictly an American activity. For example, Katya (f/e) had no idea what volunteering was before coming to the US: *“In Russia, there was no such thing as volunteering. I had never experienced it. In the US I attend some charity events with my co-workers.”* For Nikita (f/ne), who immigrated in 2014, volunteering is still a very foreign concept: *“No thank you! I do not work for free. In our situation, we cannot afford to donate our time for a cause, no matter how good.”*

Voluntary organizations are different from work environments, but they have similar effects as agencies of political socialization but without a compensation: gratitude and recognition are the currency of volunteering. Both workplace and voluntary associations are exposed to and influenced by public policies, laws, and regulations. “While almost every worker is affected in one way or another, those who believe that their occupational group is particularly influenced by political affairs are more likely than others to participate in routine politics” (Wasburn & Adkins Covert, 2017, p. 77). Voluntary organizations usually oriented toward social services and dedicated to a particular cause or a societal role. City Halls, courts, educational, non-governmental, and not-for-profit organizations are the most common places where people can find volunteering opportunities.

Fifteen respondents, or 37.5 percent of the sample, stated they either volunteered or intended to volunteer after they moved to the US. Three people (Abigail (f/e), Kristina (f/e), and Korina (f/ne)) volunteered in Russia before emigrating.

Immigrants consider volunteering opportunities for multiple reasons: to master English and learn about the US (Belka (f/ne) and Rina (f/e)); to participate in their favorite activity (Marianna (f/ne) and Jason (m/e)); to get involved with their children’s education (Marina (f/ne)

and Semion (m/ne)); to do something together with their children/step-children (Anna (f/ne) and Alisa (f/e)); and, to fulfil their professional obligations and interests (Alexey (m/ne), Yuri (m/e), Nick (m/e) Elena (f/e), Ivan (m/ne), Timur (m/e), Kristina (f/e), and Katya (f/e)).

For Belka (f/ne) volunteering was a new concept – after finishing her ESOL classes, a friend suggested volunteering at City Hall to practice English.

*“I volunteered in the City Hall at the information desk. One of my friends worked there and suggested I volunteer. I needed to start communicating with Americans, and it seemed like such a great way to do it. It did not help me to improve my English, but it helped me to realize that I want to get an education. I appreciate the idea of volunteering – people respect that, it is a source of instant gratification.”*

Volunteering was one of the best socialization agencies for Belka. It helped her to understand and navigate through the American public system and made her to get out of her shell and start communicating despite the lack of English language skills. *“When I received my citizenship, people at the City Hall surprised me with a celebration party – they even printed my picture in a local newspaper – it was incredible, and I appreciated it greatly.”* Belka was so inspired that she started to pay attention to volunteer organizations in Russia. She supports several of them through social networks.

Jason (m/e) and Marianna (f/ne), are not very active socially. They are both quiet and timid. Joining a local badminton club and volunteering to judge youth badminton tournaments allows them to enjoy their favorite sport and socialize with like-minded individuals. It is especially important for Marianna as she usually socializes with fellow Russian-speaking moms only.

Elena (f/e) joined the Toastmasters International and even served as the president of her chapter until her daughter was born. Membership in this club allowed Elena to master her English, meet new people, and get familiar with the club structure and its mission.

Marina (f/ne) has two children, her husband works as a truck driver and is usually away from home for long periods. Marina started volunteering at her youngest son's elementary school, and she quickly learned about the school structure and the educational process. She works as a part-time substitute teacher there. We had a brief discussion about state funding for public schools because this is something she is very interested in. She also argued that parents need to be involved in their children's education and support the school system. It is an example of a civic engagement that started with volunteering and developed into a devotion to improving the educational system.

Anna (f/e) has a degree in education, and she likes to read to her toddler in both Russian and English. She often takes her son to a local public library and expressed a desire to volunteer there: *"I want to volunteer at the library when my son is a little older. It will be a great help to our library and will help my son to understand how things work."* Alisa (f/e) looked into volunteering to spend some quality time with her step-daughter: *"I tried to volunteer in a library and a botanical garden. I wanted to do it with my step-daughter. But there were no openings at a time."* Alisa is very spiritual and views volunteering as a bonding experience with a positive outcome for all parties involved.

Three people in the sample stated they volunteered in Russia before coming to the US. Kristina (f/e) is a young entrepreneur; she owns a business in Russia.

*“I volunteered at a local orphanage. We helped with clothes, food, and even organized some entertainment. My friends and I had gathered provisions for several orphanages. When I find a job in the US, I would like to start volunteer again. I want to work with kids.”*

Korina (f/ne) was a professional dancer in Russia. She opened her dance studio when she was only 14. Together with her students, she volunteered her time and talent almost every weekend in schools, during holidays, and town celebrations. She used these volunteering opportunities as dancing practices for her students. In the US, Korina helps out in her daughter’s dancing school.

Abigail (f/e) was a member of a sports volunteering organization in her hometown in Russia. She liked organizing sports activities and used her position as a volunteer to establish good connections in the sports industry. If she did not come to the US, she would’ve volunteered at the 2013 World Student Games in Kazan and later, at the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.

Kristina, Korina, and Abigail represent a new generation of young Russian entrepreneurs. They had more exposure to the western values in Russia compared to older generations and found volunteering to be useful for different purposes. Even after emigrating from Russia, Kristina (f/e) tries to keep up: *“Even in the US, I follow some local news in my hometown. I want to be informed about things my business might get involved with.”*

Volunteering proved to be an effective way for respondents in my sample to socialize. It is an easy way to start communicating and receive instant gratification for an effort. It exposed

some people to American public systems and structures that lead to a better understanding of American society in general.

When it comes to voluntary organizations in the US, they can be broadly classified into two categories: ethnic and mainstream. Ethnic voluntary organizations target particular ethnic and/or immigrant groups, while the mainstream voluntary organizations are formed by native-born individuals for a variety of purposes. “Organizational involvement has been associated with increased happiness and better health. It has also helped immigrants acquire important resources, including civic and political skills, interpersonal trust, and feelings of citizenship” (Michalikova, 2017, p. 144).

Levels of voluntary civic engagement in Eastern Europe are lower than in Western Europe and the United States. It is explained by the long history of communism and low levels of trust in state and local institutions. In immigration, however, Eastern Europeans usually become active volunteers. Historically, Eastern European immigrants preferred to volunteer in their ethnic community organizations and places of worship. Nevertheless, even participation in ethnic voluntary associations is an indicator of a need for some civic engagement and interest in local communities. Polish and Ukrainian immigrants prefer to volunteer in religious institutions, while Russian immigrants – in educational organizations like libraries and schools (Ibid., p. 148). In my sample, several people expressed an interest to volunteer in their childrens’ schools: Semion (m/ne), Korina (f/ne), and Marina (f/ne). Anna (f/ne) and Alisa (f/ne) would like to volunteer in their local libraries.



Russian immigrants from earlier immigration waves formed a number of professional and religious voluntary organizations in the US: Russian Orthodox Catholic Mutual Aid Society<sup>19</sup> (1895), the Russian Brotherhood Organization (1900), and the Russian Orthodox Fraternity Lubov (1912). All three were established in the state of Pennsylvania (Ibid., p. 142). The more recent examples include the Russian American Foundation<sup>20</sup> (1997) in New York and United Russian American Association<sup>21</sup> (2005) in Houston, TX.

There are numerous Russian-speaking voluntary groups and organizations in Central and South Florida. For example, the Russian-American Community Center in Florida<sup>22</sup> acts as a liaison between Russian immigrants and American organizations and services. In addition, it organizes cultural events, teaches Russian-language classes, and hosts the Russian consulate two times a year to assist Russian immigrants who reside in Florida with their documents and other citizenship-related needs. Another interesting voluntary organization is the Russian Heritage non-profit organization<sup>23</sup>. It is a unique establishment as it attracts both Russian-speakers as well as Americans to talk about Russian history, literature, and culture.

Aside from actual voluntary organizations, there is a plethora of Facebook groups created by and for Russian-speakers in Central and South Florida. Many of them serve as forums to connect people who live in the same area and some target specific populations (women, mothers, business owners, etc.).

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/21414/view/1/21/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.nycservice.org/organizations/717>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.uraa.us/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://russianamericancenter.org/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://russianheritage.org/>

#### 6.5.4. The Church

The 1954 Johnson Amendment of the Internal Revenue Code does not allow any political campaigning in religious institutions. Nevertheless, “religious organizations do take public stands on major social issues, as many did, with considerable influence, in the 1960s with respect to Civil Rights and the Vietnam War” (Wasburn & Adkins Covert, 2017, p. 72). The ‘religious factor’ appears in political preferences and opinions because religious groups rarely differ from socioeconomic and ethnic groupings. The research shows that active participation in the church can transform into effective political participation (Ibid., p. 74).

Most immigrants in my sample attend the Russian Orthodox Church only on religious holidays. Seven respondents go to church regularly. Five out of the seven prefer English-speaking churches of different denominations. Elena (f/e) goes to a Russian-speaking non-denominational church, and Father Alexey (f/ne) came to Florida to establish a church under the canonical authority of the Patriarch of Moscow. Father Alexey served in a good church in Moscow and had no intention of moving to a different country. He traveled to America in 2014 to visit the Bishop of New York. He liked the idea of religious freedom and decided to take an offer to build a church in South Florida.

*“In Russia, people come to you. In America, you need to attract people. You need to pay attention to every person that comes to you. You need to treat each newcomer as a guest. People who left Russia a long time ago tend to be atheistic, but now they try to approach religion. They have lots of churches to choose from. I represent only one of many. If people come to my church, they really like it.”*

Father Alexey has 40 people who come to his services. All of them are Russian-speakers. He is very interested in getting a law degree in the US – a religious institution in the US has

many exemptions and benefits, and he wants to know about them. Father Alexey constantly consults with lawyers. He is very excited about having a church in the US because he appreciates the variety of religious institutions. It alleviates him from an extra pressure of being the only priest people can come to (in Russia, the Orthodox Church traditionally dominates). At the same time, he appreciates his church-goers because they chose his among many other religious institutions. It makes him cherish what he does even more.

When Victoria (f/e) came to the US for a summer exchange program, she went to a Baptist church. She was a regular church-goer in Russia, and she wanted to compare religious services. The second reason was to practice her English with fellow Christians. What she encountered changed her entire view of on religion and how it should be practiced: *“I realized that Bible studies are vital to religion. I felt the word of God. It was alive, and I wanted to know more. I wanted to be in a church that studied the Bible.”* That summer she met her future husband, also a devoted church-goer. Victoria and her husband attend church *“to study the word of God and to purify our souls.”* The Baptist church and a bible study appealed to her so much that it became one of the factors that urged her to move to the US permanently. The main one was, of course, her husband. They have the same preferences and opinions when it comes to politics. The ‘religious factor’ plays a vital role in forming conservative views on marriage, child-rearing, and politics. It is no surprise that Victoria identifies as a traditionalist and a Republican.

Sveta (f/e) and Ivan (m/ne) view American churches as a business to make money (American churches lack ‘holiness’ and act more like a social club) and prefer to attend Catholic churches. Ivan does it for the appreciation of Catholic traditions; Sveta attends a Catholic Church because she mostly communicates with Puerto Ricans and Europeans at work and at home.

Finally, Yaroslava (f/e), who is not very religious, gained a great appreciation for American churches because *“they are essential. They carry an important social load. I joined a church because they have more of a social mission than the religious one. If I am in trouble, I will go to a church first because I know they will be able to help me.”* Yaroslava attends two churches: one is a Russian-speaking church (to socialize with fellow Russian-speaking immigrants), and another is an English-speaking international church because *“they do many things for our community like summer camps for children free of charge; they gather money for international missions; help homeless and starving in the area. They do a lot of things, and I support that.”* Yaroslava appreciates a social role of the church. She sees that it is an important element of the American society. Before coming to the US, Yaroslava considered all American churches to be sects that collect people’s money. After living in the US for seven years, she changed her mind and became a passionate supporter of the church mission. The two churches Yaroslava attends, are her main socialization agencies, she considers them as institutions that are supposed to alleviate social and economic tensions in America.

The church, as an agency of political socialization, affects respondents in different ways, but it is a powerful agency nonetheless that can form both religious and political outlooks toward the world.

#### *6.6. Output Structures*

The last element of political socialization is output structures (Figure 6.1.). Output structures incorporate bureaucratic institutions on local, state, and federal levels. Bureaus, according to William Niskanen, are organizations that provide services which have value but cannot be obtained for money (Niskanen, 1971, p. 7). U.S. Customs, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and Internal Revenue Service are all good examples of bureaucratic

institutions that every immigrant has to deal with regardless of English language proficiency, residency status, or exposure to other political socialization agencies. The initial introduction to the American bureaucracy happens at the airport upon arrival to the US. This is the one process where the US citizens are separated from permanent residents and other visitors. However, once you pass the US Customs, there is no more separation. For example, a visit to a local DMV office lets an immigrant to share experiences with Americans who live in the same community: to stay in the same lane and to be subjected to the same process. It helps to create a sense of belonging to a local community and also reveals the workings of the American bureaucratic machine.

Respondents' overall impression about the US bureaucracy is very positive and consistent with expectations laid out by Max Weber who viewed bureaucracy as an ideal form of a government organization. "Bureaucracy...is fully developed in political and ecclesiastical communities only in the modern state, and, in the private economy, only in the most advanced institutions of capitalism" (Wharton, 2016, p. 11) Weber considered order and administrative regulations to be the most important aspect of bureaucracy as "office holding is not considered a source to exploited for rents or emoluments" (Ibid., p. 13).

Valentin (f/e) talked about the effectiveness of bureaucratic institutions in comparison to Russian bureaucracy:

*"Here everything is created for people and their comfort. In Russia, bureaucratic institutions are created to torture you. The system is built to create obstacles in everything. My wife and I had to deal with the Russian bureaucracy during our last trip. I was under the impression that there is a certain group of people that were born to work in Russian bureaucratic institutions: we had to talk to a young girl, but she already had*

*that nasty bureaucratic attitude – it was scary even to ask a question. You probably had to pass some exam to work in those places.”*

Ivan (m/ne) complained about his experiences with Russian state institutions: *“Russia’s political structure is a mess. There is corruption, and uncontrolled theft! I worked for the administration of the city of Saint Petersburg. There were cases of bribery, corruption, and nepotism everywhere. If you want to talk to a manager of any level, you need to give a bribe to his/her secretary first.”*

There is an agreement among all the respondents that bureaucracy is much more effective in the US compared to Russia. American bureaucracy is transparent, straightforward, and efficient. Most mentioned corruption as the main problem with bureaucracy in Russia. Nikita (m/ne) provided an example:

*“The positive aspect of the Russian bureaucratic machine is that you can quickly solve all your problems with money. Everyone, starting from the smallest bureaucratic clerk, will expect bribes. Otherwise, they will prolong a process or make it difficult. For example, the passport to travel outside of Russia take three days to issue. According to the law, it has to be issued within 30 days. Bureaucrats will make you wait for all 30 days even though they will have your passport much earlier than that – they expect you to pay extra if you want it earlier than 30 days. Some bureaucrats will help if you explain the situation, but not all of them – their salaries are very small, and they try to make extra money any way they can.”*

The efficacy of output structures in the US promotes immigrants’ political socialization because it displays order and stability. It makes people comfortable, confident and inclined to

trust a state bureaucracy that is not trying to get their money in exchange for poor services. It is something that many respondents did not experience in Russia.

### *6.7. Summary*

Gitelman identified three agencies of political socialization used by Soviet Jews in Israel: “immigrant associations, the Histadrut (General Confederation of Labor), and political parties” (Gitelman, 1982, p. 252). For Soviet and Russian Jewish immigrants in the US, ethnic organizations had traditionally served as political, cultural, and economic socialization agencies (Isurin, 2011; Lewin Epstein et al., 1997; Morawska, 2004; Shasha & Shron, 2002).

In this chapter, I constructed the model of political socialization of Russian immigrants who reside in four main metro areas of Central and South Florida. The model of political socialization includes general elements that affect the socialization of all respondent in the study: legal status (the starting point) and output structures (bureaucracy). Further, the model consists of triggers that make political socialization more likely: language proficiency, spousal support, and parenting. Finally, agencies of political socialization include ESOL classes, spouses, volunteering, and the church.

## **Chapter 7 Data Analysis**

This chapter addresses the second set of research questions: How and why do Russians, who permanently reside in the United States, perceive American democracy? Do they see differences between political systems in Russia and the US? How do ethnic Russian immigrants view Russia? Do English language proficiency and exposure to multiple socialization agencies make a difference?

According to Larry Diamond, “political culture theory predicts that democracy should be more legitimate and stable when there are high but not polarizing levels of political efficacy, participation, and information” (Diamond, 1999, p. 208). High levels of support and satisfaction with a political system occur when citizens are informed, proactive, and believe they can affect political outcomes (internal efficacy). In return, citizens expect understanding and support from their government (external efficacy) (Ibid.). To explain respondents’ attitudes toward American democracy vs. Russian authoritarianism, I should first address their perceptions of politics and the political process.

During interviews, respondents were asked about their opinions on American and Russian political systems, democratic institutions (branches of government, political parties, interest groups, and independent media) and processes (elections, political participation, freedoms, and liberties). What do they think about Russia now? Did their perception of America change after residing in the US for some time? Respondents were also asked to evaluate their



involvement in political processes (Russia, the US, or both). Based on their replies, the sample was divided into four groups presented in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1 Political classification of respondents**

<b>Classification based on political opinions, participation, and efficacy</b>			
<b>Admirers</b>	<b>Skeptics</b>	<b>Incurious</b>	<b>Recluses</b>
Yuri (m/e) Abigail (f/e) Rina (f/e) Elena (f/e) Anna (f/ne) Marina (f/ne)	John (m/e) Ivan (m/ne) Semion (m/ne) Pavel (m/ne) Vladislav (m/ne) Yaroslava (f/e) Stephanie (f/e) Katya (f/e) Sveta (f/e) Sessi (f/e)	Timur (m/e) Nick (m/e) Bill (m/e) Jason (m/e) Alexey (m/ne) Alisa (f/e) Victoria (f/e) Kristina (f/e) Yana (f/e) Maria (f/e) Olga (f/ne) Marianna (f/ne) Margarita (f/ne) Belka (f/ne) Korina (f/ne) Chepe (f/ne)	Valentin (m/e) Aristarch (m/ne) Aleksandr (m/ne) Nikita (m/ne) Andrei (m/ne) Tapolina (f/ne) Alevtina (f/ne) Lukeria (f/ne )
Total: 6	10	16	8
Percentage: 15%	25%	40%	20%

Let's look at each group separately and break down the responses on sections about political systems comparison, mass media comparison, political participation, and political efficacy.

