The acculturation modes of Russian speaking adolescents in Latvia: Perceived discrimination and knowledge of the Latvian language

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Abstract

After the collapse of the Soviet Union 25 million ethnic Russians were left living outside Russia. This article reports on research exploring acculturation strategies of ethnic Russian adolescents in Latvia: looking at the most and least preferred strategy, interrelatedness between choice of acculturation strategies and a person's gender or citizenship, as well as the impact of Latvian language knowledge and perceived discrimination on the choice of acculturation strategies. A total of 459 adolescents from secondary schools with Russian as the language of instruction in Riga participated in the study. The article draws on John Berry's two-dimensional acculturation model, based on four different acculturation strategies for ethnic minority and immigrant adaptation in the host society.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE USSR HAD A GREAT IMPACT ON THE RESHAPING and formation of new ethnic identities in the former Soviet republics. It has created a situation where 25 million ethnic Russians were left living outside Russia and were no longer the dominant nationality, but minority 'occupants' or 'colonisers', and as some researchers see them, as members of the Russian diaspora (Shlapentokh 1994; Kolstø 1996, 1999a and 1999b), or the 'Russian settler community' (Melvin 1995). The situation of these Russians is quite specific. As Shafir (1995) has pointed out, they are a hybrid group that lies between a minority and an immigrant population since only with the collapse of the Soviet Union did they find themselves to be a minority. It is vital to explore how they adapt into newborn or reborn states and what acculturation strategies they choose. Since identity changes and acculturation into a different culture are time-consuming processes and are an issue for younger generations especially, it is crucial to do research on Russian adolescents. Social integration and peace in the former Soviet Republics very much depends on successful acculturation and adaptation of these adolescents.

This article looks at Latvia as a specific geographical example of Russian acculturation and adaptation. Latvia has the second largest proportion of ethnic Russians, after Kazakhstan, constituting about 29% of the whole population. Moreover, during the Soviet period the Russification of other Slavic peoples took place. Thus nowadays demographic distribution lines more often are linguistic rather than ethnic; the inhabitants of Latvia are frequently divided into Latvian and Russian speakers. As a result of these processes, a minority group that is called 'Russian speakers' has emerged and is still developing its identity. When doing any research on ethnic minorities and immigrants in Latvia, it is essential to decide whether to put greater emphasis on the ethnic origin of a minority or on their first language. Russian language schools are the focus of this study mainly because of the concerns connected with the minority school education reform, as very often these schools have not only ethnic Russian children within them. Therefore the native language rather than one's ethnic origin or identity was chosen as a criterion for the choice of respondents and further analysis. Thus, this study examines Russian speaking adolescents in Latvia, specifically in Latvia's capital city Riga.

Although quite a lot of research has been conducted on the identities of ethnic Russians outside Russia (Melvin 1995; Shlapentokh *et al*. 1994; Chinn & Kaiser 1996; Kolstø 1995 and 1996; Laitin 1998; Karklins 1986 and 1994), the younger Russian generation in Latvia has very often been neglected. Moreover, there is still a lack of continuous research in this area. Many studies were done in the beginning and middle of the 1990s, but it still continues to be an interesting and promising topic that could help to re-examine common assumptions and prejudices. The necessity of this research is dictated also by worries of some researchers (Vēbers 2000; Apine 2001) about cultural marginalism of Russian speaking individuals, particularly among adolescents. That is why it is important to monitor adolescents' acculturation strategies and the spread of marginalisation as a choice of mode of acculturation.

The purpose of this research is to explore acculturation strategies (adaptation to Latvian language and culture) of ethnic Russian adolescents in Latvia. The research questions driving this study are as follows:

- What acculturation strategies do ethnic Russian adolescents in Latvia choose?
- Is there any interrelatedness between choice of acculturation strategies and a person's gender or citizenship?
- What is the impact of the Latvian language knowledge on the choice of acculturation strategies?
- What is the impact of the perceived discrimination on the choice of acculturation strategies?

Specifically, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. The most preferred acculturation strategy among Russian speaking adolescents is integration and the least preferred is marginalisation.
2. There is a significant interrelatedness between gender and acculturation options.
3. There is a significant interrelatedness between acculturation options and citizenship.

4. There is no systematic statistically significant correlation between Latvian language knowledge and acculturation strategies.
5. There is a systematic statistically significant correlation between perceived discrimination and acculturation strategies.

This study attempts to identify key acculturation strategies of ethnic Russian adolescents in Latvia for the first time. Acculturation theoretical approach has already been successfully used in research on immigrant adults and adolescents all over the world, but not in Latvia. Essentially this research responds to the call for a new approach to social integration in Latvia and draws inspiration from John Berry's acculturation theory that has stressed that adaptation into a different culture does not necessarily mean the loss of one's native language and culture. In addition, this study explores the interrelatedness of second language knowledge and level of perceived discrimination with choice of acculturation strategies.

This article has four parts. First, it reviews some previous studies on ethnic minority adolescents in Latvia and some previous research on acculturation processes within ethnic minority and immigrant adolescent groups. This is followed by the description of the research methodology. Next, the findings of the study are presented. In conclusion, implications of the research findings and directions for further research are discussed.

Acculturation

Although the term 'acculturation' dates back as far as 1880, it was first defined in the field of anthropology in 1936 by Robert Redfield, Ralf Linton & Melvil Herskovits (1936, pp. 149–152):

> Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. Under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture-change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation.

When examining acculturation it is very important to stress that acculturative changes are not always directed toward closer cultural resemblance. Acculturation may also be a reactive process and can strengthen cultural traditions and values. This helps us to understand that assimilation is only one possible outcome and direction of acculturation. Nevertheless, in 1964, sociologist M. Gordon describing the cultural changes within ethnic minority groups developed a one-dimensional assimilation model. Biculturalism was seen only as a middle stage on the way from the total segregation of two cultural groups to their absolute assimilation. The basic assumption of this approach was that individuals lose their cultural identity as soon as they adapt to a new culture. This approach was criticised and gave way to alternative acculturation models.

