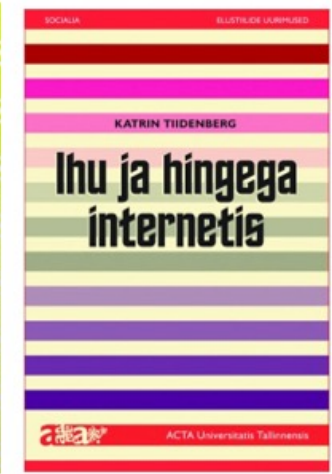
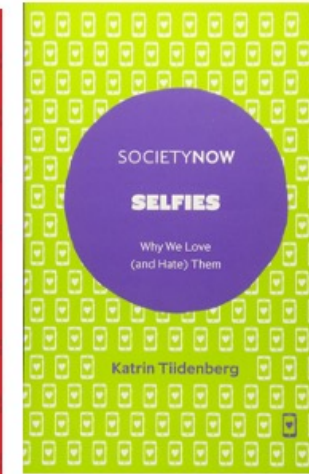
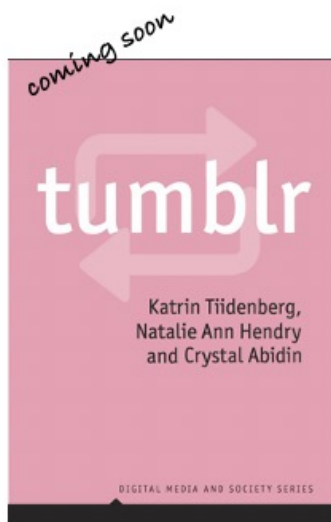


ONLINE POLITICAL BEHAVIOR  
AND IDEOLOGICAL  
PRODUCTION BY YOUNG  
ESTONIANS

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# EMPIRICAL CONTEXT

- 15 – 30 yo Estonians: politically-minded activists (5%), volunteers/ benefactors (30%), digital activists (28%) and passive young citizens (37%) (Beilmann & Kalmus 2017, CATCH-EyoU data)
- Youths in predominantly Estonian-speaking areas more likely (21%) to engage in online political activities like signing petitions etc than in predominantly Russian-speaking areas (8%) (Tiidenberg & Allaste 2016)
- Digital practices are entangled with both activist and the moderately and latently active Estonian youths' political repertoires, “online” vs “offline” participation not an informative division (Nugin et al. 2018).

## METHODS AND DATA

**32 interviews** (10 LGBTQ rights activists and allies, 11 BLM activists and allies, 11 "contex" group), pre and post-interview ethnographic observation on social media (hashtags, participant recommended accounts, groups etc)

**WHY** do young people engage (political views, identity, community, socio-economic and gender background)?

**HOW** do young people engage (internet and social media as shapers of participation, censorship, surveillance, other factors experienced as impacting)?

## EE: VIEWS / IDEOLOGY

*'I am more left-leaning. I believe that everyone should have equal opportunities, should be treated equally, so that the world would be a good place to live for everyone'* (EE P24, 7 November 2020)

- Overlap in causes
- Tolerance as 'just' vs tolerance as 'rational'

# REASONABLE REACTIONS TO PERCEIVED INJUSTICE



*'If we let this hatefulness and lack of tolerance spread then we'll end up like Poland, where the situation is very bad for minorities' (EE P12, 19 October 2020, LGBT activist).*

VS

*'LGBT .. oh ... my ideology is that it's not my business whom someone loves. But the marches and pride parades are still annoying. All demonstrations like that are questionable for me. But I understand the message, and I am pro the message. They don't have the rights that they should logically have.'* (EE P7, 23 November 2020, context group).

## SENSE OF POLITICAL SELF-EFFICACY

*“I mean ... the movement, for me BLM doesn’t mean that we work towards dark-skinned people to be like ... treated better than other people, the entire point of the BLM movement, and also feminist movement is that people would be treated equally, it is important for me that I value other people as much as I value myself, and this means that if I don’t share, or if I don’t speak about these things, then that means I’ve decided that I don’t want to deal with that stuff, and that is ... like my privilege, I have the option of saying ‘I don’t want to deal with this’ (EE P21, 19 November 2020)*

# EMPATHY / HETERONORMATIVE MASCULINITY / ETHNICITY



*‘Girls are definitely twice as active as boys, that’s my experience, so few boys, who use their platform and their voice to make the world a better place, because most boys worry that they’ll be bullied as others will think it’s “gay” to care’ (EE32, 22 November 2020).*

*“So many women have, at least to an extent, experienced some discrimination, it makes it easier to be empathetic to the injustices towards others” (EE24, November 2020)*



# REASONS FOR ENGAGEMENT



- Youth openly acknowledge the central role of social media / the internet in their worldviews and their engagement
- Information plus affective narratives of discrimination

*‘Actually it was the internet that made me get involved in BLM, because the videos circulating online really had a very strong emotional impact on me’ (EE P24, 07 November 2020).*

- Own and friends’ experiences of discrimination

# PERCEIVED SOCIAL MEDIA AFFORDANCES FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



- International content (in English) more informative, but also Estonian content more hateful, racist, homophobic (especially TikTok)
- Social media also used for learning rhetoric, not just information
- Platforms not really used can become useful when people become active (Facebook)
- Social media as a source of a sense of belonging vs as a source of a sense of despair and overwhelm

# FAMILY AS A POLITICAL SOCIALIZER



*“Levels of youth activism are low because of their families. Kids are afraid of being punished when their opinions don’t match up to those of their families.”*

*“I’ve stopped speaking to one half of my family, because my grandma would say things like “all negroes are apes,” and it was so profoundly upsetting”*

*“The more I grew up the less I wanted to talk to my parents about these issues, our opinions would diverge. They don’t get it. I’ve tried more in the recent years, but it always ends in a fight, so I can’t talk to them. I don’t want to talk to them.”*

# FAMILY AS A POLITICAL SOCIALIZER

## (2)



*“I am so lucky, I have always been able to speak to my family about these issues, it’s never been like ‘you can’t speak about this, or this is wrong’ (...) I have so many friends, who are gay, whose parents are conservative. My friend has been thrown out of home, and another one couldn’t tell the parents, because they were publicly homophobic.”*

*“My worldview is very different from my family for sure, they think that other races and sexualities are weird, but I have been able to change their mind a little, because I am bi and I am a strong supporter of the BLM movement.”*

# FAMILY VS SOCIAL MEDIA



*“Back when I didn’t know much about the political stuff ... or anything, I would listen to what my parents had to say, but after I started searching for information on Instagram and even the homepages of different political parties, about what they believe in and do. This is when I decided that my parents’ world view doesn’t really work for me” (EE 13, 21 October 2020).*

*“I think it might be because of Instagram, so young people get this information about the world, and that makes them active. The older generation is not in the habit of getting information from there”*



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## OTHER REASONS FOR OWN / OTHERS' INACTIVITY (2)

- Online harassment / cyberbullying
- Lacking skills of self-expression, lacking knowledgeability, lacking self-confidence

# ECOSYSTEM OF MOTIVATORS AND HINDERANCES



***THANK YOU!***

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