### *7.1. The Admirers*

The Admirers is the smallest group that consists of both speakers and non-speakers of English. All six members consider America to be a far more stable and prosperous country compared to Russia. Since their arrival in the US, they do not look back and see their future in the US only.

#### 7.1.1. American vs. Russian political systems

*“Democracy is theoretical, it does not exist but compared to all others, America comes pretty close to it”* Abigail (f/e).

Admirers consider a political system in the US to be effective, transparent and designed for a bottom-up communication. All six respondents agree that when it comes to domestic vs. foreign policies, there is a considerable difference in priorities in Russia and the US:

*“The US government takes care of its own people first and then moves to an international political arena. In Russia, it’s the reverse. I remember when I was a little girl, my grandmother would not give me any candy because she was saving it for our less fortunate relatives. Everywhere in Russia, it is like that: give the best to others and disregard your own”* (Marina (f/ne)).

Abigail (f/e) and Rina (f/e) argued that the US is not Russia’s enemy. *“I do not think the American government cares much about Russia and its government. They do not notice Russia unless they need to cooperate on something”* (Abigail). *“The US is not an enemy. Russia imagines all its enemies. The Russian government does not know how the global system works, and we constantly embarrass ourselves”* (Rina).

Overall, there is a very negative attitude toward Russia’s political system and a very positive one toward the US, *“it is like night and day”* (Rina).

#### 7.1.2. American vs. Russian mass media and information

In Russia, this group mostly watched TV and preferred local/regional newspapers. Anna (f/ne) listened to the radio and did not watch TV. In the US, Admirers use TV, internet, and radio. They try to watch and listen to either western media only (Yuri, Marina, Elena) or western media and Russian independent news outlets like ‘Dozhd’ and ‘Echo Moskvi’ (Rina, Anna,

Abigail). According to their assessment, American news channels are more objective and have much better quality compared to Russian channels. The US media is also more diversified: there is room for different points of view. Anna (f/e) argued that Russian media sources are irrationally obsessed with America: *“here you can turn on your TV and not hear about Russia for weeks. In Russia, you hear about the US every day. Russian social networks are flooded with Obama memes.”* She also argued that American news channels have fewer reasons to lie to their viewers because they are free to speak their mind.

### 7.1.3. Political participation

Three respondents, Abigail (f/e), Elena (f/e), and Anna (f/ne) complained about the electoral process in Russia. There are no free and fair elections in Russia. The outcome is always the same, and it does not correspond with people’s hopes and aspirations. Anna’s first marriage was in Russia, and she changed her last name. On the Election Day (the 2012 Presidential elections), she went to a polling station and learned that she was listed under her maiden name. She pointed out the mistake and they gave her a ballot with her new last name, but did not cross her old name from the list: *“I was furious: I went to an observer and told him they counted me twice so they can use my vote again! After that incident, I changed my mind about Russian politics: it went from neutral to negative.”*

Abigail decided to leave Russia after 2011 Bolotnaya Square protests, following Russia’s 2011 Parliamentary elections; *“it was like the veil fell from my eyes. I saw Russian state for what it was – an authoritarian regime that will never change.”*

Elena described the difference between elections in two countries: *“In Russia, Presidential elections are predictable. In the US – you never know who will win. There is suspense till the very end. I think it is more honest that way. We do not have a tsar here.”*

Yuri (m/e) said he regularly voted in Russia until the 2012 Presidential elections: “*I believed my voice meant something. I know it does in the US.*” He is now excited to become a citizen so he can vote in American elections which will be more considerate of his vote. The rest of the Admirers feel the same way.

#### 7.1.4. Political efficacy

Admirers are enthusiastic to participate in American politics:

*“American and Russian political systems are different because of different social roles and responsibilities. People in Russia do not want to show that they disagree. They do not want to protest; they can only discuss things over their dinner tables. My opinion drastically changed since I moved here. I realized that the government is us, the people, and we can change it however we see fit”* (Rina (f/e)).

Overall, Admirers became more active participants in the political process after immigrating to America. They want to know more; they would consider different forms of participation like canvassing and petition-signing. For all of them, the Russian political system was one of the main reasons for immigration. All six Admirers are currently permanent residents, but all of them want to become citizens so they can become active participants in the American democratic political process.

#### *7.2. The Skeptics*

This group consists of five men and five women. One man and all the women speak English. These are the people who came to the US with high expectations but soon realized the reality is not as rosy as its image from afar. Skeptics are a group of people who critically assess their environment. They had strong opinions about politics in Russia. It did not change upon

their immigration to the US. They acknowledge positive and refuse to ignore negative aspects in both countries.

#### 7.2.1. American vs. Russian political systems

*“Russian and American political systems are like two different dishes, you can be picky, but if you are hungry, you will eat either one. In a sense, American and Russian political systems are both acceptable, they differ in methods, but have the same goal in mind” (Vlad (m/ne)).*

Ivan (m/ne) and Pavel (m/ne) compared the United States to its old nemesis – The Soviet Union:

*“Nothing surprised me in the US. It was like I went back in time – the US is the rich Soviet Union! I personally saw traffic police hiding on the interstate so they could catch as many violators as possible. They are especially active toward the end of each month because they have to reach their monthly quotas, just like in the USSR! There is a propaganda of the national flag and anthem in schools. My residential community is like a good old Soviet garden society: people try to compete in everything and take advantage of one another” (Ivan). “Like the Soviet Union in the past, America is a police state. It is a good thing because I want to live in a safe place and be able to walk in the streets at night” (Pavel).*

Semion (m/ne) thinks that the US exists at the expense of other countries: *“When a country is getting destroyed, its resources are available to others. After the USSR collapsed, Americans lived well on its ruins.”* He also doubts the effectiveness of the American system of checks and balances. It is in human nature to compete and there must be one branch that overpowers the other two. In his opinion, it is the legislative branch that dominates. Stephanie (f/e) feels the same way: *“if an American President wants to accomplish something, he is under*

*the enormous pressure because the legislature might prevent anything from happening. In Russia, if the president wants something – it happens.”*

Skeptics are critical about both Russia and the US. None of them changed their views about politics after immigration. Instead, their views became reinforced after the move.

### 7.2.2. American vs. Russian mass media and information

In Russia, Skeptics watched TV mostly for sports, entertainment, and educational programs. Not all of them followed the news daily. In the US, most of them prefer to use the Internet over TV and radio: they watch American media for the news and Russian for entertainment (movies and comedy TV shows).

Overall, Skeptics admit that America has better quality mass media, but they do not believe it is more objective than the Russian media. Both Russian and American mass media are dependent on their benefactors and interpret the news in particular ways. *“The US mass media is more professional. They know how to manipulate public opinion. They are doing a very good job in that, and they keep improving. But I think that Russian media outlets are more objective and truthful”* (Vlad (m/ne)). Sessi adds: *“You believe American media more because it appeals to your emotions, but I cannot tell if American media is freer and more objective.”*

Yaroslava (f/e), Katya (f/e), and Ivan (m/ne) do not trust any media. The US media tend to be egocentric and focuses more on American events, while Russian media is more diverse. *“In both countries, media depends on their sponsors; in the US it is more obvious. In Russia, they try to conceal it”* (Yaroslava); *“Mass media everywhere makes money by talking about what people pay to hear”* (Ivan). Stephanie had an example of deliberate misinformation by one of the US news channels:

*“In Russia, there is an issue of censorship, but in the US they twist information. I caught it once: there was an interview with an elderly man in Donetsk, Ukraine. A reporter asked him: ‘What do you think of Putin?’ He answered: ‘I like him, I want him to take us to Russia.’ But the translation made it sound like he was against Putin. They lied just like that, in front of me!”*

### 7.2.3. Political participation

Skeptics are split in their preferences between political processes in Russia and the US. John (m/e), Semion (m/ne), Vlad (m/ne), and Pavel (m/ne) pay more attention to Russian politics. They admitted doing it out of habit. All three voted in Russian elections regularly and have stronger opinions about Russian political developments than American ones. Sveta (f/e), Sessi (f/e), Yaroslava (f/e), and Katya (f/e) pay more attention to American politics. As Yaroslava put it: *“I want to participate in American politics because I live here, I pay my taxes here, and I want to make sure my children will benefit from the money I pay to the government.”* Finally, Stephanie (f/e) and Ivan (m/ne) are equally interested in both: *“I consider both Russia and America as my homes, and I am very protective of both. I wish the two countries were closer to each other; they are both great nations”* (Stephanie).

Skeptics are active voters. Katya (f/e) is the only one that had never voted in her life: she left Russia before she was eligible to vote, and she is still a permanent resident with no voting rights in the US. The rest of Skeptics vote regularly, but it is their only form of participation. They are informed spectators of politics who limit their participation to ballot castings.

### 7.2.4. Political efficacy

Unlike Admirers, Skeptics are pessimistic about their abilities to influence politics. In Russia, the political process is capitalized by the elites, and in the US, it does not matter who is

in charge: Democrats or Republicans. Neither is capable of drastically changing the system – it is too stable. Semion (m/ne) had an interesting take on political efficacy:

*“My friend once told me when he was little, his dad let him drive a train. He told him to turn a big red wheel, and the train will go where he wants. It is a perfect analogy to a political process - people think they are in charge, but, in reality, they decide nothing. They turn a big red wheel, but the real machinist is in the bushes nearby. The only way to make things happen is to initiate them from above. And the only way to trigger a change at the top is to allow social elevators to work and bring different people with different backgrounds and ideas to the top – that happened during the Civil Rights movement in America.”*

Skeptics are realistic about the political process and the part played by the public. The consensus in the group: there is little ordinary people can change. Skeptics are opinionated spectators that do not want to get involved. Sessi’s (f/e) father advised her to stay away from politics and political parties:

*“There is no point in getting involved. After I moved to the US, I realized that my political opinion is not important and can harm me. There is no point voting in Russia because there is no one to choose. In the US, politics is the realm of rich people. I have nothing against them, but why do they have to spend millions of dollars to impress ordinary people? Why don’t they spend their money to alleviate hunger in Africa, for instance?”*

In sum, Skeptics are critical of the political process no matter where it takes place. For them, it is imperfect regardless of a geographical location.



### 7.3. *The Incurious*

The Incurious is the most populous group in the study. There are 16 members: 5 males and 11 females. Four out of five men and five women speak English. The main characteristic of this group is they are not interested in politics. Their reasons for changing citizenships are purely economic (except Yana (f/e) and Chepe (f/ne), who had professional reasons: research opportunities). They were never into politics in Russia, and that did not change after they immigrated to the US. It does not mean that members of this group are not educated about politics, they simply have different priorities.

#### 7.3.1. American vs. Russian political systems

Quod Dei Deo, Quod Caesaris Caesari (Latin for ‘That Which is God’s to God; That Which is Caesar’s, to Caesar’). In other words, the consensus in this group is as follows: Russia and the US have profoundly different political systems because they are different countries. Timur (m/e) is a post-doctoral researcher in biology. He thought about social science as a career field but found it to be too subjective and imperfect. Nevertheless, his hobby is learning about politics and political history in the US and the Former Soviet Union:

*“The American political system is more suited for America just as the Russian political system is suited for Russia. If you try to implement the Russian system in America and vice-versa, it will result in a civil war or a dissolution. Russia is a classic autocratic regime with a little bit of plutocracy and oligarchy. The US is a mix between plutocracy and the federal government.”*

Timur (m/e) is confident that different countries develop their political systems that reflect the country’s history, traditions, and culture. It is not a good idea to copy someone else’s political system because it will fail due to incompatibility with the domestic system of values.

Alisa (f/e) supports strong leadership in Russia because, *“from a historical perspective, Russia needs an iron fist because it is a big country. Without control, it will cease to exist. I support strong but wise leadership in Russia. It is the best option for Russia, but might not be ideal for other countries.”* In other words, there is no universal political system which can be successfully implemented in every country on the planet. States, like people, are unique. Two individuals might have some things in common, but it is impossible to have everything in common. It is normal for countries to have unique ways of conducting their political affairs.

For the Incurious, *“politics are less important than economics”* (Timur). Belka (f/ne), Marianna (f/ne), and Alexey (m/ne) measure states’ performance in economic terms:

*“The American political system is more effective when it comes to the market economy. Russia tries to replicate it, but it is not very successful. In the US the economic situation is stable, and laws are working. In Russia it is not stable yet”* (Belka).

*“I mostly see differences between the two countries in economic aspects and not politics. The US has a huge foreign debt. The American dollar is supported by nothing; it is just paper. The Russian ruble is backed by gold and other resources, and Putin tries to minimize Russian foreign debt. At the same time, Russians live much worse compared to Americans. I am aware that in the US 80% of people are poor, and only 20% are rich. But the middle class here is bigger than in Russia”* (Marianna (f/ne)).

*“I do not think that the American political system is more effective than the Russian one because of its immense foreign debt, but people live better here”* (Alexey (m/ne)).

Nick (m/e), Bill (m/e), and Kristina (f/e) compared the US’s and Russia’s business opportunities. For Nick and Bill, the US is a better place for business because the American

government provides tax breaks to businesses and supports entrepreneurial freedom and creativity. They also emphasized that the American government performs best at the local level. Kristina (f/e), who has a business in Russia, argued that until 2014, the business environment in Russia was slowly improving:

*“In the past couple of years, things got better in Russia - it was easier to create and develop a business, there is a whole new bureaucratic system that supports business development, and it is very convenient compared to what was there before. There are more construction sites, many new businesses, and new products available in Russia today.”*

The 2014 political development and economic sanctions against Russia (in response to an annexation of the Crimean peninsula) affected Kristina’s business, and together with her husband, she decided to move to the US. However, she noted that the 2016 US Presidential Elections revealed an internal conflict within the American population: *“People could not choose between the two candidates, these elections might trigger economic instability and lead to a fragile business environment. My husband and I started to express similar concerns we had in Russia - it might be too unstable to stay here and open a new business.”*

It is evident that the Incurious evaluate the US and Russia in economic terms rather than political ones. Many of them confessed they do not understand politics very well and it does not affect them enough to encourage learning more about it.

### 7.3.2. American vs. Russian mass media and information

The Incurious mostly watched TV before emigrating from Russia. NTV and STS (an entertainment channel) were mentioned most of the times. Several of them (Yana (f/e) and Olga (f/ne)) mentioned limited choices of the television channels. They also used local websites and

printed media. In the US, the Incurious use the Internet. A lot of them get information from sources like RBK, Russia 24, CNN and alike, blogs (mostly Russian like Life Journal), and social networks (Facebook and vkontakte.ru). Nick (m/e) reads the Wall Street Journal. Timur (m/e) listens to NPR. Incurious prefer scientific shows, documentaries, humorous programs, and soap operas. They follow neither pro-government nor opposition news media. There is a group consensus that mass media in the US and Russia are the same: they both lie. Alisa (f/e) and Kristina (f/e) try to avoid mass media altogether: “*mass media is evil everywhere*” (Alisa). Kristina was more specific:

*“In Russia, they say one thing, in the US they say another, but the truth is somewhere in the middle. I prefer to compare the news in the US and Russia, but I get upset and try to avoid it. In Russia, news is more interesting and diversified. In the US they tend to concentrate on one thing for a long time. I think news agencies in the US speak their opinion more freely, but I doubt there is much truthfulness to what they say. In Russia, people would be afraid to freely express their opinions; they would rather not talk about it at all.”*

Respondents in this group either tend to avoid news altogether or receive it second-hand. Margarita (f/ne), Belka (f/ne), Korina (f/ne), and Alisa (f/e) all said their husbands watch the news and later share with them. “*I do not watch the news or follow any news agencies on social media, but I am exposed to politics because of my husband’s interests: he posts a lot of news stories on his Facebook wall, and I only read his posts*” (Korina).

Exposure to mass media leads to reservations about their objectivity and dependability. The Incurious prefer to avoid both Russian and American mass media.

### 7.3.3. Political participation

All the Incurious group members mentioned they were not interested in politics and they do not associate with any political party anywhere in the world. The Incurious look at the political process from the outside as if it proceeds parallel to their lives. Yana (f/e) called elections in Russia a joke, and Kristina (f/e) defines the American electoral process as theatrical. Timur (m/e) grounded electoral process in economics:

*“I cannot name a single political force I associate with. I could potentially support many but not seriously subscribe to any of the platforms because they all try to appeal to an average voter, and the average voter is stupid. Voting does not have a meaningful impact. To have a real representative government, you need to have an array of economic interests represented. You need to have a developed economy with multiple forces within it.”*

In his opinion, elections are meaningless in Russia until there is a real economic diversification in place.

Nick (m/e) and Jason (m/e) both stated they are not interested in politics. This did not change after moving to the US. Nick usually pays attention only to business news as it is relevant to him and his professional interests. Nick is a business owner and evaluated the 2016 Presidential elections based on candidates’ proposals for businesses. He had met Donald Trump several years back and had an opinion about him as a person but not as a presidential candidate. For Nick, politics are irrelevant.

Belka (f/e) voted in Russia, but she usually checked “against all” box. *“To vote for someone, you need to take an interest in it and research every candidate - I had neither time nor interest.”*

In general, the Incurious do not consider political participation as important. It is irrelevant to their lives or interests. They vote because it is their civic duty. At the same time, for most of them, politics is a big game for the rich and power-hungry people.