In the 1980s J. W. Berry (1980, 1984, 1986 and 1987) developed his two-dimensional acculturation model. He looked more specifically at different attitudes and behaviour

models that individuals may employ in an attempt to relate to a different culture. These strategies are the result of the criss-crossing of two dimensions: 'how important for an individual it is to maintain one's own culture, language and identity' and 'how important it is to become a part of a larger society'. Individuals can choose to agree and behave according to the four main acculturation strategies: assimilation, separation, integration and marginalisation. *Assimilation* is when individuals choose to identify themselves solely with the culture of the larger society. *Separation* entails an exclusive involvement in one's traditional cultural values and norms, coupled with little or no interaction with the members and the culture of the larger society. *Integration* means the identification and the involvement with one's traditional ethnic culture as well as that of the larger society. A rejection and/or lack of involvement in one's traditional culture as well as that of the larger society characterises *marginalisation*. It is important to note that the choice of acculturation strategies can vary in different spheres of life. For example, an individual may choose integration in linguistic and political spheres, but separation in close social contacts.

When structuring his theory, Berry (1997) emphasised that it is essential to look not only at individual acculturation strategies, but also to pay attention to the behaviour of a dominant group's representatives and the state ethnopolicy towards ethnic minorities. Very often ethnopolicy and social contacts with representatives of the other cultural group can be crucial for the choice of acculturation mode by immigrants or ethnic minorities. A state policy can involve assimilation, segregation, multi-culturalism and exclusion.

The first usage of the term 'acculturation' was mainly connected with research done on a group level. Then it was adopted by psychologists (Graves 1967) to explore how and what changes happen on an individual level when a person came into continued contact with another culture. Later, Berry (1997) also stressed that it is very important to explore acculturation on an individual level because not all individuals experience acculturation in the same way as their group. Individuals can differ in how much they participate in the acculturation of their cultural group and what strategies they choose to use.

Not only can acculturation be studied on different levels, but it can also involve various research objects. At the very beginning there was a huge interest in the influence of European culture on the indigenous populations of colonies. Then, interest switched to immigrant populations in European countries and North America. Now the main object of acculturation research is ethnic groups that live in multicultural societies all over the world. Exploration of acculturation strategies started with adult ethnic minority and immigrant populations, but later adolescents appeared as the centre of attention.

When exploring adolescents' acculturation it is important to keep in mind how it can be different from adults' adaptation into a different culture. Firstly, adolescents are very much influenced by their parents and peer groups: they have to adjust their decisions to their parents' and peers' expectations (Lackland 1994). Adolescents go through socialisation processes and ideally parents and society are working together supplementing each other. This is different, however, for ethnic minority children as they are between two cultures: what their parents offer them and what a dominant society accepts.

In 1993 J. W. Berry and a group of researchers from different countries formed a special programme, 'International Comparative Studies of Ethnocultural Youth' (ICSEY)[1] to extend knowledge regarding the adaptation and integration of second generation migrants into the host society. The research programme included the following countries: Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the USA. The study examined factors related to adaptation and integration in each host society concentrating on issues that influence the psychological, socio-cultural and educational adaptation and integration of adolescents.

Studies exploring acculturation processes suggest that integration is the most preferred option, both amongst adults and adolescents (Berry 1980; Berry *et al.* 1987; Berry & Krishnan 1992; Sayegh & Lasry 1993; Kwak & Berry 2001). The literature also shows that this mode of acculturation is the most adaptive and has a positive influence on an individual's well-being (Berry 1997; Ward 1996; Phinney *et al.* 2001). Some other research (Jasinksajaj-Lahti *et al.* 2003), however, showed that the separation option could be as adaptive as is integration.

Language and discrimination have been very often considered to be central to the exploration of immigrants' acculturation and adaptation. Language can help to maintain contacts with another cultural group and the social and political institutions of a host society. It is informative to examine whether proficiency in the dominant group language is a useful indicator of the acculturation process (Phinney *et al.* 2001; Neto 2002). The interrelatedness between language proficiency and acculturation, however, is not straightforward (Ward 1996). There were some assumptions that second language proficiency or usage influenced social and emotional adjustment among immigrant children (Aronowitz 1984). In his study of more than 2,000 immigrant adolescents in Sweden, Ekstrand (1976) found that correlations between competence in Swedish and adaptation were very low. Taft (1979) and Bhatnagar (1980) also suggested that knowledge of local language might help in some aspects, but it did not seem to be a major determinant of successful adaptation. Majority language proficiency was not found to be an important predictor of acculturation strategies in Neto's study of immigrants in Portugal.

On the contrary, several studies (Berry 1997; Phinney 1990; Horenczyk 1997; Jasinskaja-Lahti *et al.* 2003) have emphasised the interrelation between perceived discrimination and acculturation orientations. Perceived discrimination is one of the major factors that are associated with decreased well-being of individuals and high acculturative stress (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000; Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind 2001; Berry 1997), and with the choice of acculturation strategies (Neto 2002). For example, Neto's study showed that choice of the separation strategy is interrelated with more perceived discrimination. The research of Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Horenczyk and Shhmitz (2003) also detected that immigrants who showed more separation attitudes perceived more discrimination than those who preferred integration or assimilation options. The study also suggested that people perceive discrimination more if they choose integration compared to the groups using an assimilation strategy.

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[1]See http://www.ceifo.su.se/en/Proj/icsey.htm, accessed 10 June 2005.

Acculturation strategy preference was also found to depend partly, amongst other factors, on gender. Neto (2002), for example, found that females were less integrated. Other findings show that very often acculturation involves greater problems for women than for men (Berry *et al.* 1988).

