

## ESTONIAN OPEN IDENTITY: REALITY AND IDEALS

Aune Valk<sup>1</sup>, Kristel Karu-Kletter<sup>1</sup>, and Marianna Drozdova<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, and* <sup>2</sup>*University of Tartu*

**Abstract.** The article reports the results of a comparative study of the relationship between the ethnic and national identity of different ethnic groups residing in Estonia. The aim of the study was to identify aspects of the Estonian national identity that are acceptable to all ethnic groups in Estonia – the Estonian Open Identity (EOI). Ethnic Estonians' national and ethnic identity are intertwined, supporting the majority group dominance perspective (Sidanius et al. 1997), while the minorities' ethnic identity was independent of the Estonian national identity, thus corresponding to the bidimensional acculturation model.

Within the EOI a distinction was made between the concepts of national pride and multicultural national identity whose relevance for different groups varied. Analyses related to the EOI showed that the development of an identity shared by the majority and the minorities is only possible if the groups have low ethnic differentiation and accept the idea of multiculturalism on a personal level. Multiple identities, as well as self-identification as a European, appeared to strengthen the EOI. The part of the Russian-speaking sample who chose to categorize themselves as Russian-Estonians could be seen as an exemplary group with regard to the EOI.

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### 1. Introduction

The world around us is shrinking continually – distances and boundaries that previously held considerable separation power have been markedly eroded by developments in technology and international cooperation. This has created many new situations of intercultural contact, highlighted previously existing identity conflicts and brought to the fore a number of new ones. To tackle the resulting challenges adequately, researchers have focused considerable effort in investigating the field of acculturation and bicultural identity formation.

Although various multiculturalism issues have been studied for some time already, there is yet no widespread agreement concerning the strategies used by individuals and groups in forming a bicultural identity and in combining the ethnic and national dimensions of identity (Phinney et al. 2001, Sidanius et al.). One of the central problems of multiculturalism lies in the fact that minorities tend to draw a distinction between the ethnic and the national identity, while majority groups do not, because their ethnic and national identity usually coincide. In the current study we define these component identities as follows: *ethnic identity* focuses on the feeling of belonging to one's group of origin, i.e. ethnic group (Phinney 1990), while *national identity* refers to feelings of belonging to a larger society or a state, and involves a political or a civic component (Smith 1991, Phinney et al. 2001).

For members of an ethnic minority both identities – ethnic and national – are necessary for effective adaptation (Oudenhoven 2006). Such adaptation, in turn, tends to correlate with higher life satisfaction (Pavot and Diener 2008). While most immigrant groups demonstrate a relatively strong ethnic identity, the strength of their national identity as well as the strength and direction of the relationship between their ethnic and national identity is shown to be more variable and to relate to the specific acculturation context (Phinney et al. 2001). National identity is clearly the more complicated component of the two, because embracing the national identity of the host country presumes, on the one hand, that the minorities are willing to adopt it and, on the other hand, that the host majority is ready to share it.

The study reported in this article investigated the relationship between ethnic identities and the Estonian national identity<sup>1</sup> among different ethnic groups in Estonia. The aim of the study was to identify those aspects of identity that facilitate the development of a shared national identity. In order to be acceptable to and meaningful for both the country's ethnic minorities and the majority group, these aspects must be culturally open. A national identity constructed on their basis will be referred to below as the Estonian Open Identity (EOI). The authors' general interest was to find out whether and how the ethnic and national identity of the host group (ethnic Estonians) facilitates the development of a healthy, fulfilling bicultural identity among the country's minorities. EOI should be easily combinable with different ethnic identities and thus facilitate bicultural identity development. The principal research question underlying the study was: "What are or could be the dimensions of the Estonian national identity that are open enough to allow adoption to be adopted by all ethnic groups in Estonia?"

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'national identity' was chosen to refer to the civic (or state) identity, related to the country and its inhabitants. The respective term in Estonian is *riiklik identiteet* (as opposed to *rahvuslik* (ethnic) *identiteet* which in common parlance refers to an identity based on Estonian ethnic culture and the Estonian language).