#### 7.3.4. Political efficacy

Since their interest in politics is minimal, there are low expectations of people's political efficacy. The Incurious gave up on the idea that it is possible to change something by casting a vote. Olga (f/ne) regularly voted in Russia until the 2004 Presidential election: *"after that election, there was no point in voting - Putin was not going anywhere."* Maria (f/e) agrees with it: *"I voted in Russia, but it was pointless because everyone knew the winner. It was just a waste of my vote and my time."* The Incurious agree that popular elections in Russia do not mean anything and people who vote cannot change the system. They also agree there is no point to vote in the US but for a different reason: Republicans and Democrats balance each other regardless of who is in power at the moment. As Yana (f/e) put it, *"in the US, I do not have to choose between the two parties because they are both very respected and not a lot of policies would change if one replaces the other. I vote, but I always vote for an actual person and not his/her party."*

#### *7.4. The Recluses*

The last group consisted of eight individuals, seven of whom do not speak English and spend most of the time with their families or other Russian-speakers. Also, the sample's oldest cohort – Tapolina (f/ne), Alevtina (f/ne), and Aleksandr (m/ne) are in this group.

#### 7.4.1. American vs. Russian political systems

Recluses are people who used to be active participants in the Russian political and most of them still have strong opinions and plenty of criticism for the Russian government. They are also passionate supporters of the American political system:

*“I would never call the Russian regime a democracy. Everything that is done there is for the benefits of elites only. It is a totalitarian regime. The American system of checks and balances makes more sense because people are in charge of their destinies, and if they want, they can achieve a lot.”* (Valentin (m/e)).

*“The American political system is more effective compared to the Russian one. The Russian government does not allow people to have decent lives: salaries are very small. Russia and the US fight a lot, and I blame Russia for it”* (Aleksandr (m/ne)).

*“The American political system is more effective because it is stable and does not change as often as the Russian one does. In Russia, there are no protections for people. The US and Russia are very aggressive in their foreign policies. The US has global reach, and Russia is only a regional power. That is why Putin goes to places like Chechnya and Ukraine”* (Tapolina (f/ne)).

American political system is stable, so there is no need to participate. Just relax and enjoy your time. For Valentin, Aleksandr, and Tapolina moving to the US meant there are no more economic and political struggles. They sought stability, and once they found it in the US, they took it for granted and distanced themselves from the political process.

Nikita (m/ne) and Aristarch (m/ne) argued that the Russian government is corrupt. They both moved with their families to the US after winning in the Green Card lottery. Both men

thought the US was a better place to raise a family. Since they do not speak English, there is a lack of socialization and communication with Americans. Their preconceived notion about the US remains unchanged. *“The American political system is stable, and people have their say in all political matters. There is no bulky bureaucracy like in Russia. Almost any problem can be solved over the phone”* (Nikita). Aristarch did not hesitate when asked which political system is better: the American one, of course. It is better than the Russian system because ordinary people live better and there are a lot of opportunities, even though in his case they are ephemeral. Both men had engaging careers in Russia. In the US, Nikita delivers pizzas, and Aristarch is a stay-at-home dad who tries to develop his own contracting company. I think this is the main reason why they are not interested in politics anymore: *“after we moved here, I care only about my family and nothing else”* (Aristarch). They feel insignificant in the US, and it negatively affects their interest in politics and the ability to influence their political environment. As a result, their world had shrunk to only fit their families.

Two Recluses – Andrei (m/ne), Lukeria (f/ne) – admit they became more pro-Russian while living in the US. Andrei and Lukeria have their own business. They came to the US to make money and, eventually, stayed. Before opening their business, they worked in hotels as housekeepers and a laundry personnel. Their impression of America comes from interactions with low-paid working people in the service industry. They consider Americans to be poorly educated but admit there must be intelligent people with great educational credentials. However, having lived in the US for thirteen years, they had never come across those people. For Andrei, *“the Russian system is more effective because it is authoritarian and things get done. In the US there are too many people involved in negotiations and decision-making. On the other hand, the*



*US strategy is more future-oriented. Policies are created with people's benefit in mind."* Lukeria provided some criticism for the American legislature:

*"I do not like that the US Congress has too much power. People vote for the President, but a lot of Presidential initiatives are canceled by the Congress. Congressmen are driven by unknown interests, and I think they are not patriotic enough. They think about the US global leadership, but the main effort should be visible on the domestic front. The life in America has to be better, and it should be the Congress's main priority."*

Andrei and Lukeria appreciate the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, for his style of communication with people: *"Putin conducts and participates in different forums and holds 'direct line' conferences to communicate with Russian citizens several times a year. I do not see anything like that here, but I do not know enough about the American government"* (Lukeria).

#### 7.4.2. American vs. Russian mass media and information

The Recluses' mass media habits did not change after immigration. Before moving to the US, they mostly watched TV and read popular newspapers (i.e. 'Argumenty I Fakty' and 'SPEED Info'). After the move, they continue to watch Russian TV and use Russian social networks (vkontakte.ru and odnoklassniki.ru). The majority of Recluses think that the American media is better compared to the Russian media. It is interesting considering they do not speak English very well. Valentin (m/e), the only Recluse that speaks English, is adamant about freedom of speech issue in Russia:

*"I often read Russian mass media - there is no freedom of speech, there is only a pro-government propaganda. TV channels, Like Kultura, are allowed to exist*

*independently, only if they have nothing to do with politics. In the US it is more interesting - different channels have different views. It is more diversified in the US.”*

Aristarch (m/ne) and Andrei (m/ne) talked about the same feature of American media – freedom of expression: *“In Russia, anti-commercials are not allowed, but it is ok in the US, from products to politics – it is ok to talk bad about your opponent. That is why American media is better and more truthful”* (Aristarch). *“I am shocked by the behavior and tactics of presidential candidates during these elections. They poured so much dirt on one another”* (Andrei).

Aleksandr (m/ne) tries to watch both Russian and American TV channels: *“The Russian media broadcasts are all lies, American media is more truthful. It is freer and more objective too. In Russia, there is censorship and other barriers for truthful media outlets.”* Tapolina (f/ne) and Alevtina (f/ne) could not make a comparison because they do not watch American TV. Without knowing the language, there is no point.

#### 7.4.3. Political participation

Some Recluses voted in Russia, but in the US they are spectators. Valentin (m/e) and Andrei (m/ne) are US citizens. Valentin identified as a Democrat because he is *“for innovation and against conservatism.”* At the same time, he is more interested in the Russian politics – he called it a habit. He has more opinions about the Russian government and political system. His attitude toward Putin has changed from positive to very negative after moving to America. Valentin looks at the US as a stable country where nothing changes, so there is no point in following any political news. It is a good thing. Andrei is interested in politics in both countries, but he participates in neither: *“I do not have political identification, and I do not engage in political processes anywhere.”*

Nikita (m/ne) and Aristarch (m/ne) did not change their political views: they are still very critical of Russia and very praising of the US.

#### 7.4.4. Political efficacy

Recluses appreciate American system because American people live better than average Russians. For people like Aristarch (m/ne), Aleksandr (m/ne), Tapolina (m/ne), and Alevtina (m/ne), the size of your salary and your retirement paycheck is the main indicator of a successful political system. If a state can provide a decent living for people, it means people have some say in politics.

Others like Valentin (m/e), Andrei (m/ne), and Nikita (m/ne), think that freedoms and opportunities come first: if there are more career opportunities for people and a political system responds to peoples aspirations, then social elevators are working and the dialogue between the government and its people is on-going.

#### *7.5. Survey results*

The Pew Research Center political typology survey classifies voters into eight groups based on their political attitudes and values. The survey form used in the study can be found in Appendix A. Here is the list of political typology groups from Left (liberal) to Right (conservative) of the political spectrum (Pew Research Center, 2014, pp. 2-10):

1. **Solid Liberals (SL)** – express liberal values on every social issue and are dedicated voters of the Democratic Party;
2. **Faith and Family Left (FFL)** – a religious, racially and ethnically diverse group that is uncomfortable with changes and deviations from a traditional family structure, but votes for the Democratic Party. They are less affluent and less

educated than Solid Liberals or Next Generation Left. They support expensive social programs.

3. **Next Generation Left (NGL)** – this is the youngest group of voters. They are optimistic and have progressive views on social issues. They embrace diversity but wary of big and expensive social programs.
4. **Hard-pressed Sceptics (HpS)** – do not have a clear party preference, but lean Democratic. They are the most financially challenged group and favor an increased government social spending. Their views on social issues, however, tend to be more conservative compared to other groups in the Democratic camp.
5. **Young Outsiders (YO)** – do not have a clear party preference, but lean Republican. They disagree with an increase in government spending on social programs. Possess more liberal views on social issues.
6. **Business Conservatives (BC)** – reliable voters of the Republican Party. Tend to be wealthy and optimistic. They are socially progressive, favor business growth, desire a smaller government, and support an engaging foreign policy.
7. **Steadfast Conservatives (SC)** – on average are older than Business conservatives and more traditional when it comes to social issues. They are skeptical of both big government and big business. Do not like an active international involvement.
8. **Bystanders** (not a part of the political spectrum) – this group is on political sidelines. They are not registered to vote and pay no attention to politics.

The Pew Research Center survey has 23 questions with two possible answers for each (A and B). For this study, I altered their survey by including an additional answer option C - 'I don't know.' Typically, I asked my respondents to take the survey on paper before or after our

interview. After I collected all the surveys, I took the online political typology test<sup>24</sup> forty times with answers I received from respondents. I treated option C as no answer and simply skipped questions when my respondents marked ‘I don’t know’ option as their answer. Table 7.2 adds the survey results to already established groupings shown in table 7.1.

**Table 7.2 Political classification and political typologies of respondents**

<b>Classification based on political opinions, participation, and efficacy</b>			
<b>Admirers</b>	<b>Skeptics</b>	<b>Incurious</b>	<b>Recluses</b>
Yuri (m/e) - <b>FFL</b>	John (m/e) - <b>NGL</b>	Timur (m/e) - <b>NGL</b>	Valentin (m/e) - <b>YO</b>
Abigail (f/e) - <b>YO</b>	Ivan (m/ne) - <b>NGL</b>	Nick (m/e) - <b>SL</b>	Aristarch (m/ne) - <b>SC</b>
Rina (f/e) - <b>YO</b>	Semion (m/ne) - <b>NGL</b>	Bill (m/e) - <b>YO</b>	Aleksandr (m/ne) -
Elena (f/e) - <b>SC</b>	Pavel (m/ne) - <b>FFL</b>	Jason (m/e) – <b>YO</b>	<b>NGL</b>
Anna (f/ne) - <b>NGL</b>	Vladislav (m/ne) - <b>FFL</b>	Alexey (m/ne) - <b>NGL</b>	Nikita (m/ne) - <b>YO</b>
Marina (f/ne) - <b>NGL</b>	Yaroslava (f/e) - <b>FFL</b>	Alisa (f/e) - <b>YO</b>	Andrei (m/ne) - <b>NGL</b>
	Stephanie (f/e) - <b>NGL</b>	Victoria (f/e) - <b>NGL</b>	Tapolina (f/ne) - <b>FFL</b>
	Katya (f/e) - <b>NGL</b>	Kristina (f/e) - <b>NGL</b>	Alevtina (f/ne) - <b>HpS</b>
	Sveta (f/e) - <b>YO</b>	Yana (f/e) - <b>Bystander</b>	Lukeria (f/ne) - <b>YO</b>
	Sessi (f/e) - <b>NGL</b>	Maria (f/e) - <b>SC</b>	
		Olga (f/ne) - <b>BC</b>	
		Marianna (f/ne) - <b>YO</b>	
		Margarita (f/ne) - <b>YO</b>	
		Belka (f/ne) - <b>NGL</b>	
		Korina (f/ne) - <b>NGL</b>	
		Chepe (f/ne) - <b>YO</b>	
Total:	6	10	16
			8

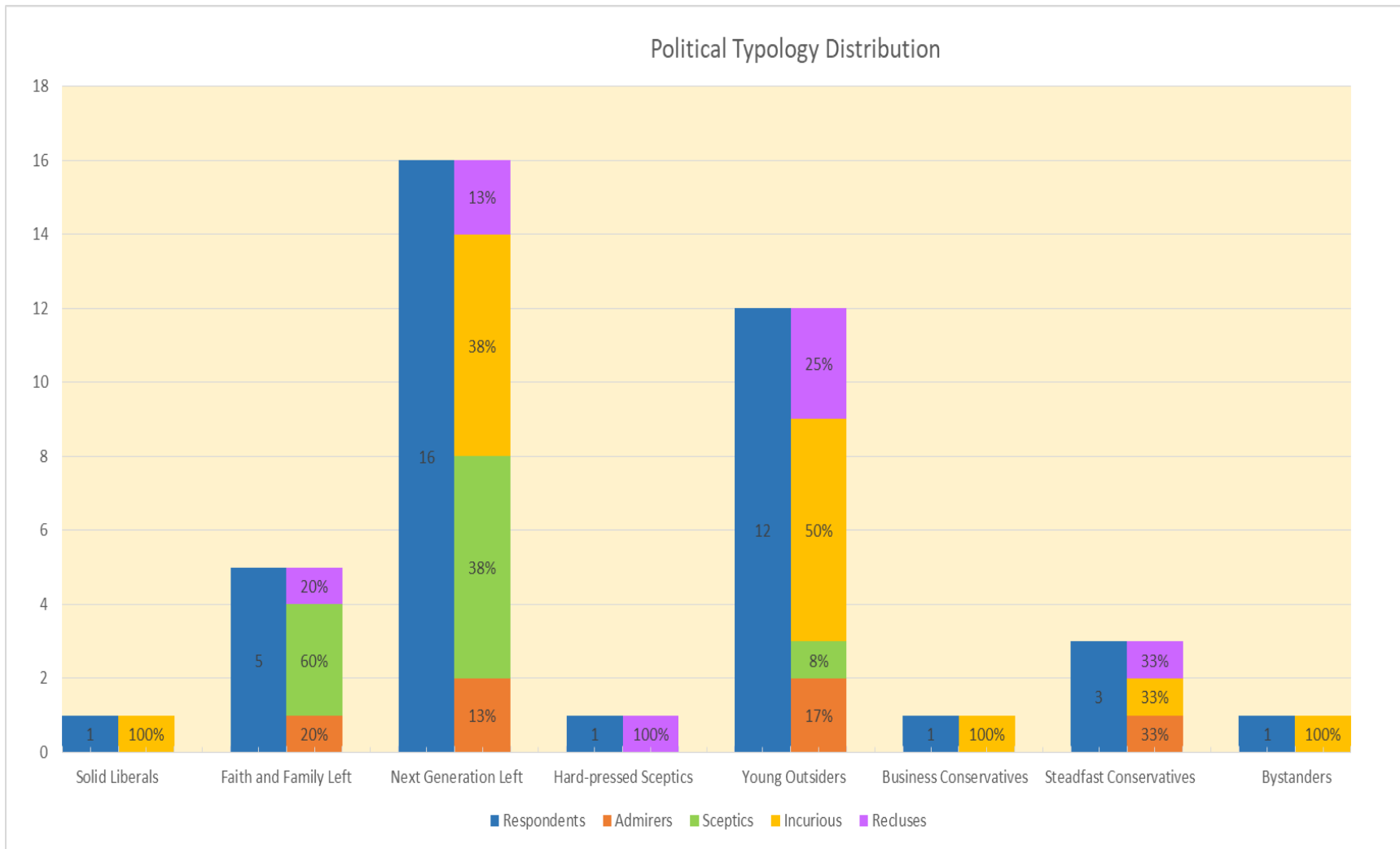
Figure 7.1 shows the distribution of the sample along the political typology spectrum from the Left (liberal) to the Right (conservative). It also identifies percentages of political typology in each of the four groups based on interviews. The Next-Generation Left is the most populous political typology group – 16 respondents, or 40 percent of the sample. They are present in all four political classification groups identified in this study. The Next-Generation Left is in the Democratic Party camp. The second most populous typology group is the Young

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.people-press.org/quiz/political-typology/>

Outsiders – 12 respondents, or 30 percent of the sample. They can also be found in all four classification groups. The Young Outsiders can be characterized as non-committing Republicans.

Both the Next-Generation left, and the Young Outsiders “tend to be very liberal on social issues, very secular in their religious orientation and are generally open to immigration” (Pew Research Center, 2014, p. 19). At the same time, they differ in their opinions about the government spending as the Next Generation Left group is more supportive of expensive social programs.

The third most populous group in the sample is Faith and Family Left which consists of 5 respondents or 12.5 percent of the sample. The only group where Faith and Family Left is not represented is the Incurious. There are also three Social Conservatives (one Admirer, one Incurious, and one Recluse); a Solid Liberal; a Business Conservative, and a Bystander in the Incurious group. Finally, there is one Hard-pressed Sceptic Recluse.



**Figure 7.1 Political typology distribution by the group and among the four classification groups.**

As a group, respondents provided uniformed answers (30+ votes) on seven questions (numbers of responses are in parentheses):

2. A. Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard **(34)**  
B. Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people **(5)**  
C. No opinion **(1)**
3. A. This country should do whatever it takes to protect the environment **(30)**  
B. This country has gone too far in its efforts to protect the environment **(5)**  
C. No opinion **(5)**
5. A. Racial discrimination is the main reason why many black people can't get ahead these days **(0)**  
B. Blacks who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition **(33)**  
C. No opinion **(7)**
14. A. The best way to ensure peace is through military strength **(7)**  
B. Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace **(31)**  
C. No opinion **(2)**
15. A. Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside of our control **(4)**  
B. Everyone has it in their own power to succeed **(32)**  
C. No opinion **(4)**
19. A. Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost many jobs and hurt the economy **(3)**  
B. Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost **(35)**  
C. No opinion **(2)**
23. A. Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents **(37)**  
B. Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care **(0)**  
C. No opinion **(3)**

Two of the questions that received uniformed answers are about environment policies (#3 and #19) which means that respondents in general are in favor of protecting the environment. Answers to questions #2, #5, and #15 indicate that respondents are self-sufficient and do not rely on the system to provide for them. Question #14 reveals that, as a group, respondents are not militaristic. Finally, in question #23 the majority of respondents agreed that immigration is a good thing for a country.