The Russian speaking population in Latvia

According to Latvia's population census of 2000, 60.5% of the population speak Latvian and 37.3% Russian as their mother tongue. Although some groups of Russian speakers have a long history in Latvia, the majority of them arrived only after the Second World War, and in particular in the 1960s. The proportion of Russian speakers born in the territory of Latvia, however, continues to grow. In 1989 approximately 40% of the Russian speaking population in Latvia were born there, but in 2000 this proportion had grown to more than 60%.

The Russian speaking population in Latvia differs from Russian diasporas in Western European countries and in the USA or from modern day Russian immigrants. They did not come to Latvia as intentional immigrants; very often they were convinced they had just moved to some other city or town within their big state. After the collapse of the Soviet Union their political and also psychological status changed and they became a minority in the state they saw as their native place and home. Many of them could not get citizenship automatically, but had to apply for it and pass specific exams. Later, the citizenship law was amended and children who were born in Latvia after it regained independence were granted citizenship automatically on the request of both non-citizen parents. Yet, in 2005 only about 50% of Russian speakers were citizens of Latvia and the majority of the rest are without any citizenship: that is they are non-citizens.

The pace of naturalisation is still quite slow. In the beginning insufficient knowledge of Latvian language was seen as the major barrier for naturalisation. Today language is very often only a secondary concern. Social scientists agree that psychological aspects such as the view that citizenship has to be granted automatically for all those born in Latvia, and the view of the naturalisation process as something humiliating, as well as pragmatic aspects such as reduced fees for visas to CIS states, lack of money or time are of most importance. Language also plays an important role in acculturation processes. During Soviet times there was asymmetric bilingualism in Latvia when almost all Latvians spoke fluent Russian whereas, according to 1989 data, only about 20% of Russian speakers spoke fluent Latvian. Russian language dominated in administration, professional spheres, the economy and science. Latvian was almost solely used only in cultural, family and partly in educational spheres. Latvians were highly motivated to learn Russian, but Russian speakers did not have motivation to learn and speak Latvian since Russian was sufficient.

After regaining independence the situation changed. Latvian became the only official language of the new reborn Latvian state and the Russian speaking population had to adapt linguistically. According to the latest survey data (Valoda 2004) only about 10% of Russian speakers do not know any Latvian. Of course, much research shows that knowledge of Latvian language improves faster among the younger generation and the level is much higher than that of older generations. In spite of this,

the situation is made difficult by the politicising of language issues and also by the fact that the Latvian language has to compete with Russian and now also English, both of which are widely used languages internationally.

As already mentioned earlier, Latvia has a specific ethnopolitical situation. Very often a segregated school system based on language of instruction (most often Latvian or Russian) and thus on ethnic belonging, is seen as a factor encouraging segregation of Latvian and Russian speakers. This segregated education system was inherited from the Soviet Union and resulted not only in a two-community state, but also in a very low knowledge of Latvian language in Russian language schools, and therefore lower chances of continuing education to the university level or competing on the labour market for ethnic minority young people. For that reason, in 1999 ethnic minority primary schools switched to a bilingual education, but in high schools a minimum of three subjects had to be taught in Latvian. Moreover, starting from September 2004 minority high schools have to teach in Latvian 60% of the time.

Surveys show that the overall attitude of Russian speakers towards their children and learning the Latvian language themselves is positive (BSZI, 2000). The great majority of them support bilingual education yet only about half of Russian speakers in Latvia support the idea of teaching 60% of classes in Latvian in minority high schools. There are worries about the psychological well-being of children, knowledge of school subjects, proficiency in their native language, and fear of assimilation. The language issue is still contentious: Russian speakers and schoolchildren have protested against plans to require 60% of school subjects to be taught in the national language instead of Russian. It has to be mentioned here, however, that the lack of research and professional information before the start of the education reform resulted in a highly politicised issue. Enormous tension exists in Latvia due to the fact that Latvian language does not serve as a communication tool for all members of Latvian society. Latvians are afraid that Russian will overtake Latvian, but Russian speakers in turn are afraid of assimilation. That is why education seems so important for both sides. Little attention is paid to aspects of culture, history or citizenship studies at school. Moreover, if children in schools are left segregated, it will be almost impossible to solve the issue of social integration through the improvement of Latvian language knowledge only.

On the issue of perceived discrimination in Latvia, surveys conducted by the Baltic Data House in 2000 to investigate the perceived discrimination in Latvia demonstrate that 24% of Latvian inhabitants thought that in the previous three years their human rights had been violated. Non-Latvians, non-citizens, inhabitants of Riga and people with higher education were most often among those who had a high level of perceived discrimination. For ethnic minorities, ethnicity and language were more frequently the grounds for perceived discrimination. Research 'On the Road to a Civil Society' (Ceļā 1997 and 2001) asked a similar question and revealed that Latvian citizens believed that they were less discriminated (16.1%) than non-citizens (26.4%). The only research devoted to direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of ethnicity was the study carried out by Artis Pabriks (2002) called 'Occupational Representation and Ethnic Discrimination in Latvia'. The data in this study do not suggest the existence of widespread ethnic discrimination in the labour market. The socio-economic status of minorities and Latvians is rather similar. This is not usually the case in societies with

widespread ethnic discrimination. The study points to disproportions between Latvians and minorities in certain institutions and branches of industry, but these disproportions do not appear to derive from discrimination, but from segregation tendencies.

While there is a high number of intermarriages and intense communication between Russian and Latvian speakers, there have been no registered incidents of ethnic conflict or violence in Latvia since independence. The 2000 survey 'On the Road to a Civil Society' demonstrated that every third respondent evaluated interethnic relations as good and two thirds of respondents considered relations to be satisfactory. Moreover, in accordance with data from the same research, more than 50% of respondents believed that interethnic relations in Latvia would improve in the coming five-year period. Asked about the most appropriate model for Latvian society—a single community society, a binational society or a society open to cultural diversity— a plurality (46%) supported the last option. It should be mentioned that the most conservative and distrustful towards representatives of other ethnic groups and the idea of an open society are elderly people. Representatives of the younger generation are more open to contacts with representatives of other ethnic groups and perceive Latvia as a society open to cultural diversity.