### *1.1. Ethnic minority acculturation and bicultural identity*

Preserving one's ethnic identity and adopting the national majority identity of the society or state of residence can be viewed as expressions of the two main dimensions of psychological acculturation – maintenance or loss of the original culture and adoption of or separation from the new host culture.

There are several models of acculturation to account for the process of cultural and psychological change that takes place in the host and home culture, or in the national and ethnic identity of minority group members (for a comprehensive overview see LaFromboise et al. 1993). Generally speaking, these models can be divided into three groups: (1) unidimensional; (2) bidimensional; (3) fusion models. According to **unidimensional models** the first of which was proposed by Gordon (1964) in his assimilation theory, the deeper the acquisition of a new culture, the more marked is the displacement of the original one. According to this model, having a bicultural identity means that the identity holder is in the process of assimilation into the new culture. Although the unidimensional model is considered old-fashioned, it is supported by empirical results of a number of studies. For instance, ethnic and national identities were negatively correlated in Israel and the USA among Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union (respectively, Phinney et al. 2001 and Birman and Trickett 2001), and in the Netherlands among Antillean immigrants (Phinney et al. 2001).

The **bidimensional models** assume that it is possible for a minority to identify with the host culture without losing the minority's original one (Berry 1980): the two cultures and identities are independent of each other and can be practiced side by side. According to this model there are four acculturation strategies [which Hutnik (1986, 1991) designates 'strategies of self-categorization'], which represent the orientation to integration, assimilation, separation or marginalization with respect to the host culture. Differing correlation patterns between ethnic and national identity illustrate this theory – e.g., a stronger national identity accompanied by a weakening ethnic identity would suggest assimilation, while a positive correlation between the two would suggest integration. Since the model is founded on an understanding that the two cultures and identities are independent of each other, it can be used to interpret the results of studies in which no correlation was found between ethnic and national identities (for instance, Eyou et al. (2000), Nesdale (2002), Roebars and Schneider (1999), Tartakovsky (2009)).

An addition to the bidimensional framework in the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) was proposed by Bourhis et al. (1997). They argued that if people prefer to identify themselves neither with an immigrant group nor the host majority, there should still be another alternative to marginalization – namely the individualist approach. As proposed by Bourhis et al., there are always immigrants as well as members of the host group who prefer to treat themselves and others as individuals rather than group members. For example, according to Barrette et al. (2004), individualism was the second most strongly endorsed acculturation approach by French and North African students in Paris. The 'individualists', who

do not attribute much importance to group membership, should not be confused with those who are marginalized, since the individualists' dissociation from the group is deliberate. Moreover, it has been suggested that individualists are likely to support state acculturation policies that emphasize acculturation along pluralist and civic, as opposed to ethnicist lines (Bourhis et al.) – in this sense individualists are similar to integrationists.

The **fusion model** suggests that cultures sharing an economic, political, or geographic space will fuse together, creating a new unique culture and a new identity. In their overview of the fusion model, LaFromboise and her colleagues (1993: 401) write that this model brings to the fore “the psychological impact that contact with members of the minority group has on those of the majority group”. They claim that this effect has been rarely discussed and needs more attention.

Similar to the fusion model of acculturation is the Bicultural Identity Integration (BII) model – a theoretical construct proposed by Benet-Martinez et al. (2002). BII measures the ability of individuals to integrate two cultures into a cohesive whole and to perceive themselves as having a hyphenated identity or even being “part of a combined, ‘third’, emerging culture” (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos 2005: 1019). An empirical example of this model may be seen in the Mexican-American identity encountered in southern states of the USA where both the label used by Mexican-Americans for self-identification and the positive correlation demonstrated between their ethnic and national identity refer to a new, emergent identity (Phinney et al. 2001).