A ‘No opinion’ answer choice was introduced to provide more options. Thirty six respondents used it at least once. Table 7.3 shows the number of times each respondent used option C – ‘No opinion’ as an answer. The numbers are in parentheses.

**Table 7.3 Number of times respondents chose a ‘No Opinion’ option**

<b>Classification based on political opinions, participation, and efficacy</b>			
<b>Admirers</b>	<b>Skeptics</b>	<b>Incurious</b>	<b>Recluses</b>
Yuri (m/e) – FFL (4) Abigail (f/e) – YO (2) Rina (f/e) – YO (4) Elena (f/e) – SC (1) Anna (f/ne) – NGL (2) Marina (f/ne) – NGL (1)	John (m/e) – NGL (0) Ivan (m/ne) – NGL (9) Semion (m/ne) – NGL (5) Pavel (m/ne) – FFL (4) Vladislav (m/ne) – FFL (0) Yaroslava (f/e) – FFL (1) Stephanie (f/e) – NGL (3) Katya (f/e) – NGL (5) Sveta (f/e) – YO (0) Sessi (f/e) – NGL (4)	Timur (m/e) – NGL (1) Nick (m/e) – SL (10) Bill (m/e) – YO (8) Jason (m/e) – YO (8) Alexey (m/ne) – NGL (6) Alisa (f/e) – YO (11) Victoria (f/e) – NGL (10) Kristina (f/e) – NGL (7) Yana (f/e) – Bystander (15) Maria (f/e) – SC (3) Olga (f/ne) – BC (4) Marianna (f/ne) – YO (5) Margarita (f/ne) – YO (3) Belka (f/ne) – NGL (4) Korina (f/ne) – NGL (2) Chepe (f/ne) – YO (5)	Valentin (m/e) – YO (0) Aristarch (m/ne) – SC (4) Aleksandr (m/ne) – NGL (2) Nikita (m/ne) – YO (3) Andrei (m/ne) – NGL (2) Tapolina (f/ne) – FFL (1) Alevtina (f/ne) – HpS (8) Lukeria (f/ne) – YO (2)
Total: 6	10	16	8

There are four people who did not use a ‘No Opinion’ option in their surveys: three Skeptics (John (m/e), Vladislav (m/ne), Sveta (f/e)) and one Recluse (Valentin (m/e)). Five respondents used a ‘No opinion’ answer only once: two Admirers (Elena (f/e) and Marina (f/ne)); one Skeptic (Yaroslava (f/e)); one Incurious (Timur (m/e)); and one Recluse (Tapolina (f/ne)). There are four people who opted for a ‘No opinion’ 10+ times. All of them are in the Incurious group: Nick (m/e), Alisa (f/e), Victoria (f/e), and Yana (f/e).

When looking at responses altogether, a ‘No opinion’ option was used in every question at least once (Question #2). There are seven questions that received 10 or more ‘No opinion’ answers (the numbers of responses are in parentheses).

6. A. Business corporations make too much profit **(9)**  
 B. Most corporations make fair and reasonable profits **(16)**  
 C. No opinion **(15)**
7. A. Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return **(20)**  
 B. Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently **(10)**  
 C. No opinion **(10)**
10. A. The growing number of newcomers from other countries threatens traditional American customs and values **(8)**  
 B. The growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthens American society **(18)**  
 C. No opinion **(14)**
11. A. Government is always wasteful and inefficient **(11)**  
 B. Government often does a better job than people give it credit for **(17)**  
 C. No opinion **(12)**
13. A. Too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few large companies **(26)**  
 B. The largest companies do not have too much power **(3)**  
 C. No opinion **(11)**
16. A. Homosexuality should be accepted by society **(11)**  
 B. Homosexuality should be discouraged by society **(17)**  
 C. No opinion **(12)**
22. A. The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt **(17)**  
 B. The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy **(10)**  
 C. No opinion **(13)**

Among questions that received the most numbers of 'No Opinion' answers are questions about the welfare state (#7, #11, #22); the distribution of influences between private and public sectors (#6 and #13), and identity (#10 and #16).

### *7.6. Summary*

In Chapter 3 I mentioned The Boris Nemtsov Foundation's study about Russians in Germany. Their sample consisted of Russian-speaking immigrants from the former USSR and second-generation Russian-speaking immigrants who were born in Germany. The study analyzed immigrants' attitudes toward Russia and grouped respondents based on the duration of immigration; language spoken at home; language skills (German vs Russian); number and

frequency of contacts in the country of origin; connections in Germany; level of integration; and media consumption. The groups, listed from the most integrated to the least integrated, are: New Generation (34 percent of respondents); Middle Men (36 percent); Burgers (14 percent); and Imported Parents (16%) (Koneva & Tikhomirova, 2016).

In this chapter, I used a similar technique and divided respondents into four groups based on their opinions about political systems in the US and Russia; their comparison of American and Russian mass media; their political participation, and opinions on political efficacy. The four groups are the Admirers (15 percent); the Skeptics (25 percent), the Incurious (40 percent), and the Recluses (20 percent). They are distinct in some aspects (political systems comparison and political efficacy) and somewhat similar in others (mass media comparison and political participation). For 26 respondents (Skeptics and the Incurious), or 65 percent of the sample, moving from Russia to the United States, did not change their political perceptions. Skeptics remained critical of both Russian and American politics while the Incurious remained equally uninterested in both. Political behavior had changed in the two remaining groups: the Admirers (they became more active) and the Recluses (they had withdrawn from the political process altogether). Somewhat similar conclusion was made about immigrants from Former Soviet Union (FSU) in Israel. Michael Philippov and Anna Kaufelman observed that these immigrants adapt to Israel very slow. While immigrant youth adapts to new cultural codes relatively easy, adult population sticks with their Russian identity: they prefer Russian-speaking social circles and rely on Russian-speaking mass media. FSU immigrants have a vague understanding of democracy and associate democratic reforms with political instability and economic turmoil (Philippov & Knafelman, 2011). “In Israel *Homo Sovieticus* is transformed into a person who

does not believe in his/her ability to affect national politics and simultaneously respects the political symbolism of the state” (Ibid., p. 40).

In the second part of the chapter, I analyzed the results of the Pew Research Center’s Political Typology survey. Its results reveal that the Next Generation Left and the Young Outsiders together incorporate 70 percent of the sample. These two groups are both located toward the center of the political typology spectrum. They have some commonalities. They both have liberal views when it comes to immigration, religious practices, and a family structure. Nevertheless, they support different sides of the government spending argument: the Young Outsiders are wary of large government and expensive social programs while the Next Generation Left supports the spending notion. 12.5 percent of the sample consists of the Faith and Family Left, which is a more liberal group when it comes to the government programs but conservative about religion and a family structure. The fourth most populous political typology group is Steadfast Conservative with three people or 7.5% of the sample. This group is the most conservative on the political typology spectrum.

## Chapter 8 Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss the results of data analysis, make some important conceptual observations, and outline limitations of the study and the chosen method. Based on limitations, I suggest several ideas for future projects to enhance the present study.

### *8.1. Initial assumptions vs. findings*

My initial assumptions (Chapter 4) about political socialization of first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants read as follows: English language proficiency ensures a successful socialization in the American society. Next, exposure to multiple political socialization agencies results in faster and more effective political socialization.

Based on the data analysis (Chapter 7), I can conclude that my initial assumptions are only partially correct. The Recluses group consists of eight people, and seven of them do not speak English. Their decreased political participation is caused by a lack of exposure to their English-speaking environment. The main reason, as stated by Recluses themselves, is inability to speak English (or speak it well enough). The remaining three groups – the Admirers, the Skeptics, and the Incurious – consist of both those who speak English fluently and those who do not speak it at all (see Table 8.1.):

**Table 8.1 Number of speaker and non-speaker of English in each group**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Bilingual (English and Russian)</b>	<b>Russian-speakers only</b>
Admirers	4	2
Skeptics	6	4
Incurious	9	7
Recluses	1	7

My data analysis suggests that, when it comes to political socialization, the results are mixed. Knowledge of the English language is not the determining factor. Inability to speak English negatively affects comfort level and stops political socialization only for some immigrants, but not for all. While the Skeptics and the Incurious did not have any changes to their opinions about politics after immigration, the Admirers proved to be more politically enthusiastic in the US regardless of their language skills. The lack of English can be successfully compensated by other agencies of political socialization: a spouse for Anna (f/ne) and a combination of agencies for Marina (f/ne).

The Admirers became more politically enthusiastic after they moved to the US. They wanted to actively participate in politics in Russia but did not see any opportunities. For them, the authoritarian regime established by Vladimir Putin became one of the main reasons for emigration from Russia. Even though none of the Admirers are the US citizens yet, all six of them plan to apply for the US citizenship when they are eligible. Admirers believe in American democracy and try to learn about it through mass media, their American friends and colleagues, spouses, and other available agencies of political socialization. Their political behavior changed not only due to contacts with Americans but also because they deliberately sought the exposure. Admirers are curious and resourceful. Based on their experiences, I conclude that in the US, a political socialization is available to anyone upon request.

On the other hand, the Recluses became more withdrawn from the political process. They possess strong opinions about politics in Russia and still like to discuss Russia's current political developments. At the same time, they could not say anything specific about American politics. Their assessment of the US and its political process does not differ from the one they had prior to immigration. Recluses have limited to no exposure to the American society because they do not

speaking the language. Since they are not able to communicate with Americans, their social circles are limited to their immediate families and other Russian-speaking immigrants. Nikita (m/ne) and Aleksandr (m/ne) work in American companies but admit that communication with co-workers is very limited. Valentin (m/e), despite fluency in English, decreased his political activities because he does not need to worry about politics anymore – he is in a country with a strong and stable political system, and it will not change anytime soon.

The 2016 Presidential Elections in the US showed the lowest voter turnout since 1996<sup>25</sup>. In some respects, the Recluses might be more American than the Admirers are. This would be consistent with Robert Putnam's conclusions about the transformation of American society towards greater political apathy (Putnam, 1995). There is no guarantee that exposure to political socialization agencies will produce successful political socialization and turn immigrants into active participants of the political process. It depends mostly on immigrants' desire to learn about American politics. It is their decision whether or not they want to participate in it. With that said, political socialization agencies used by first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants in the sample are not exclusive (ethnic-centered) or restricted in any way. They are available to anyone at little (ESOL classes), to no cost (churches, partners, volunteering).

### *8.2. Data interpretation*

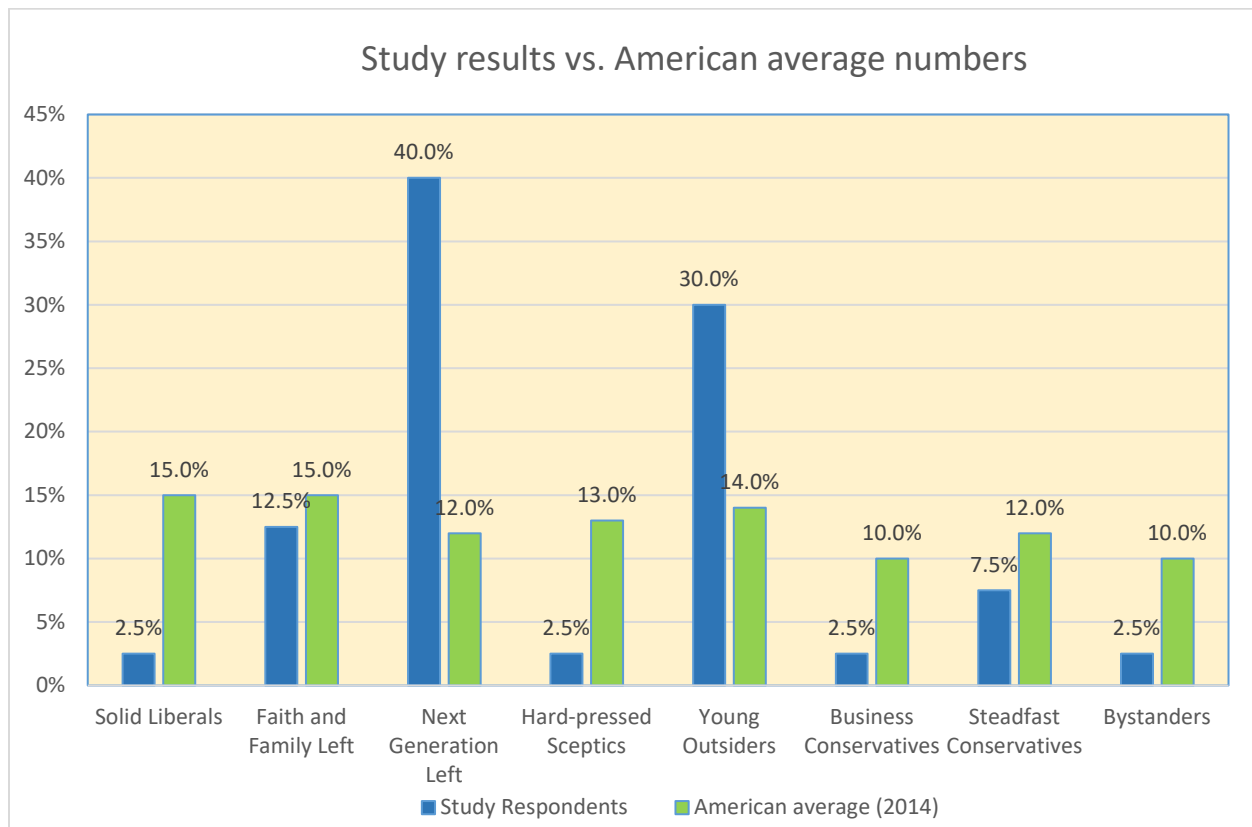
Figure 8.1 shows a comparison between the study's results and average American voters' distribution among eight political typology groups.

The spread among the groups in the 2014 American political typology survey is almost even with each political typology group holding between 10 and 15 percent of the public. The

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2016/11/11/politics/popular-vote-turnout-2016/index.html>

study's survey results show that most respondents (57.5 percent) are located toward the left side of the political spectrum with the Next Generation Left group consisting of 15 individuals or 40 percent of the sample. The right side of the spectrum hosts 42.5 percent total with 12 respondents (30 percent of the sample) identified as the Young Outsiders.



**Figure 8.1 Study political typology distribution vs. 2014 average American typology distribution**

As mentioned earlier, The Next Generation Left and the Young Outsiders have certain things in common. For example, both groups are located toward the middle of political spectrum which hosts, in the words of Anthony Downs, “the crucial middle-of-the-road voters” (Downs, 1957, p. 117). Theoretically, they can be pulled towards either Republicans or Democrats as they are very moderate and avoid extremes in their political preferences. For example, the Young Outsiders, unlike the rest of the right-wing groups, tend to have good opinions about both the Republican and the Democratic political parties. The Next Generation Left stands out on the left



of the spectrum thanks to an individualistic manner and positive attitudes toward the private sector. Figure 8.2 is the Pew Research Center’s placement of the Next Generation Left and the Young Outsiders on the political ideology spectrum (Pew Research Center, 2014, pp. 9-10).

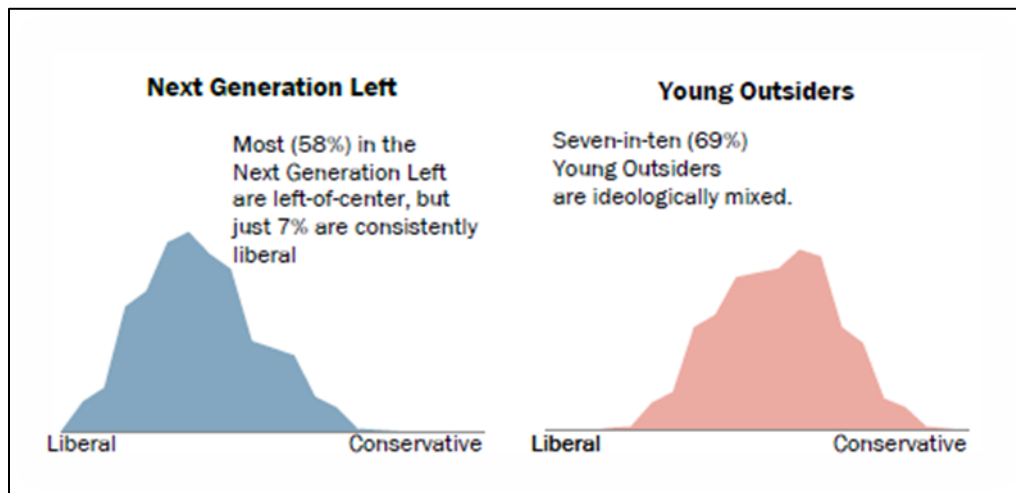


Figure 8.2 Group locations on the political spectrum<sup>26</sup>

Figure 8.3 demonstrates the large overlap between the two groups when placed together on the spectrum.

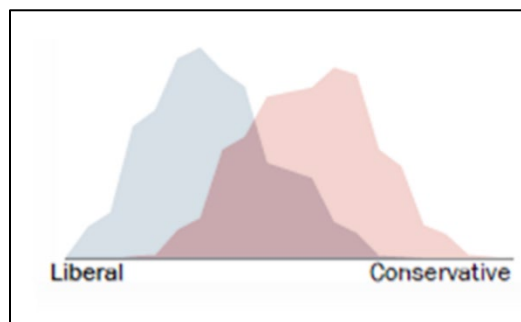


Figure 8.3 The overlapping area between The Next Generation Left and The Young Outsiders

I assume that, under the right circumstances, 70 percent of the sample can easily switch between the Republican and the Democratic political parties. Indeed, many respondents argued

<sup>26</sup> Figures 8.2 and 8.3. are different combinations of two images reprinted from “Beyond Red vs. Blue: the political typology” by The Pew Research Center (2014), retrieved: <https://www.people-press.org/2014/06/26/the-political-typology-beyond-red-vs-blue/> Reprinted with permission. More information can be found in Appendix A.

that the US political structure is very stable and it does not matter which political party is in power because neither can shake the system to its core, so to speak.