Problems that Russian speakers have to deal with following the collapse of the Soviet Union are more often not political or economical, but of a psychological nature. Already in the 1980s researchers raised the question of possible changes of identity in Russians who lived in different Soviet Republics outside Russia. Some researchers (Kory 1980) argued that they would keep their own identity and language despite their minority position and distance from Russia. Others believed that a specific Russian identity would not only persist, but be strengthened because of intense contacts with other cultural groups. Some other researchers proposed that the identities of Russian diasporas would differ from 'mainland' Russians and they would adopt some characteristics of the indigenous population (Pavlovich 1980).

Years later after the collapse of the Soviet Union, David Laitin (1998) in his book *Identity in Formation* came to a conclusion that Russians in Latvia and Estonia had taken steps toward assimilation by choosing to learn the local languages of their home countries and by encouraging their children to do the same. Laitin wrote about what he called a 'competitive assimilation' that is based on an instrumental and rational choice of the Russian speaking parents for their children. However, he also explored the possible formation of a new Russian speaking group identity by the merging of Russians with other Russian speaking groups like Ukrainians or Byelorussians as an alternative to assimilation. Laitin finds that his studies and particularly the survey data generally reveal strong assimilationist incentives in both Latvia and Estonia compared to Ukraine or Kazakhstan. None of the studies, however, conducted by other researchers (Zepa & Karklins 1995; Apine 2001) on linguistic aspects of acculturation in Latvia give evidence about possible assimilation of Russian speakers. Eduard Ponarin (2000) has already criticised Laitin's findings, arguing that it is possible to have an unassimilated bilingualism and use dominant language only in restricted spheres of life and native language in most domains. Currently public surveys in Latvia (Priedite 2005) reflect changing attitudes, a greater motivation to learn the Latvian language and a higher level of the actual language knowledge, but the use of

the Latvian language is more or less limited to the workplace. Policy makers also influence the situation by targeting predominantly instrumental motivation to learn and use Latvian. As Artemi Romanov (2000) suggests, Latvians do not demand assimilation and prohibition of Russian, but just bilingualism. Linguistic demands formulated in quite a harsh way do, however, create psychological barriers for the Russian speaking population.

Moreover, there are some separation tendencies in the linguistic sphere. Russians in Latvia have not been subject to any significant degree of assimilation in the traditional sense of the word, primarily because the Russian language retains a very strong position in Latvian society. Opportunities for education in the Russian language remain widespread; there are broad possibilities for the use of the Russian language media and also cultural interaction with Russia is very strong. Norwegian researcher P. Kolstø (1995, 1996, 1999a and 1999b) has conducted a great deal of research on Russian speakers in former Soviet Republics. Characterising the Russian community in Latvia as having high shares of the total population and low degrees of rootedness, in combination with continued strong links to Russia, he predicted the retention of a traditional Russian identity which could also change into a new identity by the convergence of the various Russian speaking groups. On the other hand, Kolstø also sees a possibility of 'Balticisation' and integration of Russian settlers in the Baltics because of negative net migration from Russia, closeness of two cultures and acceptance by Russians of Baltic values. Moreover, a pronounced proletarian profile of Russian speakers in Latvia could disturb the upkeep of traditional Russian values. Nevertheless, he also warns that the goals of political authorities and legislative practices to achieve an accelerated integration of the Russians into the Latvian society may well have the opposite effect, and push some of the Russians towards non-cooperation and non-adaptation. This could result in separation or marginalisation of Russian speakers in Latvia.

Some other researchers (Apine 2001; Simonian 2003) examine and predict the formation of an integrated Baltic or Latvian Russian identity. Baltic Russian diasporas disassociating from Russia's economic, political and cultural influence could gradually form a separate identity that will differentiate them from Russians in Russia. In a pioneering study, Aadne Aasland (1994) was struck by the strong diversity of Latvian Russian identities. It is important to emphasise that there are different Russian speaking population identities and acculturation strategies. That is why one has to remember the complexity and fluidity of acculturation and see the results of this study as a description of certain tendencies for the choice of possible adaptation strategies by the Russian speaking adolescents in Latvia. The research in this sphere has to be continuous to follow changes in the acculturation choices and directions.

Methods

Procedure

The sample of Russian speaking adolescents was taken from secondary schools with Russian as the language of instruction in Riga. A total of 459 ethnic minority adolescents participated in the study. Stratified sampling was used in order to ensure

random selection of schools from different districts of Riga. The number of respondents was chosen proportionally to their number in different Riga districts. Then in each district random schools were chosen in order to ensure a certain number of adolescents in every district. In each school, one seventh grade student was randomly selected from several students asked to participate in the survey.

The chosen schools were approached and asked for permission to have school-children complete questionnaires during class time. All adolescents, school teachers and heads of the schools were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. There were two refusals from heads of schools to participate in the study. Responsiveness from adolescents was very high. The final realised sample included a total of 459 usable questionnaires, representing a 97% response rate. Since there was some diversion during fieldwork all data that are used in analysis were then weighed according to the original proportion of adolescents in each district. The initial questionnaire was pre-tested with a convenience sample of 10 adolescents. Data for the main study were collected during February–April 2002 with a modified and complemented version of International Comparative Studies of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY) project self administrated questionnaire.[2] The questionnaire offered to the adolescents was in Russian. Approximately one hour was required to complete all questions.