An important practical question that arises in any discussion of preferred acculturation strategies is, of course, which identity combination and in what circumstances is psychologically the most satisfying? The results concerning the link between identity strength and the immigrants' subjective well-being vary (Phinney et al. 2001). When the contributions of each type of identity (ethnic and majority) are included as separate variables in analyses, the results support the view that strong ethnic identity makes a positive contribution to psychological adaptation (Liebkind 1996, Nesdale et al. 1997, Phinney et al. 1997, 2001). On the other hand, several acculturation scholars claim that a strong bicultural identity (corresponding to integration) or a strong national and a weak ethnic identity (whose simultaneous occurrence suggests assimilation) lead to the best general adaptation (LaFromboise et al. 1993, Oudenhoven).

The question still remains – why do certain ethnic and immigrant groups manage to combine the two identities successfully while others struggle with separation? The opinion often encountered in the current identity literature is that the reasons for this lie in the different social circumstances of the host countries, as well as in the individual differences of acculturating individuals (see next section for details). In addition, the development of bicultural identity can be (and has been by Minescu et al. 2008) analysed within the framework of different inter-group models. The willingness of immigrating groups to develop a dual ethnic and national identity is influenced by the perception of match or conflict between their respective identities and the host nation's corresponding ones, and of how well the

host nation's identities satisfy their main identity motives (see also the section on intergroup models below).

### *1.2. The role of the host culture in acculturation*

According to its original definition (Redfield et al. 1936: 149), acculturation is a two-sided process that refers to the "changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups". As suggested by Sam (2006), directionality (whether changes take place in one or both groups) and dimensionality (one or two independent dimensions of change) are the two fundamental issues of all acculturation research and theory.

However, most acculturation studies concentrate on changes taking place in the non-dominant group. There has also been some theorizing on acculturation strategies of the dominant group members and their relation to the acculturation of the minority group members, e.g. in the framework of the Interactive Acculturation Model proposed by Bourhis and his colleagues. Yet, rather than investigating how intergroup interactions affect the identities of members of the dominant group, these models concentrate on the dominant group's (or state's) acculturation attitudes towards minority groups and focus on the relationships between acculturation attitudes expressed by the dominant group and the acculturation strategies and adaptation outcomes demonstrated by the minorities.

Several authors (Berry 1990, Gurin et al. 1994, Phinney et al. 2001, Sabatier 2008) stress that sociopolitical climate in the society and the attitudes, stereotypes and acculturation orientations of the dominant majority have a strong impact on the acculturation orientations of immigrant minorities. For example, the majority's attitudes and the way these attitudes are perceived by minority members certainly influence the expression of their ethnic and national identities. Two opposite hypotheses have been put forward regarding the effect of discrimination on minorities' adoption of the host country's national identity. The first proposes that minority group members who experience discrimination are likely to reinforce their adherence to their ethnic identity and to reject the national identity as a source of adverse attitudes. This hypothesis was supported by the study conducted in Finland among immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU) (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2009) whose results led the authors to formulate the Rejection-Disidentification Model (RDIM) for explaining this phenomenon. Tartakovsky reached similar conclusions in his study of Jewish immigrants from the FSU in Israel.

Another hypothesis inspired by the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1981) proposes that people do not want to identify with a negatively valued group and, thus, in a situation where members of an ethnic group are discriminated against, they give up that group's ethnic identity. This relationship between discrimination and identity is obviously subject to modification on account of the immigrant's identity management strategies and will depend on how strong one's original identity is,

whether group boundaries are perceived as impermeable and status relations as legitimate and stable (Ellemers 1993).

With all these aspects taken into account, the role of the host culture in the development of bicultural identity clearly needs further investigation (Molina et al. 2004, Sam 2006, Wittig and Molina 2000).

### 1.3. Identity and intergroup relations

Although in psychology ethnic identity is seen as an independent variable that can be investigated separately from intergroup relations, ethnicity has been also defined as “a property of relationship between two or several groups, not a property of a group; it exists *between* and not *within* groups” (Eriksen, 2001: 46). Accordingly, apart from the role of the minority group and of host culture attitudes there are certain more or less universal intergroup phenomena that may help to understand the pull and push factors in bicultural identity development.