On the other hand, being in the middle means lacking strong beliefs and civic passions. Many respondents stated they either do not care about politics or do not find it important. If that was true then I expected to see more survey results similar to that of Yana's (f/e) who declared her utter ignorance toward politics by choosing option 'C' (No Opinion) 15 out of 23 times. Her political ideology could not be determined, and I placed her in the Bystander group. Based on numerous declarations of being apolitical, I should have more people in a Bystander group. Instead, a lot of those who declared their lack of interest in politics scored either as The Next Generational Left (Timur (m/e), Belka (f/ne), Korina (f/ne)) or the Young Outsiders (Alisa (f/e), Marianna (f/ne), Jason (m/e), Bill (m/e), and Valentin (m/e)). In fact, as Figure 7.1 shows, the Incurious group was the most diverse in political typologies. What does it mean? In my opinion, there are two possible explanations.

The first possible explanation: perhaps respondents do not understand what is political. Many of them provided plenty of criticism toward the government (both Russian and American) but did not elaborate on any other aspects of the political process. For example, at the end of the interview, I asked respondents to describe a civil society – all of them had struggled with it. In the literature, there is no specific definition of a civil society and it can be only loosely described as a combination of several aspects: a part of society (i.e., voluntary organizations); a kind of society in a pursuit of positive norms; and a distinct reciprocal public sphere (Chebankova, 2013, p. 164). Respondents, however, came-up with one-sided descriptions: the majority agreed that in a civil society people's needs come first and their ability to keep governments in check follows. In their collective opinion, a civil society exists to provide for people and give them the ability to

control the process. No respondent mentioned any duties and obligations of citizens in a civil society. The tendency to only see privileges but not responsibilities indicates political immaturity and a lack of civic exposure.

Moreover, most respondents consider voting as the only kind of political participation available to them. There were few people (Rina (f/e), Abigail (f/e), and Yuri (m/e)) who talked about canvassing, volunteering for a political campaign, and public protests as forms of political participation they are willing to perform once they become the US citizens but they had never done anything like that. As for the rest of respondents, being a spectator and an occasional voter sums up their political participation. Political literacy and civic engagement require exposure and practice. Even when it comes to voting, research shows that naturalized US citizens with previous democratic experiences are more likely to vote and be politically active than those who emigrated from authoritarian states (Goldsmith & Holzner, 2015, p. 50). In case of Russian immigrants, the exposure to democratic practices and principles of a civil society was minimal before immigration. If it had occurred at all, it would've taken place in the 1990s when any democratic development was overshadowed by drastic and, for the most part, unfortunate economic and social changes.

The second possible explanation of political confusion is the inferiority complex. As early as the 1920s, sociologists paid attention to immigrants' humbleness. Immigrants feel inferior to native-born Americans because of their minority status, lack of language and cultural skills. An inferiority complex minimizes immigrants' chances to successfully integrate into a host society and creates a feeling of defeat and, sometimes, resentment. Herbert Miller called it 'the oppression psychosis' (Miller, 1921, p. 139). An outside demand and even an internal desire to assimilate into the native majority can perpetrate inferiority in minorities and immigrants

(Alba, 1999, p. 9). In case of Russians in America, the sense of inferiority is the product of a long history of rivalry between the USSR and the US during the Cold War – a competition of the two different economic systems, ideologies, and lifestyles. The Soviet defeat confirmed American superiority in all these aspects and forced Russia to pursue a liberal model of development. Western countries, predominantly the US, became the source of advisers, models, and examples for emulation. In the Russian collective mind, circa mid-1990s, the West was an exceptional place where governments took care of the sick and disabled and everyone lived in luxury and comfort. The westerners, according to this premise, were enlightened individuals and brilliant professionals in their fields. Western products have the highest quality and the best design esthetics. In other words, the West is an ideal civilization while Russia is somewhere very far behind.

When asked about their pre-emigration image of America, all forty respondents provided a description similar to the one above. They were very positive, optimistic, and idealistic. Not one person mentioned anything negative when describing their impression of America from afar. For many respondents (Abigail (f/e), Yana (f/e), Rina (f/e), Katya (f/e), Anna (f/ne), Marina (f/ne), Tapolina (f/ne), Yuri (m/e), Nikita (m/ne), Aristarch (m/ne), Aleksandr (m/ne), Alexey (m/ne)), their pre-conceived impressions did not change after living in the US for years despite numerous difficulties each of them had encountered. There is a strong belief in the American economic and social superiority. So prevalent was the belief that President Dmitry Medvedev<sup>27</sup> addressed it in his 2009 “Go Russia!” article (emphasis added):

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<sup>27</sup> Dmitry A. Medvedev was the third President of Russia (2008-2012). He currently serves as the Prime Minister of Russian Federation (2012 - present).

“We must have interested partners and involve them in joint activities. And if we need to change something ourselves in order to do so, abandon previous prejudices and illusions, then we should do so. I am of course not referring to a policy of unilateral concessions. Lack of will and incompetence will not gain us any respect, gratitude, or gains. This has already happened in our recent history. **Naive notions of the infallible and happy West and the eternally underdeveloped Russia are unacceptable, offensive and dangerous.** But no less dangerous is the path of confrontation, self-isolation, mutual insults and recrimination” (Medvedev, 2009).

President Medvedev criticized previous attempts to modernize the Russian economy and emphasized the importance of making Russia relevant in the contemporary world. In order to change the entire country, people need to change their thinking first. The sense of inherent backwardness is a serious problem in Russia and those who immigrate to Western countries feel inferior even before settling. That is why most Russian immigrants often feel it is not their place to develop or express opinions about politics in the US.

Thus, a lack of political knowledge and an inferiority complex can serve as a good explanation for respondents’ declarations of being apolitical but having strong political views at the same time.

Initially, I divided my sample based on English language proficiency and gender. The division by gender allowed me to see the differences in attitudes and responses between men and women. Russian women are more active and more inquisitive compared to Russian men. There are 24 female participants in my study and only 16 males. Men were more hesitant to participate compared to women. It was mostly due to their busy schedules and the lack of interest. Women, on the other hand, were excited to participate and talk about their experiences. My data shows that, compared to Russian men, Russian women are more open to economic, cultural, and

political socialization in the US. Among the study participants, 8 women came to the US after marrying American men. All 8 marriages were going strong at the time of data collection. It shows that Russian women are more accepting of a foreign culture and willing to learn and, when occasion calls for it, to compromise. Russian men, on the other hand, refuse the idea of an intercultural marriage. They do not believe in it and insist that cultural differences will destroy even the strongest of romantic connections (Andrei (m/ne)).

It is interesting to note that the Admirers group in my classification consists of five women and only one man. Two female Admirers demonstrated their enthusiasm about the American political process despite lacking in their English language skills. Many of my female respondents are either breadwinners in their families (Yaroslava (f/ne) and Stephanie (f/e)) or self-employed enthusiasts who find their place in a foreign economic and cultural environment with ease (Abigail (f/e), Rina (f/e), Kristina (f/e), Alisa (f/e), Korina (f/ne)). Based on my data, I can conclude that Russian female immigrants adapt better to their host environment compared to Russian male immigrants because they are more accepting of a foreign mentality.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, Nina Michalikova found considerable differences between East European male and female immigrants in the US. She noted that East European women are more educated and more socially active compared to East European men. Women tend to be equally well integrated into the labor market and social environments, like neighborhoods (Michalikova, 2017, pp. 161-165). My data confirm these findings.

### *8.3. Comparisons to Russian speakers in the US, Israel, and Germany*

Soviet Jews in the US, did not feel inferior to Americans and preferred integration in the US society by economic means through business ownerships (Gold, 1997, p. 272). However, they felt condescending attitudes from American Jewish community for either not being very

religious or for being too conservative about politics. Soviet Jews usually affiliated with Republican Party while American Jews, for the most part, are Democrats. As a result, many Soviet Jews resented resettlement programs initiated by American Jewish organizations. In addition, those who held important positions in the USSR, felt ashamed for not retaining similar status in the US and intentionally withdrew from American Jewish communities (Ibid., p. 168).

In Israel, Russian-speaking immigrants from the FSU have a passive perception of their role in national politics. They “are unfamiliar with the mechanisms of public influence in a democratic society (laws, bureaucratic procedures, and so on)” (Philippov & Knafelman, 2011, p. 44). Russian-speakers in Israel do not believe in a fairness of electoral campaigns and insist that a state should have a distance from its citizens (Ibid.). At the same time, they embrace the right-wing of political spectrum and favor strong leadership, individual liberties, and national level politics (Ibid., p. 41). A more recent research indicates that Russian-speakers in Israel started to move away from the national politics toward local political scenes. FSU immigrants are among the three largest and most influential groups in Israeli politics (the other two are the Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews). Their “advantages stem their large size, human capital, strong ethnic consciousness, and their increasing desire to be a leading group in Israel” (Al-Haj, 2015, p. 96). It is evident that Russian-speaking immigrants feel more politically confident and efficient in Israel. They are no longer strangers, but one of the leading groups of citizens and decision-makers.

Germany has a reputation of a stable, socially-oriented state. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was an influx of immigrants to Germany consisting mostly of Russian-speaking Jews and ethnic Germans from Kazakhstan and Russia (Münz & Ohliger, 2003, p. 292). Upon their arrival, ethnic Germans from FSU and Eastern Europe (collectively called

*Aussiedler*) were not targeted by German political parties because they “were seen as having a lifestyle that was outdated and, hence, would tend toward being conservative” (Ibid., p. 289). *Aussiedler*, while great in numbers, lacked social networking skills and, as a group, had low organizational and mobilization capabilities (Ibid., p. 299).

Russian-speaking immigrants viewed Germany as a well-developed country with high standards of living. At the same time, they had to go through a disillusionment stage, similar to Russians in America. Reality was not as rosy as it seemed from afar: German people were not very friendly and German bureaucracy was bulky and confusing (Isurin, 2011, p. 77). Russian-speakers felt inferior toward Germans whom they perceived as far more cultured and sophisticated people. In addition, immigrants often felt unwelcomed due to a wide-spread prejudice against foreigners (Ibid., p. 88).

A limited research shows that, as of 2016, approximately 35 percent of Russian Germans supported the Christian Democratic Union for Germany (CDU), a center-right political party. Ten to fourteen percent favored the Alternative for Germany (AfD), a right-wing to far-right political party (Stratievski, 2017). Russians in Germany is a complex group that incorporates over eighty different nationalities. They do not play a substantial role in German politics because “a homogenous Russian-speaking community simply doesn’t exist in Germany” (Ibid.).

Why do immigrants from the USSR and later Russia tend to be more conservative in their political views? In my opinion, the best explanation was provided by Zvi Gitelman. In his 1982 study of the Soviet and American immigrants to Israel, he noticed that after living in Israel for three years, immigrants from the Soviet Union had changed their opinion about political efficacy (it became more positive), but not an authority (remained the same). Gitelman hypothesized that “the sense of efficacy is more sensitive to the specific political system, whereas attitudes toward



authority are more immune to changes in political environment” (Gitelman, 1982, p. 313). He theorized that attitudes toward authority are formed continuously starting at an early age. People are exposed to an authority concept in their families, at school, and at work. As follows, opinions on authority are more stable and less amenable to change. In a paternalistic state such as Russia, people are historically more submissive to authority. As follows, while immigrants’ opinions on political efficacy can be influenced by experiences in their host society (as it was displayed in my study), attitudes toward authority had proven to be very consistent and resistant to changes among immigrants from Russia and other former Soviet republics.

#### *8.4. Theoretical findings*

In this study, only the Admirers are willing and ready to participate in the political process in ways they had never considered in Russia. At 15 percent, they are the smallest group in the sample. What happened to the others? If we were to evaluate Skeptics and the Incurious using Almond and Powell’s conceptualization, both groups would qualify as ‘subjects’ in the political culture framework:

“Subjects are those citizens who become part of the national political system and perceive its impact, or potential impact, on their lives. But their view of their own role in politics remains that of subjects, affected by governmental action, but not active in shaping it. They may have policy preferences, as well as positive or negative expectations about their treatment by police and administration. They may even develop a sense of legitimacy toward, or alienation from, the regime and the authorities. But they remain passive in their orientation toward political participation” (Almond & Powell, 1978, p. 35).

In order for *subjects* to transform into *participants*, they need to exhibit high levels of political trust and low levels of political hostility. Political trust refers to an individual's willingness to work with others and the ability to view himself/herself as an important part of the group. Political hostility is an "emotional component of intergroup and interpersonal relation in a society" (Ibid., p. 38). A sense of mutual hostility can easily develop if groups base their relations on differences and do not search for a common ground. Political trust and political hostility are inversely related, and a balance between them depends on political culture. Almond and Verba defined the US political culture as a participant (Almond & Verba, 1963). A century earlier, de Tocqueville, an outsider, had acknowledged the infectious atmosphere of groups and associations present in the US (Tocqueville, 1945b). Though public activities might have decreased toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Putnam, 1995), even the study participants agree that the US is a country with an active collective consciousness and energetic political disposition. They described the US as the most organized and comfortable place for living with no bureaucratic or other forms of corruption. They trust in American government much more than the Russian one. At the same time, only Admirers became politically enthusiastic in America. Why did the American political culture fail to disarm the Skeptics and excite the Incurious?

A glance in more recent work by one of the original contributors to political culture concept (G. Bingham Powell), reveals a simplified logic behind the classification of political culture into parochial, subject, and participant – a congruence theory. "For instance, support for a democratic system is typically higher in societies that have a more participatory political culture. Authoritarian states are more likely to endure where people lack the skills or motivations to participate and the state discourages their participation" (Powell et al., 2012, p. 50). According

to Powell et.al, a proper education and a democratic setting should, eventually, make people politically active. Looking at my sample, there are sixteen respondents (40%) with advanced degrees; eighteen (45%) have college degrees; five individuals (12.5%) went to a trade school; one did not finish his Bachelor's degree, and one was in college at the time of the interview. In other words, it is a very educated bunch, and one cannot blame the lack of political participation on ignorance. All respondents immigrated to the US between the years of 2004 and 2014. So they had spent at least several years in a participant political culture before interviews took place. Nevertheless, they remain as passive observers. What is the problem?

Larry Diamond pointed out that “socioeconomic development does generate more ‘modern’ attitudes and values: greater tolerance and valuing freedom, higher levels of political efficacy, greater capacity to participate in politics and civic life” (Diamond, 1999, p. 162). After researching the evolution of political culture studies, I realized there is an assumption at the base of the concept that was never questioned. We assume that educated individuals will readily participate in the political process if opportunity presents itself. We assume that an authoritarian regime is the only barrier that prevents people from being politically active. Finally, we assume that political participation is a natural human behavior. What if these assumptions are wrong? As this study shows, it is possible to gather forty educated individuals who, for the most part, are not interested in political participation and feel quite comfortable on the sidelines of the political process. There are people like Semion (m/ne) the Skeptic and Timur (m/e) the Incurious. Both are post-doctoral researchers, and they both came to the US in 2004-2005 timeframe which means they've spent more than a decade in the US by the time our interviews took place. Timur and Semion like to talk about politics, they vote, and volunteer their time and expertise. At the same time, both are disillusioned about politics. According to political culture concept, they

should desire to change political process if they dislike it. On the contrary, Timur and Semion prefer to withdraw from it and so do many other respondents. Because of examples like these, I do not agree with the assumption that people would naturally become politically active in an encouraging political environment.

I also question the premise about political culture's developmental progression from a parochial to a subject and from a subject to a participant. Had this process ever occurred? In my opinion, the three types of political culture follow an outdated logic: one can picture it as a three-step ladder with a parochial step on the bottom and a participant on the top. For some unexplained reason, every country is expected to climb this ladder in order to reach the top step.

Furthermore, when it comes to questions of identity and culture, one of the most prominent theories today is liberal multiculturalism. It teaches us to tolerate, respect, and support opinions, identities, and culture that are different from ours. Political philosopher Will Kymlicka argued that "liberal multiculturalism is the view that states should not only uphold the familiar set of common civil, political, and social rights of citizenship...but also adopt various group-specific rights or policies that are intended to recognize and accommodate the distinctive identities and aspirations of ethnocultural groups" (Kymlicka, 2007, p. 61). The message of multiculturalism is to celebrate diversity of cultures, religions, ethnicities, identities, etc.

However, when it comes to political culture, countries, and societies are still judged against the three-step ladder in an attempt to achieve Francis Fukuyama's 'true global culture' "centering around technologically driven economic growth and the capitalist social relations necessary to produce and sustain it" (Fukuyama, 2006, p. 126). In my opinion, the concept of political culture is an exceptional and important part of the Comparative Politics studies. It provides an opportunity to look past the dry constructs of states' political structures in search for

deeper meanings behind domestic and foreign policy decisions. At the same time, it should not be used as a measuring tool, but rather a catalog to document and preserve the richness of political cultures and their lifecycles throughout the human history.

#### *8.5. Study limitations and future opportunities*

As any social research, this study has its limitations and imperfections. The common problem in social science research is a lack of the middle ground: it is either too narrow (qualitative methods) or too wide (quantitative methods) (Gerring, 2001). Qualitative studies are based on an in-depth research in a natural setting; it requires a massive amount of information about a subject or a case. That is why a good qualitative study has few subjects (cases) but provides detailed descriptions. The ultimate goal is to paint a complex and holistic picture of a phenomenon. In my opinion, the qualitative method has one main limitation – subjectivity. An in-depth analysis leaves little room for objectivity and generalizability. Since the researcher is deeply involved in the process of his/her research, it could be challenging to differentiate between experiences of the researcher and the researched. I think my interview questions had changed my respondents in some ways as they had never considered many of the questions. Likewise, they had changed me, my perceptions, and my abilities to analyze their responses. Subjectivity is the result of data gathering techniques that are too close and personal.