Participants

The target population for this study consisted of Russian speaking adolescents aged 13–14 who were studying in the seventh grade at schools with Russian as the language of instruction at the moment of the survey in spring 2002. Riga was chosen as a target city because of its size and very multicultural outline. Riga is the capital of Latvia and 35% of the Latvian population lives there. The choice of the seventh grade schoolchildren as the research object was determined by the fact that they will be the first to start their studies in high schools with 60% of study time being in Latvian in 2004. In this context it is important to look at their acculturation strategies and perspective adaptation especially in the sphere of language. From the original sample, adolescents who specified Russian as their native language were selected for further data analysis. The final data set included 414 cases. Table 1 provides a profile of the respondents in terms of gender, citizenship, place of birth, and ethnicity. The sample consisted of 220 (53.2%) boys and 194 (46.8%) girls. By ethnic descent, 80.9% of the adolescents were Russian, 6.9% marked Latvian as their choice of ethnicity, 3.6% were Ukrainian, 3.1% Belarusian and 5.5% were of some other ethnic identity. Although 92.6% of the adolescents in this study were born in Latvia, only 54.4% of participants were Latvian citizens. Only 49.6% of the respondents' mothers and 50.9% of their fathers were born in Latvia.

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[2]The research design drew on the following: the work by Berry *et al.* (1995); and Acculturation Depot (Version I) *Abridged Versions of Acculturation Scales*: Benet-Martinez Acculturation Scale (BMAS), Cultural Beliefs and Behaviors Adaptation Profile (CBBAP), General Ethnicity Questionnaire-abridged (GEQ-a), available at: http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~psych/depot.html, accessed 10 March 2002.

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Variable	n	%
Gender		
Male	220	53.2
Female	194	46.8
Ethnicity		
Russian	332	80.9
Latvian	28	6.9
Ukrainian	15	3.6
Belarusian	13	3.1
Other ethnicity	22	5.5
Citizenship		
Latvian	221	54.4
Non-citizen	175	43.1
Citizen of other country	11	2.5
Place of birth		
Latvia	380	92.6
Russia	18	4.4
Other country	12	3.0
Mother's place of birth		
Latvia	200	49.6
Russia	107	26.4
Byelorussia	38	9.4
Ukraine	31	7.7
Other country	28	6.9
Father's place of birth		
Latvia	201	50.9
Russia	124	31.3
Byelorussia	26	6.6
Ukraine	24	6.0
Other country	20	5.2

Measures

Perceived discrimination. The perceived discrimination was measured through four-point Likert scale statements: 'I have been teased by Latvians because of my ethnic background', 'I do not feel accepted by Latvians', 'I do not speak Latvian because people laugh about my mistakes'. All the scale points of these three items were labelled ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The responses given by each respondent were summed ranging from 0 to 9. The internal consistency of the perceived discrimination scale was 0.52.

Knowledge of the language. Knowledge of the Latvian language was measured using three items for separate subjective assessment of speaking, writing and reading skills. A four-point scale was used in each case. The scale points of all three items were labelled ranging from 1 (no knowledge or almost no knowledge) to 4 (fluent). The responses given by each respondent were summed to provide an overall knowledge of the Latvian language ranging from 0 to 9. A higher overall score indicates a better knowledge of the language. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.76.

Acculturation attitudes. Acculturation strategy measurements were adopted from the ICSEY project. It assessed four acculturation strategies (assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation) among adolescents on a four-point scale (from 1 'strongly disagree' to 4 'strongly agree') in each of the four domains: cultural traditions, language, friends and social contacts. For example, four acculturation strategies regarding the sphere of language are: 'I feel that it is more important for Russians in Latvia to know Latvian language than Russian' (assimilation), 'I feel that it is more important for Russians in Latvia to know Russian language than Latvian' (separation), 'I feel that it is of the same importance for Russians in Latvia to know Latvian and Russian' (integration), and 'I feel that it is not important for Russians in Latvia to know either Russian or Latvian' (marginalisation). The responses given by each respondent in different spheres were summed to provide an overall score for acculturation strategy ranging from 0 to 12. A higher overall score indicates a stronger acceptance of a certain mode of acculturation. The internal consistencies for assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation were 0.53, 0.63, 0.71 and 0.43, respectively.

Demographic variables. The questionnaire also contained questions to determine a respondent's gender, native language, ethnic origin, citizenship, birth place and the birth place of their mother and father.

Results

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics of the main measurements used in the study and helps to explore the first hypothesis. Exploratory analysis of the data suggests that integration ($Mdn = 9$; $M = 8.72$, $SD = 2.71$) is the most preferred strategy and both marginalisation ($Mdn = 1$; $M = 1.55$, $SD = 1.76$) and assimilation ($Mdn = 1$; $M = 2.01$, $SD = 1.90$) are the least favoured acculturation modes. These findings supporting the first hypothesis are concordant with expectations and research conducted in other countries. However it has to be mentioned here that the second preferred acculturation attitude is separation ($M = 6.44$, $SD = 3.08$) and a closer examination of the medians shows that both integration and separation are on the preferred side and both

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF MEASUREMENTS

Scale	Range	Median	Mean	SD	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
Integration	0–12	9	8.72*	2.71	0.55	4
Separation	0–12	7	6.44	3.08	0.71	4
Assimilation	0–12	1	2.01	1.90	0.64	4
Marginalisation	0–12	1	1.55	1.76	0.48	4
Latvian language proficiency	0–9	1	5.88	1.55	0.76	3
Perceived discrimination	0–9	6	1.95	1.98	0.53	3

Note: *Highest value stands for stronger agreement, better knowledge of language or more perceived discrimination.

assimilation and marginalisation are not favoured by Russian speaking adolescents. Table 2 also indicates the high level of Latvian language knowledge among Russian speaking schoolchildren. At the same time it suggests that these adolescents have a very low level of perceived discrimination.