In relation to the study reported here the following three models are of principal relevance: **the optimal distinctiveness theory** (Brewer 2001), which postulates that an optimal social identity is achieved when one’s needs for distinctiveness and at the same time inclusiveness are simultaneously satisfied. This means that, for members of an ethnic minority, a national identity that is too assimilative may not be optimal since it will threaten the minority’s existence as a group distinct from the majority. **The common in-group identity model** (Gaertner et al. 1993, Hewstone et al. 2002) proposes that a shared national identity accepted by all groups (an identity that is superordinate to the particular identities of different ethnic groups) will counteract discrimination between the groups, because it will give them shared in-group boundaries. It has been claimed, however, that this effect may be limited to certain groups and conditions – for instance, in the case of groups with unequal social status, the superordinate identity will often be constructed around the dominant group’s attributes and will as such be resisted by minority group members (Lipponen et al. 2003, Mummendey and Wenzel 1999, Sidanius et al.).

The **mutual intergroup differentiation model** (Hewstone and Brown 1986) merges the two approaches and stresses the importance of preserving group boundaries while developing a superordinate identity. It follows that the distinctive identities of the society’s ethnic groups should not be abandoned in striving for a broadly acceptable national identity

Applying the three models to bicultural identity development suggests that while minority groups and the majority may have distinctive ethnic identities, they should share a superordinate national identity which is not exclusively defined by dominant group values and characteristics, but is open enough to allow ethnic group boundaries to be preserved. The reality is rarely that clear. Although this paper addresses bicultural identity as a combination of ethnic and national identity (which is the approach taken amongst others also by Phinney et al. 2001, Sidanius et al. and others), different studies often approach similar variables by means of

widely different concepts – or assign different meanings to similar concepts. For instance, Ryder et al. (2000) studied the acculturation of Chinese Canadians using the concepts of **heritage** and **mainstream culture**; the focus of Benet-Martinez and Haritatos' (2005) study of Chinese-Americans was on their multiple **cultural identities**; the Finnish study of Russian immigrants' Russian and Finnish identity by Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebkind (2000) revolved around the notion of **multi-ethnicity**. Yet, in essence the subject matter of all these studies is the same: the mix of identities of people exposed to two cultures simultaneously.

Sidanius et al. have shown that variance in the relationship between the two identities of bicultural persons is not merely terminological but has a real impact on practical use patterns of the two identities. They propose three perspectives for analyzing the interface between national and ethnic identity: (a) the melting pot; (b) multicultural or ethnic pluralism, and (c) the group dominance perspective.

Within the **melting pot perspective**, one's original ethnic background is regarded as largely irrelevant and thus loyalty to the host nation is equal among different groups and independent of (or positively related to) their ethnic identity. The **pluralist model** implies that there is a positive correlation between ethnic and national identities, i.e. a strong ethnic identity also means having a strong national identity. According to the **group dominance model**, national identity is considered stronger and also more strongly associated with ethnic identity among dominant ethnic groups in comparison to minorities. Support for the latter model has been found e.g. in the USA and in Israel among the Euro-American and Jewish dominant majorities respectively.

#### *1.4. Estonian social context: cultural groups and identities*

A similar pattern of dominance of host culture components in national identity construction can be expected also in Estonia, where Estonians are a native population, and where until WWII they were a big majority – 95% or more. During the Soviet occupation period (1944–1990) the proportion of immigrants from other Soviet republics increased considerably. Currently, 32% of the Estonian population consists of members of non-Estonian ethnic groups who, according to Berry (1980), may be called ethnocultural groups. According to the last Estonian Population and Housing Census (2000) there were 142 different ethnic groups represented in the country – yet, since over 80% of minority members have Russian as their first language (Asari 2009), public discourse focuses mainly on the Estonian majority and the Russian-speaking minority.