A qualitative method used in this study is grounded theory. Glazer and Strauss, the fathers of grounded theory, developed a path to a theory-building relying on data and skipping any a priori assumptions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 3). They had also acknowledged the Achilles' heel of grounded theory - theoretical saturation. The researcher is constantly confronted with 'slices of data' – different kinds of data that provide “different views or vantage points from which to understand a category and to develop its properties” (Ibid., p. 65). In a way,

theoretical saturation never ends. There is always one more additional point or an opinion. In case of immigrants' political socialization, different vantage points can be provided by respondents' friends and family, colleagues, fellow church-goers, etc. Their insights on respondents' adaptation in the US could be invaluable to my theory. Unfortunately, getting these 'slices of data' would mean to violate respondent's privacy and deem my research unethical.

In terms of my data, I have only one regret – I wish I asked my respondents about their living accommodations. Do they rent or own their homes? I think this aspect is important and relevant to this study because it can indicate the level of commitment to life in the US. With that said, I envision different avenues for future follow-up research. It could be interesting to broaden the study's geography. For example, there is a large Russian-speaking community split between Columbus and Cincinnati in the state of Ohio. It would be very interesting to compare and contrast their experiences with those from Florida. Another interesting idea is to conduct the same study with Ukrainians, Belarusians, and immigrants from other former Soviet republics in Central and South Florida. Comparing their interviews with those of ethnic Russians could give some interesting insights not only on their socialization patterns but differences in post-Soviet adaptations in general.

#### *8.6. Summary*

In this chapter, the main findings were compared to initial assumptions to reveal that good English language skills do not determine the success of political socialization. Instead, a personal initiative can speed up the process. American political socialization agencies seem to be within arm's reach, so to speak. There is an apparent disconnect between interviews and survey results indicating that respondents either lack political exposure or suffer from an inferiority complex (or both). The majority of respondents did not change their attitudes toward politics and

political participation despite being surrounded by a participant political culture. It means that you can get a person out of his/her political culture, but you cannot get a political culture out of the person. If this is correct, then people, like countries, carry their political cultures through their lives. In chapter 1 I argued that both the US and Russia display a continuity of political culture. If it applies to people as well as their countries, then there is a need to reconsider the use of political culture. I propose to use it as a catalog instead of a measuring tool.

## Conclusion

“So tell me, what is civil society?” – Anna asked the minute our interview was over. I replied: “It is a complex social phenomenon, but first and foremost, it is a responsibility.” We talked about it for another hour.

Anna was born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia. She is still in love with her hometown. When I asked her if she misses it, she started crying: “*of course I do, it is the most beautiful place in the world!*” As someone who grew up in Russia in the 1990s, Anna is no stranger to the feeling of defeat.

*“In 1998, I remember I wanted to buy a nail polish, so I put some pocket money aside. I went to a store thinking I can buy five bottles of nail polish, but I could only afford one – prices went up overnight after Russia’s economy defaulted. I got used to things collapsing around me. The 1990s was a non-stop economic and social failure. Living in a constant downfall was the norm.”*

Anna got her first job in a company that later was charged with fraud and extortion. She worked at the front office and had no idea that her employers committed routine raids on small businesses. She moved on and accepted another job offer but only after she confirmed that her salary would be ‘white’<sup>28</sup> and she knew how the company functioned. She became wary of corruption and fraud. After the 2011 Parliamentary elections, Anna became very distrustful of

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<sup>28</sup> A ‘white salary’ is a legal wage. Black salary is an unofficial earning given to an employee under the table to avoid paying taxes.



the Russian political system as well. In Chapter 7, subsection 7.1.3 (p. 153), I described Anna's unpleasant confrontation at the polling station when she realized that, due to her name change, a polling station personnel intended to use her vote twice.

Anna lives in the US since 2012. She is a stay-at-home mom and a homemaker. Anna's husband is a former Russian compatriot who left Russia in 1992 when he was 22 years old. They met in St. Petersburg when he came to Russia to sell a property he inherited. Anna visited him in the US several times. On her last trip, she became pregnant and stayed for good.

Anna was one of the first people who volunteered for my study. She called me the same day I posted my ad on Facebook. She likes discussing politics. Both Anna and her husband oppose Putin's regime in Russia. They blame it for Russian economic stagnation and its continuous social backwardness. They pay a lot of attention to Russia's opposition and American mainstream media. Anna would like to obtain American citizenship not only for unrestricted international travel (the most popular answer among my respondents) but also because she wants to participate in the political process. Anna believes that in the US your voice means something and you can influence your environment. In Russia, she witnessed corruption too many times to hope for any improvements in the economic and political order. Anna does not speak English very well and communicates mostly with her husband, his friends, and fellow Russian-speaking stay-at-home mothers.

This study was an attempt to understand how first-generation ethnic Russian immigrants socialize in the American political environment. Anna was one of forty respondents who participated. The concept of political culture assumes that people are socially inclined to be politically active. Political participation suffocates under authoritarian regimes and thrives in

democracies. As follows, immigrants from Russia, an authoritarian state, should exhibit behavior similar to Anna's.

On the contrary, Anna is one of only six people – the Admirers – who became more enthusiastic about the US's political process. The two largest groups – Skeptics and the Incurious – did not demonstrate any changes in their political behavior. The final group – the Recluses – reduced their interest in politics altogether.

Russian immigrants do not come to the United States to escape misery, discrimination, or persecution. Like the rest of Eastern Europeans, Russians move to improve their standards of living. They did not have advantages available to some other immigrant groups: government assistance (early Cuban immigrants), resources of ethnic organizations (Russian-speaking Jews), or extensive social networks (immigrants from Latin America & Asia). Russians have to be more resourceful in their economic, social, and political adaptations in the United States.

They appreciate America for its economic and political stability and concentrate on their personal and professional goals. For example, when it comes to voting, my research leads me to believe that the fundamental difference between Russian and American voters is the reasoning. Americans vote to elect someone to represent them and their domestic and foreign interests. Russians vote to elect a leader who could alleviate them from thinking about their domestic and foreign affairs. Russians seek stability so they can dedicate their time to personal interests.

Anna had an interesting story to share about people in Russia. Her husband once tried to start an international business and sought partners in Russia. Very soon he became frustrated with Russians because no one was willing to invest in his business idea. In Anna's words: *“my husband still does not understand why clever and well-educated people in Russia refuse to*

*progress and move forward. None of his friends wanted to take advantage of his offer. It was risky, but, as you know, losers do not drink champagne*<sup>29</sup>” Anna’s husband was disappointed in Russia. For him, Russia became the place of endless suffering. Partially it was due to a tragic family loss, but it was also because people were unwilling to change. Again, Russians seek stability and they are willing to pass on something potentially profitable but risky.

In Chapter 1 I described American and Russian political cultures. Both exhibit a historical continuity: some elements in Russian and American political cultures can be traced several hundred years back. American political culture is individualistic and prone to civic initiatives. Russian political culture is paternalistic and tend to have a well-defined hierarchical structure.

In Chapter 8, I concluded that people do not change easily and immigrants carry their native political culture with them wherever they go. The study findings confirm that immigrants do not embrace political culture of a host society. Stephen White’s transferability theory of political resocialization (Chapter 2) has some merit: immigrants retain their previous beliefs and patterns of political behavior after immigration (White et al., 2008, p. 269).

There is an apparent disconnect between interviews and survey results: many respondents declared themselves apolitical during interviews. At the same time, their surveys indicated they had strong opinions. This disconnect may be due to the lack of understanding what is considered a political issue. The inferiority complex could be another explanation.

Overall, the study shows that political socialization of first-generation ethnic Russians in the US can be successful. It does not depend on a good knowledge of the English language.

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<sup>29</sup> A loose translation from Russian idiom ‘кто не рискует тот не пьёт шампанское’

Rather it happens at will – an immigrant must want to socialize politically. Those who speak good English, have an encouraging partner and little children, seem to want it more than others. The most common agencies of political socialization used by ethnic Russians are ESOL classes, a spouse, volunteering organizations, and the church.

In this study, I developed an immigrants' political attitudes classification based on opinions on political process, mass media, political participation and efficacy. The classification consists of four groups: the Admirers, the Skeptics, the Incurious, and the Recluses. This classification is generalizable and could be successfully used in other studies about immigrants.

The main theoretical contribution consists of a proposal to treat political culture concept as a catalog instead of a classification tool that is used to sort political cultures around the world into three tight categories that tell little about different people and their political aspirations.

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## **Appendices**



## Appendix A Study Materials

### IRB Approval Letter



RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE  
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669  
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799  
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

April 25, 2019

\*This letter supersedes the letter dated July 15, 2016

Marina Mendez  
Government and International Affairs  
30302 USF Holly Drive  
Tampa, FL 33620

**RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review**

**IRB#: Pro00027010**

**Title: When faced with Democracy: the study of ethnic Russian immigrants and their political socialization in the US**

**Study Approval Period: 7/14/2016 to 7/14/2017**

Dear Ms. Mendez:

On 7/14/2016, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

**Approved Item(s):**

**Protocol Document(s):**

[Protocol Guidelines Version 1.docx](#)

**Consent/Assent Document(s)\*:**

[Verbal Informed Consent Form English.docx](#)

[Verbal Informed Consent Form Russian.docx](#)

\*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s). Consent forms granted a waiver are not stamped.

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review

research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your study qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.117(c) which states that an IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds either: (1) That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern; or (2) That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context. (Verbal Consents)

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Schinka, Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson  
USF Institutional Review Board

## Study Advertisement



# **Are you a Russian immigrant? Did you emigrate from Russia between 2004 and 2014?**

**If so, you are invited to participate in a research study about political attitudes. We need participants for two study groups:**

- 1) Russian immigrants who speak English, work for an American company, received/are receiving education in an American college or university, and have American partner and/or friends.
- 2) Russian immigrants who speak poor English / do not speak English at all, and mostly communicate, personally and professionally, with other Russian immigrants.

**It will only take one hour of your time.**

**Your participation will help to add to a body of knowledge of how immigration affects political attitudes and interests.**

**There is no compensation for participation**

**Anonymity is guaranteed**

For further questions please contact Marina Mendez at 727-417-1892 or [kulakova@usf.edu](mailto:kulakova@usf.edu)

**IRB Study Number: Pro00027010**



## **Вы русский иммигрант? Вы эмигрировали из России в период с 2004 по 2014?**

**Если да, мы приглашаем вас к участию в научном исследовании о политических взглядах. Нам нужны участники для двух исследовательских групп:**

- 1) Русские иммигранты, которые говорят по-английски, работают в американской компании, имеют / получают образование в американском колледже или университете, состоят в браке с американским гражданином и/или имеют американских друзей.
- 2) Русские иммигранты, которые либо плохо говорят по-английски, либо не говорят вообще и в основном общаются, лично и профессионально, с другими русскими эмигрантами.

**Ваше участие займёт один час.**

**Ваше участие поможет определить, как иммиграция влияет на политические взгляды и предпочтения.**

**Участие в исследовании не оплачивается**

**Анонимность гарантируется**

По всем вопросам обращайтесь к Марине Мендэз на 727-417-1892, [kulakova@usf.edu](mailto:kulakova@usf.edu)

**IRB Study Number: Pro00027010**



### Verbal Informed Consent

Researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) study many topics. To do this, we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called: ***When faced with Democracy: the study of ethnic Russian immigrants and their political socialization in the U.S.***

The person who is in charge of this research study is Marina Mendez. This person is called the Principal Investigator.

You are being asked to participate because you are a first generation ethnic Russian immigrant who **either** obtained/ is currently obtaining education from a US college or university, have an American partner and/or friends, work/worked for an American company, and is exposed to American culture and speaks English; **or** did not attend any American college or university, have your own business or work for/with other Russian-speaking people, is either single or married to a fellow Russian and speak little to no English.

The purpose of this study is to test if the exposure to American society and its values influence any changes in political opinions among ethnic Russian immigrants.

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to give an interview about some aspects of your life in Russia prior to immigration and after moving to the United States. In addition, prior to the interview you will receive a survey that would determine your political ideology. All the data will be collected anonymously and conducted in a place of your choosing.

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study.

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer and should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time.

This research is considered to be minimal risk.

We will not pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

We must keep your study records as confidential as possible. We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who you are. However, certain people may need to see your

study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

- The research team, including:
  - Marina Mendez, principle investigator;
  - Dr. Darrell Slider, the advising professor, dissertation committee chair;
  - Dr. Elizabeth Aranda, dissertation committee member;
  - Dr. Kees Boterbloem, dissertation committee member;
  - Dr. Harry Vanden, dissertation committee member;
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety. These include:
  - The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the staff that work for the IRB. Other individuals who work for USF that provide other kinds of oversight may also need to look at your records.
  - The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at [RSCH-IRB@usf.edu](mailto:RSCH-IRB@usf.edu). If you have questions regarding the research, please contact the Principal Investigator by email at [kulakova@usf.edu](mailto:kulakova@usf.edu) or by phone at (727) 417-1892

Would you like to participate in this study? YES \_\_\_\_\_



### **Форма для получения осознанного устного согласия:**

Исследователи из Университета Южной Флориды (USF) изучают разные темы. Для этого нам нужна помощь людей согласных принять участие в исследовании. Мы просим вас принять участие в исследовании под названием: «Лицом к лицу с демократией: политическая социализация этнических русских иммигрантов в США»

Марина Мендес, главный исследователь, отвечает за данное научное исследование.

Вас просят принять участие потому что вы считаетесь первым поколением этнических русских эмигрантов из России и **ЛИБО** говорите по-английски, работаете в американской компании, имеете / получаете образование в американском колледже или университете, состоите в браке с американским гражданином и/или имеете американских друзей; **ЛИБО** плохо говорите по английски (или не говорите вообще) и в основном общаетесь, лично и профессионально, с другими русскими иммигрантами.

Цель данного исследования: изучить воздействует ли американское общество и его ценности на политические взгляды и предпочтения этнических русских иммигрантов.

Если вы примите участие в данном исследовании, вам будет предложено дать интервью о некоторых аспектах вашей жизни до и после переезда в США. Перед интервью вам надо будет пройти тест который определит вашу политическую идеологию. Все данные будут собираться анонимно. Интервью будет проводиться в любом удобном для вас месте.

У вас есть выбор не участвовать в данном исследовании.

Участие в исследовании только добровольное без оказания какого-либо давления в принятии решения об участии. Вы можете прирвать ваше участие в любое время. Какой-либо риск от участия в данном исследовании минимален.

Мы обязаны хранить все ваши сведения в секрете. Мы можем опубликовать результаты данного исследования. При этом, мы никому не позволим узнать ваше имя или детали которые помогут вас идентифицировать. Тем не менее, некоторым людям, возможно, будет необходимо ознакомиться со всеми материалами исследования. По закону, люди которые знакомятся с вашими сведениями, должны держать их в секрете.

Список людей у которых будет возможность ознакомиться с вашими сведениями и материалами:

Марина Мендэз – главный исследователь;

Dr. Darrell Slider – консультующий профессор, председатель диссертационной комиссии;

Dr. Elizabeth Aranda – член диссертационной комиссии;

Dr. Kees Boterbloem - член диссертационной комиссии;

Dr. Harry Vanden - член диссертационной комиссии.

Некоторым государственным служащим и работникам университета также необходим доступ к материалам исследования. Люди которые контролируют данное исследование, возможно просмотрят ваши материалы чтобы убедиться в том что мы проводим это исследование по всем правилам и защищаем ваши права и вашу безопасность. К этим людям относятся:

- Сотрудники The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board. Сотрудники университета которые осуществляют другие виды контроля.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

По вопросам о ваших правах как участника исследования можно связаться с IRB USF по телефону (813) 974-5638 или по электронной почте [RSCH-IRB@usf.edu](mailto:RSCH-IRB@usf.edu). Если у вас возникли вопросы, касающиеся самого исследования, пожалуйста свяжитесь с главным исследователем по электронной почте [kulakova@usf.edu](mailto:kulakova@usf.edu) или по телефону (727) 417-1892.

Хотите ли вы принять участие в этом исследовании? ДА \_\_\_\_\_



## **Interview Questions**

### **Background and country of origin**

1. **What city in Russia are you from?**
2. **What did your parents do for a living?**
3. **How would you describe your family's financial situation when you were growing up?**
4. **What were your impressions of the Perestroika period and the collapse of the Soviet Union?**
5. **What is your opinion about the economic and political reforms conducted by the Russian government throughout the 1990s?**
6. **What effect did the 1998 Russian financial crisis have on you and your family?**
7. **What was/is your attitude toward the First Chechen War (1994-1996) and the Second Chechen War (1999-2002)?**
8. **What social class did you belong to in independent Russia?**
9. **Did you belong to any political groups?**
10. **Did you have an opinion about Russia's politics while living there?**
11. **Were you familiar with Russian political parties and their political platforms?**
12. **Were your family and friends interested in politics?**
13. **Did you participate in any on-going discussions about politics?**
14. **What was your favorite TV channel in Russia?**  
**Favorite programs or type of programs?**  
**Did you regularly watch the news in Russia?**
15. **What was your favorite newspaper/news website in Russia?**
16. **What did you think of America while you were still in Russia?**
17. **Did you have any opinion about the US political structure or the idea of democracy?**  
**What is it supposed to look like?**

### **Adaptation to the US**

1. **Why did you decide to come to the US?**
2. **When and at what age did you come to the US?**
3. **What did you expect when you left Russia? What thought did you have while sitting on the plane?**
4. **Did anything surprise you on your arrival in the USA?**
5. **Did you experience any language barriers when you moved to the US?**
6. **How long did it take you to become comfortable with the language?**
7. **What do you think about Americans?**
8. **What do you think about America?**
9. **Have you ever felt isolated or lonely?**
10. **Have you ever felt homesick?**

11. Are there any particular problems associated with life in the US that you have encountered?
12. How would you describe the American identity in one word?
  - a
13. Do you have an opinion about American politics?
14. Do you think the American system is more efficient than the Russian system?
15. What is your citizenship status in the US?

### **Identity**

1. Do you consider yourself a typical Russian?  
How would you describe a typical Russian?
2. How would you describe Russia to someone who has never been there?
3. Is there a particular group of people that you are comfortable with? (race, ethnicity, country of origin, educational/financial background)
4. When people ask you where you are from, what do you tell them?
5. Do you feel proud/ashamed/scared/indifferent telling them that?
6. Do you consider yourself an American?
7. How often do you speak English as opposed to Russian?