The distribution of the choice of acculturation in different spheres is presented in Table 3. For tradition, language and friends domains, integration clearly was the most favoured choice for the adolescents. However, for the social contact domain, integration and separation were both the most preferred attitudes. In the sphere of language and social contacts marginalisation was the least favoured strategy. In traditions and friends domains approximately the same number of Russian speaking adolescents chose assimilation and marginalisation.

Since all variables were measured at an ordinal level of measurement, in further analysis and hypothesis testing the appropriate non-parametric statistical tests were used. Correlations were carried out using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient and group comparison was carried out using the Wilcoxon Mann–Whitney test.

With respect to relationships among different acculturation strategies (Table 4), there is a significant positive correlation between integration and assimilation, as well as between separation and marginalisation. There is also a significant negative correlation between integration and separation, separation and assimilation, as well as between choice of integration and marginalisation. Correlation analysis (Table 4) was carried out to explore whether the preference of a certain acculturation strategy by the Russian speaking adolescents is interrelated with the level of perceived discrimination or language knowledge. The statistically significant negative correlation between discrimination and integration strategy ($r_s = -0.271$, $p < 0.01$) suggests that adolescents who have a higher level of perceived discrimination favour integration strategy less. Moreover, as was expected, a positive correlation between separation and perceived discrimination ($r_s = 0.328$, $p < 0.01$) shows that those who prefer the separation attitude have a higher level of perceived discrimination. Choice of marginalisation is also related to a higher level of perceived discrimination ($r_s = 0.139$, $p < 0.05$).

According to the results of the correlation matrix between acculturation attitudes and language knowledge (Table 4), better language knowledge is related to the choice of assimilation ($r_s = 0.157$, $p < 0.01$) or integration ($r_s = 0.190$, $p < 0.01$) and preference of separation strategy is statistically significantly interrelated with a lower level of language knowledge ($r_s = -0.280$, $p < 0.01$). The results suggest that there was no statistically significant interrelatedness for the assimilation and perceived discrimination as well as for marginalisation and language knowledge.

Statistical analysis of the data suggests that there are differences based on adolescent gender and citizenship in the choice of acculturation strategies. The results show that boys more strongly agree with separation strategy ($z = -2.958$, $p < 0.01$) than girls, and boys also favour the marginalisation mode of acculturation ($z = -2.441$, $p < 0.05$) more than girls. On the contrary, girls give greater preference to integration strategy than boys ($z = -2.872$, $p < 0.01$). The correlations also revealed that adolescents who are non-citizens give stronger preference to separation strategy than Latvian citizens ($z = -2.144$, $p < 0.05$). It is also interesting to note that there is

TABLE 3
CHOICE OF ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS, % AND AVERAGES

	Integration		Separation		Assimilation		Marginalisation	
	Strongly agree (+ somewhat agree) %	*Mean score**	*Strongly agree (+ somewhat agree) %*	*Mean score*	*Strongly agree (+ somewhat agree) %*	*Mean score*	*Strongly agree (+ somewhat agree) %*	*Mean score*
Traditions	55.9 (78.3)	3.27	22.1 (37.1)	2.36	5.5 (10.6)	1.52	6.0 (11.3)	1.57
Language	61.9 (79.7)	3.35	35.7 (52.9)	2.76	10.1 (19.5)	1.84	1.3 (3.7)	1.19
Friends	52.9 (73.8)	3.17	21.6 (44.1)	2.44	1.8 (4.3)	1.32	2.7 (3.8)	1.18
Social contacts	39.7 (64.2)	2.92	41.9 (59.3)	2.87	1.6 (5.3)	1.36	7.2 (13.6)	1.62

Note: *Scale range 1–4.

TABLE 4
SPEARMAN'S RHO CORRELATIONS AMONG THE CHOICE OF ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES, LANGUAGE
KNOWLEDGE, PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION

	Assimilation	Integration	Separation	Marginalisation	Language knowledge
Assimilation					
Integration	0.355*				
Separation	−0.442*	−0.516*			
Marginalisation	−0.086	−0.315*	0.210*		
Language knowledge	0.157*	0.190*	−0.280*	−0.006	
Perceived discrimination	−0.048	−0.271*	0.328*	0.139*	−0.205*

Note: *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

a statistically significant difference in the levels of language knowledge and perceived discrimination between girls and boys. Male adolescents perceive more discrimination ($z = -2.723$, $p < 0.01$) than their female counterparts. Furthermore, girls evaluate their knowledge of the Latvian language higher than boys do ($z = -3.763$, $p < 0.01$).

Sets of a more detailed correlation analysis (Table 5) were carried out to draw relationships between acculturation strategies in different spheres and language knowledge as well as perceived discrimination. According to the results, language knowledge has statistically significant positive correlations with assimilation attitude in language, friends and social contact domains; with integration in language, social contacts and friendship spheres; and negative correlations with separation in all four spheres used in the study. A correlation matrix of the choice of acculturation strategies in different spheres with perceived discrimination reveals that there are statistically significant negative correlations with all four spheres of integration strategy and positive interrelatedness with four domains of separation attitude and social contact and friendship sphere of marginalisation as a preferred mode of acculturation.

Discussion

This study was aimed at investigating the acculturation strategies of Russian speaking adolescents in Riga. It is the first study that demonstrates choice of acculturation mode in connection with gender, citizenship, perceived discrimination and language knowledge in Latvia. The results suggest that integration is the most favoured strategy and marginalisation is the least preferred one. These findings support the first hypothesis of the study and correspond with previous research done in this sphere, mentioned in the introduction. The second most preferred, and in the social contact domain favoured on the same level as integration, is separation strategy. It also has to be taken into account that in many urban settings in Latvia, including Riga, Russian language is very often self-sufficient and thus separation is much more likely to happen.