One of the main aims of Estonia's integration policy (the government's programme *Integration in Estonian Society 2000–2007* and the *Integration Strategy 2008–2013*) has been language integration. The programme for 2008–2013 makes specific mention of ethnic diversity in the Estonian society and stresses the need for the ethnic Estonian majority to become more open towards ethnocultural groups. Thus, one of the principal aims of the current integration programme is:

*to strengthen the single Estonian national identity, to develop an understanding of the Estonian state that could be shared by all permanent residents of the country and that would reflect constitutional values characteristic of a democratic country abiding by the principle of the rule of law, that would value Estonian citizenship and recognize the contribution of each individual to the development of society while accepting cultural differences (Integration Strategy 2008–2013: 4)<sup>2</sup>.*

In previous studies, Estonian national identity has usually been measured with single item measures, e.g. the relative strength of affiliation to categories such as ‘citizen of the Republic of Estonia’, ‘inhabitant of Estonia’ or ‘member of Estonian society’. A study of the strength of identification with different ethnic, cultural and regional groups allowed Vihalemm and Masso (2007: 84) to identify three major self-categorization patterns among members of Russian-speaking minority groups in Estonia: the local-cultural pattern, the ‘new’<sup>3</sup> supra-national and global pattern, and a pattern of ‘post-Soviet nostalgia’. Their analysis revealed that the “new category offered by the state integration programme, namely ‘citizen of the Republic of Estonia’, lacks deeper cultural-historical context and links with other identification structures”. A similar view was expressed by Vetik (2008) who concluded that the Estonian citizenship, as well as knowledge of the Estonian language, have mainly instrumental meaning for Russians living in Estonia and as such are not directly identity-related.

Vetik used a three-item measure to investigate national identity. The measure focused on perceived relevance of the Estonian language, pride in the national symbols (exemplified by the Estonian flag) and attachment to Estonia as a country. The results indicated that females, persons who were born in Estonia, persons who hold Estonian citizenship and who live in regions other than Tallinn or Ida-Viru County, as well as persons who have a good knowledge of the Estonian language and persons who have more personal contacts with ethnic Estonians are more likely to have a strong affiliation with the Estonian national identity. At the same time, the respondents’ age and education were not related to the strength of their Estonian (national) identity.

In spite of the relationship between Estonian citizenship or knowledge of the language and affiliation with the Estonian national identity, neither of the former could be regarded as a reliable predictor of the latter. Vetik (p. 14) concluded that the most important issue concerning integration in Estonia revolves around whether it is possible to “construct a public sphere that all people who have links with Estonia can identify with and feel secure in”<sup>4</sup>. The content of a public sphere that would help to connect ethnic Russians to Estonia and to Estonians has been analysed by Masso (1999) in her qualitative study of Russians living in Estonia. Analysing spontaneous answers by the former to questions about what brings them

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<sup>2</sup> The authors’ translation of the relevant passage from the Estonian original.

<sup>3</sup> Quotation marks from the original.

<sup>4</sup> The authors’ translation of the relevant passage from the Estonian original.

closer to and what separates them from Estonians, she identified 16 attributes that were considered by respondents to be common and uniting: place of residence, economic interests, government, laws, economic and political rights and obligations.

In order to explore the national identity shared by people living in Estonia (and, more widely, also by those having links with Estonia but living elsewhere, i.e. the Estonian diaspora), in this study we are proposing the concept Estonian Open Identity (EOI). One of the aims of introducing the EOI is to measure the success of Estonian integration on identity level. In addition, the EOI can be used to highlight what links people in the above-mentioned groups (Estonia's minorities, the Estonian majority and the Estonian diaspora) have with Estonia (**the 'Estonian' component in the EOI**) and how strong that link is. Moreover, a wider recognition of the EOI should make it easier for identities other than ethnic Estonian to coexist with the national identity, thus supporting the development of a multicultural national identity (**the 'open' component in the EOI**).