### **Education and college experiences (optional)**

1. What is the highest level of education you obtained in Russia?  
What was your major?
2. Did you acquire any or further education in the US?
3. What was your major?
4. Did you take classes on politics in college in the U.S.?
5. Did you feel comfortable studying together with Americans?
6. Were you afraid to express your opinion on some topics that you studied?
7. Were you judged in any way because you are Russian?
8. While going to school/university, did you make any American friends?
9. Did you have roommates? What nationality (-ies) were they?
10. While in school, did you belong to any clubs, organizations, etc.?
11. Do you feel that your political perceptions changed after being educated in the US?
12. After graduating, why did you stay in the US?
13. Didn't you want to go back to Russia?

### **Job**

1. Where do you work?

2. **Is it an American company?**
3. **Do you have American co-workers?**
4. **If so, how close are you to your co-workers?**
5. **Do you talk about politics?**
6. **If not, what do you talk about?**
7. **Do you often agree with your co-workers' opinions?**
8. **Is your workplace more Republican or Democratic?**  
**What is the difference between the Republican and Democratic parties?**  
 Republican  
 Democratic
9. **Do you feel comfortable working with Americans?**
10. **Do you like the work atmosphere of your workplace?**
11. **Are you afraid of losing your job?**
12. **Do you like the benefits that come with your work?**
13. **Do you think you would be more secure working in Russia?**

## **Relationships**

1. **Are you married/engaged/in a relationship?**
2. **If yes, is your partner American?**
3. **If yes, do you understand each other perfectly?**
4. **Do you ever feel that there is a cultural barrier?**
5. **What are your partner's political views (democrat, republican, etc.)?**
6. **Do you have the same political views as your partner?**
7. **Did you alter your political views after being in a relationship with your partner?**
8. **What does your partner think about Russia?**
9. **Do you discuss relations between the US and Russia?**
10. **Do you agree with each other in your analysis?**
11. **How close are you with your partner's family?**
12. **Did you have difficulty fitting in?**
13. **Do you have American friends?**
14. **Do you have Russian friends?**
15. **With whom do you communicate the most?**
16. **Do your American friends talk about politics?**  
**What about your Russian friends?**  
**Whom do you agree with the most? Why?**
17. **Have you ever stopped communicating with anyone whose political opinions you disagree with?**
18. **Do you communicate with people back in Russia?**
19. **What do you think about their political views?**

20. Do you feel they are different from yours?
21. Do you go home? How often?
22. How do you feel when you travel back to Russia?

### **Participation (currently)**

1. Do you belong to any clubs?
2. Do you go to church? Which one?
3. Do you do volunteer work?
4. Did you participate in any similar organizations in Russia?
5. Do you follow American political news?  
Do you watch news/debates on the ongoing presidential elections?
6. How engaged are you in the political process?
7. Would you say you care more about politics in the US or Russia?
8. Is there a particular political party you identify with (in Russia or the US or both countries)? Why or why not?
9. Do you vote?
10. Have you voted in Russia?
11. In the US?  
If you voted in this country, what are the issues you consider the most important?
12. How do you feel the US government treats the government of Russia?
13. What is your opinion of Putin and his policies?
14. Did you have a similar view when you lived in Russia?
15. Do you follow Russian domestic politics? What do you think about them?

### **Media**

1. Do you watch TV, listen to the radio, and browse the internet?
2. Is your media of preference Russian or American?  
Do you have access to Russian TV channels?  
Which Russian channels do you watch?
3. How would you compare television and newspapers here in the US with those of Russia?
4. Do you think American media are more free and objective compared to Russian?
5. What is your favorite movie?
6. Do you prefer American movies or Russian ones?
7. What do you think about the situation in Ukraine?
8. Do you follow any news on the development in Ukraine? If yes, which ones?

9. **Do you agree with American involvement in Ukraine? Why or why not?**
10. **Do you agree with any Russian involvement in Ukraine? Why or why not?**
11. **Are there any other new stories about Russia that you are following?**

#### **Summary questions**

1. **Do you feel that being in the US gives you an idea of what is the best and most efficient political system?**
2. **Do you see the differences in political realities of Russia and the US? What are they?**
3. **Do you think you saw this in the same manner before you came to the US?**
4. **Do you think you became more critical in your political judgment?**
5. **Would you ever go back to live in Russia? Why or why not?**
6. **Name three things that you like in the US compared to Russia?**
7. **Three things you like in Russia compared to the US?**
8. **In your opinion, what is a civil society?**  
**Is there a civil society in Russia?**  
**In the US?**

## **Вопросы для интервью**

### **О вашем прошлом и стране происхождения**

1. Из каковы вы города в России?
2. Чем занимались ваши родители?
3. Как бы вы описали финансовое положение вашей семьи, когда вы росли?
4. Какие впечатления на вас произвела перестройка и развал Советского Союза?
5. Какого ваше мнение об экономических и политических реформах в России в 90-е годы?
6. Какое влияние на вас и вашу семью оказал финансовый кризис 1998 года?
7. Какое у вас мнение о первой Чеченской войне (1994-96)?
8. Какое у вас мнение о второй Чеченской войне (1999-2002)?
9. К какому социальному классу вы принадлежали в независимой России?
10. Были ли вы членом какой-либо политической группы?
11. У вас было мнение о Российской политике?
12. Вы знали о Российских политических партиях и их программах?
13. Ваши семья и друзья интересовались политикой?
14. Вы участвовали в каких-либо политических разговорах/спорах?
15. У вас был любимый телевизионный канал? Какие программы и какого жанра? Новости смотрели регулярно?
16. Любимая газета, журнал или сайт в интернете?
17. Пока вы жили в России, что вы думали об Америке?
18. У вас было какое-нибудь мнение о политическом устройстве США или о демократии в целом (что она должна из себя представлять)

### **Первое время в США (адаптация)**

1. Почему вы решили переехать в США?
2. Когда и в каком возрасте вы переехали в США?
3. Что вы ожидали, когда покидали Россию?
4. Вас что-нибудь удивило по прибытии в США?
5. У вас были проблемы с языком, когда вы переехали?
6. Сколько времени потребовалось, чтобы привыкнуть к языку?
7. Что вы думаете об американцах?
8. Что вы думаете об Америке?
9. Вы когда-нибудь чувствовали себя здесь одиноко или изолированно?
10. Вы когда-нибудь скучали по дому/родине?
11. Есть ли в США какие-то определенные жизненные проблемы с которыми вы сталкивались?
12. Одним словом опишите Американскую идентичность.
13. У вас есть мнение о политике США?
14. Как вы думаете, Американская политическая система более эффективна чем Российская?

15. В каком статусе вы находитесь в США?

### **О себе**

1. Вы считаете себя типичным(ой) русским(ой)? Как бы вы описали типичного русского?
2. Как бы вы описали Россию человеку, который там никогда не был?
3. У вас есть какая-либо определенная группа/категория людей, с которыми вам особенно комфортно (раса, национальность, страна происхождения, образовательный или финансовый уровень)?
4. Когда вас кто-то спрашивает откуда вы родом, что вы им отвечаете? Вы говорите что вы из России?
5. Какие вы при этом испытываете эмоции (гордость, стыд, страх, спокойствие)?
6. Вы себя считаете американцем/американкой?
7. Как часто вы разговариваете на английском по сравнению с русским?

### **Образование**

1. Какое образование вы получили в России? Кто вы по этому образованию?
2. Вы получили какое-нибудь образование в США?
3. Какая специальность?
4. В США у вас были классы о политике?
5. Вы себя свободно чувствовали в классе с американцами?
6. Вы боялись высказывать свое мнение?
7. Вас осуждали или критиковали за то что вы русский(ая)?
8. Пока вы учились, у вас появились американские друзья?
9. Вы снимали с кем-нибудь квартиру? Какой национальности были эти люди?
10. Пока вы учились, являлись ли вы членами каких-нибудь клубов или организаций?
11. По вашему мнению, после получения образования в США, у вас изменилось представление о политике?
12. Почему вы остались в США после получения диплома?
13. А вы хотели вернуться в Россию?

### **Работа**

1. Где вы работаете?
2. Это американская компания?
3. У вас есть американские коллеги?
4. Если да, вы с ними хорошо общаетесь?
5. Вы с ними разговариваете о политике? Если нет, то о чем?
6. Если разговариваете, то о чем именно?
7. Вы часто соглашаетесь с мнениями своих американских коллег?
8. Большинство ваших сотрудников Республиканцы или Демократы? Какая между ними разница?

9. Вы себя свободно чувствуете, работая с американцами?
10. Вам импонирует рабочая атмосфера на вашем предприятии/месте работы?
11. Вы боитесь потерять эту работу?
12. Вам нравится соц. пакет который вам обеспечивает ваша компания?
13. Как вам кажется, в России вы бы чувствовали себя более защищенными в плане трудоустройства?

### **Отношения**

1. Вы женаты/замужем, обручены, в отношениях?
2. Если да, ваша половинка американец(ка)?
3. Если да, у вас хорошее взаимопонимание?
4. Вы не чувствуете никаких различий в культуре или ментальности?
5. Какие у вашего партнера политические взгляды (партийная принадлежность)?
6. Вы разделяете политические взгляды вашего партнера?
7. Вы поменяли свои политические взгляды из-за ваших отношений?
8. Что ваша половина думает о России?
9. Между собой вы обсуждаете отношения между США и Россией?
10. Если да, совпадают ли ваши мнения?
11. Вы в близких отношения с семьей своей половинки?
12. Сложно было войти в эту семью?
13. У вас есть американские друзья?
14. У вас есть русские друзья?
15. С кем вы чаще общаетесь?
16. Ваши американские друзья обсуждают политику? А русские? С кем вы больше соглашаетесь? Почему?
17. Вы когда-нибудь переставали общаться с людьми из-за их политических взглядов?
18. Вы общаетесь с кем-нибудь в России?
19. Что вы думаете об их политических мнениях?
20. Есть ли разница между вашими взглядами?
21. Вы ездите в Россию? Как часто?
22. Что вы ощущаете по возвращению на родину?

### **Общественная деятельность**

1. Вы входите в какой-нибудь клуб по интересам?
2. Вы ходите в церковь? Какую?
3. Вы работаете где-нибудь как волонтер?
4. Если да (на все три вопроса или частично), чем-то подобным вы занимались, будучи еще в России?
5. Вы следите за политическими новостями? А за новостями/дебатами президенстких выборов в Штатах?
6. Как сильно вы интересуетесь (вовлечены) политическим процессом?



7. Вас больше интересует политика в США или в России?
8. Есть ли определенная политическая сила (партия) которой вы импонируете (в США или России или в обеих странах)? Почему или почему нет?
9. Вы ходите на выборы?
10. Вы ходили на выборы в России?
11. В США? Если бы вы имели право голосовать в США, какие проблемы/вопросы вас бы больше всего интересовали?
12. Как по вашему мнению правительство США относится к правительству России?
13. Что вы думаете о В. В. Путине?
14. Ваша оценка его деятельности совпадает с той, что у вас была до переезда в США?
15. Вы обращаете внимание на внутреннюю политику России? Что вы о ней думаете?

### **Средства массовой информации**

1. Вы смотрите телевизор, слушаете радио, пользуетесь интернетом?
2. Вы предпочитаете российские или американские новости? Если у вас есть доступ к Российским каналам, какие каналы предпочитаете?
3. В чью пользу сравнение средств массовой информации в России и США?
4. Как вы считаете, американские средства массовой информации более свободные и объективные, чем Российские?
5. Какой ваш любимый фильм(ы)?
6. Вам больше нравятся американские или русские фильмы?
7. Что вы думаете о ситуации на Украине? Вы следите за новостями про Украину? Если да, то за какими именно?
8. Вы согласны с тезисом, что США должны вмешаться на Украине? Почему?
9. Вы согласны с тезисом, что Россия должна вмешаться на Украине? Почему?
10. Следите ли вы ещё за какими-нибудь новостями о России?

### **Заключительные (общие) вопросы**

1. Как вы думаете, живя в США, вы больше стали понимать какая политическая система наиболее эффективная?
2. Вы видите разницу в политических реалиях России и США? В чем именно они различны?
3. Ваши представления поменялись или они такими были еще в России?
4. По вашему мнению, вы стали более критичны после переезда в США?
5. Вы когда-нибудь переедете жить обратно в Россию? Почему да или нет?
6. Что вам нравится в США по сравнению с Россией (три вещи)?
7. Что вам нравится в России по сравнению с США (три вещи)?
8. По вашему мнению, что такое гражданское общество? Есть оно в России? В США?

## Survey questions

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

- 24. A. Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest
- B. Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good
- C. No opinion
- 25. A. Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they are willing to work hard
- B. Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people
- C. No opinion
- 26. A. This country should do whatever it takes to protect the environment
- B. This country has gone too far in its efforts to protect the environment
- C. No opinion
- 27. A. Using overwhelming military force is the best way to defeat terrorism around the world
- B. Relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred and leads to more terrorism
- C. No opinion
- 28. A. Racial discrimination is the main reason why many black people can't get ahead these days
- B. Blacks who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition
- C. No opinion
- 29. A. Business corporations make too much profit
- B. Most corporations make fair and reasonable profits
- C. No opinion
- 30. A. Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return
- B. Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently
- C. No opinion
- 31. A. It's best for the future of our country to be active in world affairs
- B. We should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on problems here at home
- C. No opinion
- 32. A. It is not necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values
- B. It is necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values
- C. No opinion
- 33. A. The growing number of newcomers from other countries threatens traditional American customs and values
- B. The growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthens American society
- C. No opinion
- 34. A. Government is always wasteful and inefficient

- B. Government often does a better job than people give it credit for
- C. No opinion
- 35. A. Society is better off if people make marriage and having children a priority
- B. Society is just as well off if people have priorities other than marriage and children
- C. No opinion
- 36. A. Too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few large companies
- B. The largest companies do not have too much power
- C. No opinion
- 37. A. The best way to ensure peace is through military strength
- B. Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace
- C. No opinion
- 38. A. Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside of our control
- B. Everyone has it in their own power to succeed
- C. No opinion
- 39. A. Homosexuality should be accepted by society
- B. Homosexuality should be discouraged by society
- C. No opinion
- 40. A. Americans need to be willing to give up privacy and freedom in order to be safe from terrorism
- B. Americans shouldn't have to give up privacy and freedom in order to be safe from terrorism
- C. No opinion
- 41. A. Government aid to the poor does more harm than good, by making people too dependent on government assistance
- B. Government aid to the poor does more good than harm, because people can't get out of poverty until their basic needs are met
- C. No opinion
- 42. A. Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy
- B. Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost
- C. No opinion
- 43. A. Our country has made the changes needed to give blacks equal rights with whites
- B. Our country needs to continue making changes to give blacks equal rights with whites
- C. No opinion
- 44. A. U.S. efforts to solve problems around the world usually end up making things worse
- B. Problems in the world would be even worse without U.S. involvement
- C. No opinion
- 45. A. The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt
- B. The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy
- C. No opinion
- 46. A. Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents

- B. Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care
- C. No opinion

## Опрос:

Какие из следующих утверждений ближе к вашему мнению?

1. А. Регулирование бизнеса государством необходимо для защиты интересов общества  
В. Регулирование бизнеса государством обычно приносит больше вреда чем пользы  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
2. А. Большинство людей, которые хотят многого добиться, могут этого достигнуть если готовы много работать  
В. Для большинства людей тяжелый труд и целеустремленность не являются гарантми успеха  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
3. А. Страна должна сделать все возможное для защиты окружающей среды  
В. Страна уже сделала слишком много для защиты окружающей среды  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
4. А. Превосходство военной силы – это лучший способ победить терроризм  
В. Эксклюзивное использование военной силы в борьбе с терроризмом создаёт предпосылки для ненависти и еще большего терроризма  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
5. А. Расовая дискриминация является главной причиной, по которой многие чернокожие не могут достичь успеха  
В. Те чернокожие, которые не продвинулись в этой стране, сами виноваты в своих провалах  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
6. А. У частных корпораций слишком много прибыли  
В. Большинство частных корпораций довольствуются разумной суммой прибыли  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
7. А. Сегодня бедным людям легко прожить, потому что они получают государственные пособия, ничего не делая взамен  
В. Бедным людям сегодня тяжело, потому что государственного пособия недостаточно для того, чтобы достойно жить  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
8. А. Для лучшего будущего нашей страны нужно активно участвовать в мировых делах  
В. Нам нужно уделять меньше внимания зарубежным проблемам и сосредоточиться на проблемах у себя дома  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
9. А. Для того, чтобы быть хорошим человеком, не обязательно верить в Бога  
В. Чтобы быть хорошим человеком, необходимо верить в Бога  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
10. А. Традиционные Американские ценности под угрозой из-за увеличивающегося числа приезжих из других стран  
В. Большое число приезжих только укрепляет Американское общество  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
11. А. Правительство расточительно и неэффективно

- В. Правительство часто более эффективно чем граждане о нем думают  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
12. А. Общество улучшается, когда его граждане считают брак и семью самым важным  
В. Общество улучшается даже если у граждан есть другие приоритеты кроме брака и семьи  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
13. А. Слишком много власти сконцентрировано в руках нескольких крупных компаний  
В. Крупнейшие компании не имеют слишком много власти  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
14. А. Военная мощь – это лучший способ обеспечения мира  
В. Хорошая дипломатия это лучший способ обеспечения мира  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
15. А. Успех в жизни в значительной степени определяется силами, находящимися вне нашего контроля  
В. Каждый сам кузнец своего успеха  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
16. А. Гомосексуализм должен быть принят обществом  
В. Гомосексуализм должен быть отвергнут обществом  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
17. А. Американцы должны быть готовы отказаться от конфиденциальности и свободы для того, чтобы быть в безопасности от терроризма  
В. Американцы не должны отказываться от конфиденциальности и свободы для того, чтобы быть в безопасности от терроризма  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
18. А. Государственная помощь для бедных приносит больше вреда, чем пользы, делая людей слишком зависимыми от дотаций  
В. Государственная помощь для бедных приносит больше пользы чем вреда – люди не могут выбраться из нищеты, пока их базовые потребности не будут удовлетворены  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
19. А. Ужесточение экологических законов и нормативных актов вредит экономике и приводит к потере рабочих мест  
В. Ужесточение экологических законов и нормативных актов необходимо  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
20. А. Наша страна сделала все возможное для уравнивания черных и белых в правах  
В. Нашей стране необходимо продолжать делать всё возможное для уравнивания черных и белых в правах  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
21. А. Усилия США по решению проблем в мире в конечном счёте делают ситуацию ещё хуже  
В. Мировые проблемы были бы еще хуже без участия США  
С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
22. А. Правительство обязано помогать нуждающимся даже если это приведет к увеличению государственного долга  
В. Сегодня правительство не может себе позволить помощь нуждающимся