It is interesting to look at the results of this study in the context of previous research findings about the future of the Russian diaspora in the former Soviet countries. Main choices for possible Russian speaking identities in Latvia might be reduced to three

TABLE 5

SPEARMAN'S RHO CORRELATIONS AMONG THE CHOICE OF ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES IN DIFFERENT SPHERES, LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION

	Assimilation			Integration				Separation				Marginalisation	
	Language	Friends	Social contacts	Traditions	Language	Social contacts	Friends	Language	Traditions	Social contacts	Friends	Social contacts	Friends
Language knowledge	0.160**	0.142**	0.143*		0.116*	0.125*	0.153***	−0.199**	−0.157***	−0.211**	−0.226**	0.119*	0.114*
Perceived discrimination				−0.123*	−0.160**	−0.223**	−0.238***	0.182**	0.153**	0.238***	0.344***		

Notes: *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

main options: assimilation into the Latvian culture group, separation maintaining a distinct Russian identity and integration at the same time as formation of a new identity conglomeration of the Russian and Latvian cultures. The choice of integration and separation as the two most favourite modes of acculturation by Russian speaking adolescents corresponds to two possible outcomes of their identity and acculturation development. First, it supports the argument that Russians will keep their identity and language (Kory 1980; Kolstø 1999a) and even strengthens it in the case of the choice of separation. In the case of the choice of integration, Russian speakers would probably form some specific integrated Baltic Russian speaking group which is different from mainland Russians, but not completely assimilated into Latvian culture (Pavlovich 1980; Kolstø 1999a; Apine 2001; Simonian 2003). Also various opinion surveys show a tendency both towards the establishment of distinct Baltic–Russian cultures (integration), some separation tendencies and a certain resilience of traditional Soviet attitudes. The same surveys indicate that the younger generation of Russians is integrating readily. Their knowledge of Latvian language is very high, more of them apply or have Latvian citizenship and their values are very similar to Latvian adolescents.

The research findings show that there are very weak assimilation tendencies which contradict Laitin's (1998) main predictions on the Russian speaking population in Latvia. Laitin's findings then have to be questioned. His conclusions are based on the equitation of a language choice with choice of ethnic identity. At some point he agrees that a language is just one part of identity, but when he talks about the identity formation he sees language as the most and almost the only important factor. Here Berry's acculturation theory is clearly relevant, stating that acculturation can be uneven in different spheres and, for example, one can seek linguistic assimilation, but not social integration. It has to be emphasised that the choice to learn a second language can lead to bilingualism and not only to assimilation. As Artemi Romanov points out,

> as far as linguistic outcomes are concerned, a review of the available evidence suggests that the Russian minority group will retain its language, at least for several coming generations, despite political changes in the Baltic. The retention of the Russian language will probably go hand in hand with increased competence in Latvian, which does not necessarily imply a decrease in the use and function of Russian (Romanov 2000, p. 67).

Laitin's approach, however, is very useful for looking at the instrumental nature of the choice of acculturation strategies, but I would like to talk not about 'competitive assimilation', but about competitive integration and bilingualism. Even if Russian speaking adolescents want to gain competence in the Latvian language they still want to keep their knowledge of the Russian language at a high level and thus be competitive in the labour market using their bilingualism. This also explains why the Russian speaking population in Latvia, both adolescents and their parents, favour bilingual education but feel threatened regarding the use of Latvian for 60% of study time.

Citizenship issues also highlight the dominance of the instrumental approach over psychological factors. After Latvia became a member of the EU, citizenship

applications grew within a couple of months. EU citizenship seems to be perceived as more beneficial than Latvian citizenship alone. We have to stress here that even if one learns the Latvian language and chooses Latvian citizenship because of the economic benefits associated with them, a person can still be separated from Latvians in the sphere of social contact and not feel any sense of belonging to the Latvian state. Many young people are now leaving Latvia and going to other EU countries to work. It would be very interesting to look at different rates of economic migration within different ethnic groups in Latvia.

Research shows that integration is often seen as the most adaptive option, not only for individual well-being (Ward 1996), but also for the integration of the whole society. Even if some other research (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2003) supported the idea that the separation option could be as adaptive as is integration, in the case of Latvian society coherence and social development integration it is still more often seen as a choice that is favoured and supported by state policy. That is why it is so important to look at different factors that are interrelated with the preference of acculturation strategies, especially the choice between integration and separation.

This study tested the relationship between acculturation attitudes and two sociodemographic factors (gender and citizenship) as well as two behavioural variables: perceived discrimination and Latvian language knowledge by Russian speaking adolescents. Acculturation strategy preference was found to depend partly on the gender of a person. This hypothesis was supported. Contrary to previous findings (Berry et al. 1988; Neto 2002), however, females seem to be more adaptive, favouring integration strategy more than males, and boys less integrated preferring separation or marginalisation more than girls. Poppe & Hagendoorn (2001) in their research on the typology of the identification of Russians in Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Kazakhstan found that males tend more towards assimilation and identify primarily with the titular population. But it is interesting that the same research also shows that the dominant language proficiency is closely related with the degree of relatedness with the republic of residence and its titular population. Furthermore this study suggests that there is a statistically significant correlation between language knowledge and the gender of respondents. It seems that Russian speaking girls in Latvia know Latvian at a higher level, or at least subjectively evaluate it higher than boys do. If the knowledge of a second language and person's gender is combined, it can be proposed that Russian speaking girls in Latvia are more likely to choose integration strategy than boys from the same group. It helps to explain relatedness between gender, acculturation and second language knowledge.

The study also validated the relationship between language knowledge and acculturation attitudes in general. Language issues have an important place in Latvia's integration and everyday life especially of these adolescents who were the first to start their studies in high schools with 60% of study time in Latvian. This is inconsistent with some previous research (Ekstrand 1976; Taft 1979; Bhatnagar 1980), suggesting that proficiency in the language of the host society has statistically significant correlations with some acculturation attitudes. The research hypothesis was not supported. According to the results, language knowledge is positively interrelated with assimilation and integration and negatively with separation strategy.