### *1.5. Research questions*

The purpose of this study is to identify aspects of the Estonian national identity which could form the basis for a superordinate identity that would not pose a threat to the minorities' other important self-identifications and that could thus be shared by ethnic Estonians and various ethnocultural minorities living in Estonia. The research questions that determined the design of the study are the following.

- Does the Estonian national identity combine equally well with the Russian and the Estonian ethnic identity? The hypothesis was that it does not: the Estonian national and ethnic identities are intertwined while the ethnic identity of Russian speakers is clearly different from the Estonian national identity. This laid the foundation for our second question.
- Do different ethnic groups see the Estonian national identity in essentially different ways? If yes, which aspects of the Estonian national identity hold positive significance for all groups involved? Following the models of acculturation referred to above (Benet-Martinez et al. 2002, Berry 1980, Sidanius et al.), as well as the intergroup differentiation perspective (Hewstone and Brown 1986), we decided to explore, amongst other things, the combinations formed in different subgroups between ethnic, national and multiple identities. Based on the analyses of these relationships we tested the validity of the EOI in the ethnic Estonian and ethnocultural groups of Estonia. For the EOI to be a valid measure of a national identity acceptable to all groups, its strength in all groups should be comparable and the correlation of the EOI with ethnic identities should be positive as well as similar in strength. The hypothesis was that the shared aspects of identity would come from the domain of civic identity (land, economy, achievements of the people) (see Masso) rather from the culture domain (which also involves language and history).

- The final aim of our study was to investigate which demographic factors (gender, age, citizenship, language skills, etc.) and which psychological factors (ethnic identity and multiple identity, self-esteem, satisfaction with life) predict EOI and whether this varies in different groups.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Procedure

The data used for the study were collected within the project *Perspectives of music in development of Estonian Open Identity* carried out from September 2008 until December 2009 by means of web-based as well as paper questionnaires (see Ojamaa and Valk, 2007). Younger participants were recruited on site in 21 high schools in the city of Tartu and in Tartu County, in Tallinn, in the Harju County and in the Ida-Viru County. The rest of the sample was contacted by the project team electronically, in personal meetings and partly by networking. Thus, part of the adult sample was recruited via high school students who were asked to take a copy of the questionnaire home to their parents.

The questionnaire included the assurance that the collected data would remain confidential and would only be analyzed for the purposes of the project undertaken. Participation in the survey was voluntary and the individuals approached were always given the option of refusing to participate without any further explanation. The questionnaires were available both in Estonian and in Russian.

### 2.2. Participants

The sample consisted of Estonian inhabitants from different ethnic backgrounds. There were altogether 1597 participants whose mean age was 27.3 ( $SD = 12.7$ ; age range 15–83) and 43.6% of who were male.

Based on their self-reported identification, participants were divided into two main groups: **ethnic Estonian majority (Est)** – 975 participants (60.6% women,  $M$  age = 28.8 years,  $SD$  age = 13.75, age range = 15–83 years); and **ethnic minorities (Min)** – 622 participants, (46.5% women,  $M$  age = 24.7 years,  $SD$  age = 10.3, age range = 15–74 years). Within the latter group, 377 participants (60.6%) identified themselves as ‘Russian’ ( $M$  age = 23.9 years,  $SD$  age = 10.2, age range = 15–74 years; 47.7% women), 211 participants (33.9%) as ‘Russian-Estonian’ or Estonian and Russian ( $M$  age = 26.0 years,  $SD$  age = 10.1, age range = 15–68 years; 43.5%), 15 participants as ‘other’ (Ukrainian, Belarusian, Finnish, etc.) and 15 as ‘Russian and other’ (e.g., Russian and Ukrainian). Self-identification data was missing in the case of 4 respondents.

In the following analyses we defined members of non-Estonian ethnic groups as the minority (Min) and used the self-definitions provided by the participants

themselves to subdivide this group into **Russian (Rus)** and **Russian-Estonian (Rus-Est) subsamples**. The groups of other minorities were unfortunately too small and too heterogeneous to permit statistically reliable analysis.