- С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу
23. А. Своим трудом и талантами, иммигранты делают нашу страну сильнее
- В. Иммигранты ослабляют нашу страну, забирая наши рабочие места, жильё, и медицинское обслуживание
- С. У меня нет мнения по этому поводу

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## Appendix B Raw study data

**Table 1. Exposure to American political socialization agencies<sup>30</sup>**

Name	Education	Employment		Relationships		Participation			Mass media the US/Russia	Talk to people in Russia
		American company	Am. Co-workers	marriage	Friends American/Russian	Club	Church In the US/Russia	Volunteer in the US/Russia		
Group 1:1 – Males who speak English										
Timur	+	+	+	+	+/+	+	-/-	+/-	+/+	+
Yuri	+	+	+	-	+/-	-	+/+	+/-	+/-	+
Nick	+	-	+	-	+/+	+	-/+	+/+	+/+	+
John	+	+	+	+	+/+	-	-/+	-/-	+/+	+
Bill	+	+	+	-	+/+	+	-/-	-/-	+/+	+
Jason	-	+	+	-	+/+	+	-/-	-/-	-/-	+
Valentin	-	+	+	-	+/+	-	-/-	-/-	-/+	+
Group 1:2 – Males who do not speak English										
Ivan	-	+	+	-	-/+	+	+/+	-/-	+/+	+
Semion	+	+	+	-	+/+	-	-/-	-/-	-/+	+
Aristarch	-	-	-	-	-/+	-	-/-	-/-	-/-	+
Alexey	-	-	-	-	+/+	-	-/+	+/+	-/+	+
Aleksandr	-	+	-	-	-/+	-	-/+	-/-	+/+	+
Pavel	-	+	+	-	+/+	-	-/-	-/-	-/+	+
Nikita	-	+	+	-	-/+	-	-/-	-/-	-/-	+
Andrei	-	-	-	-	-/+	-	-/+	-/-	-/+	+
Vladislav	-	-	-	-	-/+	-	-/-	-/-	-/+	+
Group 2:1 – females who speak English										
Abigail	-	-	-	+	+/+	-	-/-	+/-	+/-	+
Alisa	-	-	-	+	+/+	-	-/-	+/-	-/-	+
Sessi	-	+	+	-	+/-	-	-/-	-/+	+/+	+
Yaroslava	+	+	+	-	+/+	+	-/-	+/-	-/-	+
Rina	+	+	+	+	-/+	-	-/+	+/-	+/+	+
Katya	+	+	+	+	+/+	+	-/-	-/-	+/+	+
Sveta	-	+	-	+	-/-	-	+/+	+/-	+/+	+
Victoria	-	+	+	+	-/+	+	+/+	+/-	+/+	+
Stephanie	-	+	+	+	+/+	-	-/-	-/-	+/+	+
Kristina	-	-	+	+	+/+	+	-/-	+/+	+/+	+
Elena	-	+	+	+	+/+	+	-/-	+/-	+/-	+
Yana	-	+	+	-	+/+	-	-/-	-/-	-/-	+

<sup>30</sup> Sign '+' indicates an exposure to the US agency; sign '-' indicates either the absence of an exposure or presence of a Russian agency (especially in marriage and friends category)

Group 2:2 – females who do not speak English										
Maria	-	-	-	+	-/+	-	-/-	-/-	-/+	+
Margarita	+	-	-	+	-/+	-	-/-	-/-	+/+	+
Anna	-	-	-	-	+/+	+	-/+	+/-	+/-	+
Marina	+	-	-	-	+/+	-	+/-	+/-	+/+	+
Chepe	+	+	+	-	-/+	-	-/+	-/-	-/+	+
Olga	-	+	+	+	-/+	-	-/-	-/-	+/+	+
Marianna	-	+	+	-	+/+	+	-/-	-/-	-/-	+
Tapolina	-	-	-	-	-/+	-	-/+	-/-	-/+	+
Belka	+	-	-	-	-/+	-	-/+	+/-	-/+	+
Alevtina	-	-	-	-	+/-	-	-/+	-/-	+/+	+
Korina	-	-	-	-	+/+	-	-/-	-/+	+/+	+
Lukeria	-	-	-	-	-/+	-	-/+	-/-	-/+	+

**Table 2. Identity and opinions about the US compared to Russia**

Name	Do you consider yourself?		One word to describe America	Three things I like about the US compared to Russia	Three things I like about Russia compared to the US
	A typical Russian	American			
Group 1:1 – Males who speak English					
Timur	No, citizen of the world	No, citizen of the world	Law-abiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Economy</li><li>• Convenience</li><li>• Mobility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More freedom</li><li>• Relationship</li><li>• Simplicity</li></ul>
Yuri	No	Yes	Hardworking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Driving/no traffic</li><li>• Friendly people</li><li>• Customer service</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Food</li><li>• Nature</li><li>• People I know</li></ul>
Nick	No, citizen of the world	No, citizen of the world	Entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roads</li><li>• Business ease</li><li>• Financial/banking system</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Food</li><li>• Culture</li><li>• Young people (compare to FL)</li></ul>
John	Yes	30% Yes	Laid back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Politeness</li><li>• Customer service</li><li>• Ability to travel</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Straightforwardness</li><li>• Culture</li><li>• Women</li></ul>

Bill	Not a typical Russian	No	Emancipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Freedom to move</li> <li>• Diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My parents</li> <li>• Nature/architecture</li> <li>• It is my homeland</li> </ul>
Jason	Yes	No	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities</li> <li>• Weather</li> <li>• Retirement security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• NA</li> <li>• NA</li> </ul>
Valentin	Yes	No	Normal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifestyle</li> <li>• Freedom</li> <li>• Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature</li> <li>• Fashion</li> <li>• Food</li> </ul>
<b>Group 1:2 – Males who do not speak English</b>					
Ivan	Yes, absolutely	No, I will never be American	Narrow specializations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads</li> <li>• Less bureaucracy</li> <li>• Environment policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social welfare</li> <li>• Nature</li> <li>• NA</li> </ul>
Semion	Yes	No	Standardized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary army</li> <li>• Support for science</li> <li>• Academia elevators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movement freedom</li> <li>• People's hospitality</li> <li>• Nature</li> </ul>
Aristarch	Yes	No	Soap bubble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Cheap traveling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Straightforwardness</li> <li>• Nature</li> <li>• Food</li> </ul>
Alexey	Yes	No	Serenity (specific to FL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less control of my work</li> <li>• Religious freedom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not much difference</li> <li>• I forget I am in the US</li> </ul>
Aleksandr	Yes	No, I am an immigrant	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less bureaucracy and corruption</li> <li>• Attitude toward people</li> <li>• Products' quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relaxed laws</li> <li>• Can negotiate with the law enforcement</li> <li>• NA</li> </ul>
Pavel	Yes	No	Egocentric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer service</li> <li>• Less bureaucracy</li> <li>• Banking system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People's relations</li> <li>• Family relations</li> <li>• Upbringing</li> </ul>
Nikita	Yes	No	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No denunciation</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weather</li> <li>• Salary to work input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money solve all problems</li> <li>• Snow</li> </ul>
Andrei	Yes	Yes	Good-natured Calm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banking system</li> <li>• Calm</li> <li>• Business ease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Family/friends</li> </ul>
Vladislav	Yes, absolutely	No, I am Russian	Hard-working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher salaries</li> <li>• Social security and healthcare</li> <li>• Goods and services accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentality</li> <li>• Nature</li> <li>• Society and the government</li> </ul>
<b>Group 2:1 – females who speak English</b>					
Abigail	No	No	Survivalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom of opportunity</li> <li>• Weather</li> <li>• Friendly people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Nature</li> <li>• History</li> </ul>
Alisa	No	No	Similar (to us)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comfortable living</li> <li>• Friendly attitude</li> <li>• More choices in everything</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep, sensual attitude</li> <li>• Savvy people</li> <li>• Always ready to help</li> </ul>
Sessi	Not anymore	Maybe in 15 years	Zombie (indifference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polite people</li> <li>• Financial aid in college</li> <li>• Clean streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature</li> <li>• History</li> <li>• Culture</li> </ul>
Yaroslava	Yes	No, I Americanized	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comfort</li> <li>• Customer service</li> <li>• Job availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paid vacations</li> <li>• Education and aesthetics</li> <li>• Food</li> </ul>
Rina	Yes	Yes, my future is here	Friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government apparatus</li> <li>• Opportunities</li> </ul>	• NA

				• My husband	
Katya	Yes	No <sup>31</sup>	Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach</li> <li>• Sense of security, low criminal activity</li> <li>• Friendly people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• My family</li> <li>• Music</li> </ul>
Sveta	No, European	No, European	Stupid (Zadornov)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer service</li> <li>• Accessibility of everything</li> <li>• Banking system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Straightforwardness</li> </ul>
Victoria	Yes	No	Law-abiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher salaries</li> <li>• Tolerance</li> <li>• Respect for the law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep, sensual people</li> <li>• NA</li> <li>• NA</li> </ul>
Stephanie	Yes	Yes	Calm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent family relations</li> <li>• Weather</li> <li>• Privacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History/architecture</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Togetherness</li> </ul>
Kristina	No	Not yet	Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifestyle</li> <li>• Stable economy</li> <li>• Cheaper traveling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is my home</li> <li>• City life</li> <li>• Free health care</li> </ul>
Elena	No, I am too happy for a Russian	No, when I get citizenship	Opinionated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious freedom</li> <li>• Founding principles</li> <li>• My daughter was born here</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childhood memories</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Unexplainable feeling<sup>32</sup></li> </ul>
Yana	No, I am just a human	No, I am just a human	Happiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards of living</li> <li>• No corruption</li> <li>• People's attitude</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Traditions/holidays</li> </ul>
<b>Group 2:2 – females who do not speak English</b>					
Maria	Yes	No	Soap bubble	• Stability	• More educated people

<sup>31</sup> I know how to sew and cook – I am self-sufficient

<sup>32</sup> The feeling of getting out of a sauna in the winter; Умом Россию не понять...

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social support</li> <li>• Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthcare</li> <li>• NA</li> </ul>
Margarita	Yes	No, I feel integrated	Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities</li> <li>• Affordable traveling</li> <li>• Low prices of clothes and shoes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People</li> <li>• Nature</li> <li>• The sense of homeland</li> </ul>
Anna	Yes	I will gladly be one if it accepts me	Non-stop progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility of information</li> <li>• Active volunteering</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing</li> </ul>
Marina	No	Not yet	Smiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The sense of security</li> <li>• Standards of living, can provide for children</li> <li>• Medical care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible healthcare</li> <li>• Friends/relatives</li> <li>• Childhood memories</li> </ul>
Chepe	Think so	Definitely not	A commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer service with the smile</li> <li>• Science infrastructure</li> <li>• Affordable travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The sense of freedom</li> <li>• Daycare system</li> <li>• Food</li> </ul>
Olga	Of course	No, you need to be born here	A labor camp (they work a lot)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casual clothing</li> <li>• Low prices of clothes and shoes</li> <li>• Healthcare quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Accessible healthcare</li> <li>• Public transportation</li> </ul>
Marianna	I have Russian mentality	No	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less bureaucracy</li> <li>• Care for people with disabilities</li> <li>• Low interest rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic food</li> <li>• NA</li> <li>• NA</li> </ul>
Tapolina	Yes	No	Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High education</li> <li>• Social security, human safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern construction technologies</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More interaction among people</li> <li>• NA</li> </ul>
Belka	No	Only by citizenship	Comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads quality</li> <li>• Medical service</li> <li>• Landscaping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is my home</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Food</li> </ul>
Alevtina	No	No	Successful state order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compassion politeness</li> <li>• Shopping comfort</li> <li>• Sense of stability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is my home</li> <li>• Native language</li> <li>• Nature</li> </ul>
Korina	No, consider myself Ukrainian	No	Imagined paradise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads, infrastructure</li> <li>• Healthcare quality</li> <li>• Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Free sport activities</li> <li>• Preventive medicine</li> </ul>
Lukeria	Yes	No	Dimensionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate</li> <li>• Clean streets</li> <li>• Comfortable living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Leisure possibilities</li> <li>• Public transportation</li> </ul>

## Appendix C Survey Results

Codename	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	#13	#14	#15	#16	#17	#18	#19	#20	#21	#22	#23	Result
Maria	B	A	A	A	B	B	A	B	B	C	A	A	A	B	B	B	C	A	B	A	A	C	A	Steadfast Conservative
Ivan	A	B	A	A	B	C	B	B	C	C	B	B	C	A	C	C	B	B	B	A	C	C	C	Next Generation Left
Semion	A	B	A	B	C	B	A	C	A	B	C	C	A	B	C	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	Next Generation Left
Alexey	A	B	A	B	B	A	C	A	A	B	C	C	A	B	B	C	B	B	B	A	C	C	A	Next Generation Left
Timur	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	C	A	A	B	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	B	A	Next Generation Left
Alisa	B	A	A	B	C	C	C	B	C	C	C	B	C	B	C	A	B	C	B	C	A	C	A	Young Outsider
Margarita	B	A	A	A	B	C	A	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	A	C	A	Young Outsider
Abigale	B	B	A	A	B	C	A	B	A	A	A	B	C	B	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	B	A	Young Outsider
Sessi	A	A	A	B	B	C	B	B	C	B	A	C	B	A	C	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	Next Generation Left
Yaroslava	A	A	A	A	B	A	B	B	A	A	B	A	A	B	B	B	B	A	B	B	A	C	A	Faith and Family Left
Aristarh	B	A	B	B	B	B	A	B	C	C	A	B	A	B	B	B	C	A	A	C	A	B	A	Steadfast Conservative
Marina	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	A	A	B	C	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	Next Generation Left
Rina	B	A	B	B	B	C	B	B	A	B	C	B	A	B	B	A	B	A	C	B	A	C	A	Young Outsider
Anna	B	A	A	A	B	C	B	A	B	B	B	B	C	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	A	A	Next Generation Left
Nick	C	A	A	C	C	C	C	B	C	B	B	C	A	B	B	C	B	C	B	B	C	A	A	Solid Liberal
Katya	A	A	A	C	B	A	C	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	C	A	A	C	B	B	C	A	A	Next Generation Left
Chepe	A	A	A	C	B	A	A	B	A	A	C	A	C	B	B	B	B	C	B	C	A	B	A	Young Outsider
Yuryi	B	A	A	A	C	B	C	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	A	C	A	B	B	B	B	C	A	Faith and Family Left
Sveta	A	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	A	B	B	B	A	B	B	A	A	A	B	B	A	B	A	Young Outsider
Viktoriya	A	A	C	B	B	B	C	B	A	C	C	C	C	B	B	B	C	C	B	A	C	C	A	Next Generation Left
Olga	A	A	B	A	B	A	A	C	C	B	B	A	B	A	B	C	A	C	B	A	B	A	A	Business Conservative
John	A	A	A	A	B	B	A	B	A	B	A	A	A	B	B	A	B	B	B	A	B	B	A	Next Generation Left
Marianna	B	A	A	B	B	B	A	B	A	C	C	A	A	C	B	B	C	A	B	A	A	C	A	Young Outsider
Tapolina	A	A	B	B	B	B	C	A	B	A	B	A	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	Faith and Family Left
Belka	A	A	A	C	B	B	B	B	A	C	B	B	A	B	B	C	A	B	B	A	C	A	A	Next Generation Left
Aleksandr	A	B	A	B	B	C	B	B	A	B	A	C	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	A	Next Generation Left
Korina	A	A	A	A	B	A	C	A	A	B	B	A	A	A	B	C	B	B	B	A	B	A	A	Next Generation Left
Nikita	A	A	A	A	B	C	A	B	A	C	C	B	A	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	A	B	A	Young Outsider
Lukeria	B	A	A	A	B	C	A	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	A	Young Outsider
Andrei	A	A	C	A	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	A	A	A	B	C	B	B	B	A	B	A	A	Next Generation Left
Stephanie	A	A	A	A	B	C	A	A	A	B	C	A	C	B	B	A	B	A	B	A	A	A	A	Next Generation Left
Kristina	A	A	A	C	B	B	A	C	C	A	B	B	A	B	B	C	C	C	B	A	A	C	A	Next Generation Left
Jason	C	A	C	B	B	C	A	B	A	C	A	C	A	B	B	C	B	A	B	A	C	C	C	Young Outsider
Elena	B	A	C	A	B	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	B	B	A	Steadfast Conservative
Vladislav	A	A	A	A	B	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	B	B	B	A	B	B	B	A	A	A	Faith and Family Left
Pavel	A	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	A	C	A	A	A	B	B	B	A	A	B	C	A	A	C	Faith and Family Left
Bill	B	A	A	B	C	B	C	B	C	C	A	A	A	B	B	C	B	C	B	C	A	C	A	Young Outsider
Alevtina	A	C	A	C	C	A	B	C	A	A	C	A	C	C	A	B	A	B	B	A	C	A	A	Hard-pressed skeptic
Valentin	A	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	A	B	A	A	B	A	B	A	A	A	B	A	A	B	A	Young Outsider
Inna	C	A	C	C	C	C	C	C	A	C	C	B	C	B	B	A	C	C	C	C	C	A	A	Bystander