With respect to citizenship, as was expected, non-citizens more than citizens prefer a separation strategy—thus the hypothesis was supported. It is important, however, to look at their parents' influence and acculturation strategies because adolescents who were born before 21 August 1991, and are younger than 15, can be naturalised only together with their parents or receive citizenship automatically tracing descent from the interwar period. It should be added here that the choice of staying as non-citizens could be part of a separation acculturation attitude of adolescents in the future.

Consistent with recent research advocating the interrelatedness between perceived discrimination and acculturation orientations (Ward 1996; Berry 1997; Phinney *et al*. 2001; Neto 2002; Jasinskaja-Lahti *et al*. 2003) the results of this study also clearly reveal a significant relationship between the level of perceived discrimination and the preference of certain acculturation strategies. Level of perceived discrimination has significant positive correlations with separation and marginalisation and a negative correlation with the integration option. I have to also emphasise that perceived discrimination is interrelated with choice of acculturation strategy in all four domains studied. Thus the research hypothesis was supported. One should remember, however, that even if more perceived discrimination can lead to separation, it can be the other way round where choice of the separation strategy encompasses sensitivity towards the action of Latvians and raises the level of discrimination perception.

In conclusion it has to be emphasised that it is possible for adolescents to use different acculturation strategies in different domains. As this study suggests, the majority of Russian speaking adolescents in Latvia prefer integration and have good Latvian language knowledge that is positively interrelated with the choice of integration strategy. The knowledge of Latvian alone cannot ensure integration of the whole society. Findings of this study suggest that Russian speaking adolescents favour separation on the same level as integration in the social contact domain. The social contact sphere is very important for successful adaptation and social integration. The absence of contacts can lead to separation or marginalisation and social segregation. In the context of the segregated school system, especially in Riga where the Russian language domain is self-sufficient, this factor becomes even more important. Thus, it is essential to strengthen communication possibilities between Russian and Latvian speaking adolescents, for example, by means of informal education such as different exchange projects and summer camps. One has to remember also that for adolescents their peer group has a huge influence on their acculturation as well as overall socialisation.

One also has to keep in mind that political authorities and legislative practices, aimed at an accelerated integration of Russians into Latvian society, may well have the opposite effect, and push parts of the Russian population towards non-cooperation and non-adaptation (Kolstø 1999). This could result in the separation or marginalisation of Russian speakers in Latvia. As Graham Smith *et al*. (1998) argue, certain actions of the Latvian government, especially citizenship and language policy, could make Russian speaking non-citizens opt for Russian citizenship and thus separation and alienation. Latvia joining the EU lets us return to the instrumental approach of the choice of acculturation strategies and citizenship. As the results of this study show, separation is already the second preferred option by Russian speaking

adolescents and perceived discrimination is positively interrelated with the preference of separation.

In this research only some tendencies can be marked out since research on identity formation and acculturation will always be speculative. It is impossible and even dangerous to extrapolate into a long distance future since, for example, research on immigrants (Kolsto 1996) very often indicates that third generation migrants sometimes refuse to accept their parents' integrative or assimilative practices and return to their grandparents' culture and use separation as their mode of acculturation.

The results of this study have some limitations. First, acculturation attitudes were measured in four domains that cover only some of the broad issues of daily living, despite being the most important ones. Political or socio-economic acculturation and adaptation were not studied. Most attention was paid to cultural, linguistic and social contact spheres that are more important in the context of a school setting and adolescents' everyday life. Some caution regarding generalisation of results is also connected with the relatively low reliability of some of the scales used in the study. Another factor is the specific geographical place of fieldwork. Riga has its own specific ethnic and social situation. Some 40% of the Latvian population live in Riga, of which 56% are Russian speakers. Russian language there is very often self-sufficient and one can follow some separation tendencies between Latvians and Russians. It is important to emphasise that the results of the research done in Riga cannot be generalised to all of Latvia. For example, it is useful to compare acculturation strategies of Russian speakers living in Daugavpils where they constitute more than 80% of the whole population, with some other smaller towns where one can find only about 10–20% of Russian speakers or less. It should also be mentioned that all adolescents studied here attend schools with Russian as the language of instruction. Adolescents who study in schools with Latvian as the language of instruction or smaller ethnic minority schools such as Ukrainian, Lithuanian or Polish have to be studied separately. It would be of great importance and interest to compare the results from these studies.

Furthermore, the suggestions of this research remain quite speculative because only self-reported measures were used. However, nobody should underestimate that exactly the subjective perception of different events and not, for example, an objectively defined discrimination very often influences the choice of the acculturation strategy, Nevertheless, it is important in the future to use some external indicators to test the validity of subjective measurements.

Finally, it is essential to say that it is impossible to establish any causality from this research: one can look only at interrelatedness of the preference of acculturation strategies and other factors. Thus it is possible that if a person speaks the dominant language better and has more social contacts with the Latvians there is a higher probability that they would choose integration. On the other hand, one can first choose integration and then make an effort to learn the language and look for closer contacts with the Latvian group.

The findings of this study suggest immediate directions for future research. It would be interesting and useful to explore the influence of host attitudes and state policy on acculturation strategy choice. Secondly, it is also crucial to compare parents and

children, older and younger generation acculturation attitudes as well. It would also be useful to look at ethnic Russian acculturation and not Russian speaking groups, as was done in this study. Moreover it would be very useful to explore acculturation strategies of those who have citizenship of the Russian Federation or to compare groups who were born in Latvia with those born in other countries. Thirdly, it would be valuable to continue this study and convert it into a longitudinal one: studying the same adolescents (at least from the same cohort and schools) when they finish the twelfth grade, after spending three years studying 60% in Latvian.

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