Regarding the language of responding to the survey: the predominant majority of respondents who had identified themselves respectively as ‘Estonian’ (99%) and ‘Russian’ (97%) used the corresponding language to fill out the questionnaire. Among Russian-Estonians, 84% filled out the questionnaire in Russian and the rest in Estonian.

### 2.3. Measures

The research instrument consisted of four questionnaires, a section concerning the demographic background of respondents and a few questions concerning their attitudes to multiculturalism.

- (1) **The Ethnic Identity measure** used in this study is a shortened (12-item) version of the Ethnic Identity Scale developed by Valk and Karu-Kletter (2001), which originally included 20 statements describing different components of ethnic identity. The items measure the strength of identity along two key dimensions: **ethnic pride** and **ethnic differentiation**. Ethnic pride describes one’s feelings of attachment to his or her ethnic group as a whole, the emotions and attitudes related to affiliation to the group, and an interest in the culture, history, and customs of the group. The statements in the ethnic pride subscale are of the following type: “I am interested in the history of my ethnic group”, “I am proud of my ethnic group”, etc. Ethnic differentiation describes a desire to distinguish between one’s own and other ethnic groups both in abstract and concrete terms. Examples include: “People’s ethnic background is not important for me”, “When I am considering marriage, the ethnic background of my future spouse does not matter”. The internal reliability values (Cronbach  $\alpha$ ) of the subscales and the full scale of the current study were, respectively: for ethnic pride, .82 (.83 for Est; .81 for Rus and .79 for Rus-Est); for ethnic differentiation, .66 (.66 for Est; .67 for Rus and .67 for Rus-Est) and, for the whole scale, .69 (.70 for Est; .58 for Rus and .70 for Rus-Est). The factor structure was highly congruent between Est and Min groups: Tucker’s congruence coefficients for ethnic pride and ethnic differentiation subscales were, respectively, .98 and .99.
- (2) **The EOI scale** consisted of 21 items and measured different aspects of the Estonian national identity, amongst other things including openness to multicultural identity. The scale was developed in 2007–2008 following the pilot study by Ojamaa and Valk. The items are shown in the results section.

For the test version of the EOI scale we developed items that describe aspects of Estonian identity that are civic in nature (not necessarily based on common descent) and that have been shown by previous studies (Berg

2002, Masso, Valk and Karu 2000, Vihalemm and Masso) to be relevant for defining Estonian identity. The aim of the test version was to reduce the number of items while maintaining the variety of themes. To measure the openness aspect of the EOI, a series of items approaching multicultural identity from different angles were generated using Estonian (Integration Monitoring 2008, Heidmets, Lauristin 1998) as well as foreign examples (Benet-Martinez, Haritados 2005). Since most Estonian participants in our target group were of monocultural background, the items were phrased such that they would measure agreement with various expressions of a multicultural identity rather than ask for an estimate of the degree of the respondent's own biculturalism.

Taking into account the relevant theoretical considerations, we sought to go beyond mere self-categorization and to cover as many identity dimensions as possible. Thus, Ashmore, Deaux, McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) have identified seven elements of collective identification: self-categorization, evaluation, importance, attachment and sense of interdependence, social embeddedness, behavioural involvement, and content and meaning. All these elements, except for social embeddedness, were covered in the test version with one or several items. The initial pool of test statements consisted of 90 items.

The pilot study was administered in 2008 to a total of 117 Estonians and Russians living in Estonia. Following the factor and reliability analyses, the initial pool was reduced to 21 items (5 of them reversed), which gave the most accurate description of various aspects related to the Estonian national identity and its openness to multiculturalism.

- (3) **Psychological well-being** was measured using two scales. Based on the pilot study, 5 statements of the 12-item Estonian and Russian versions (Pullmann, Allik 2000, Pullmann 2007) of the Rosenberg (1986) global **Self-Esteem Scale** (SES) were used to measure self-esteem. In addition, we borrowed 5 statements from the **Satisfaction With Life Scale** (SWLS, Diener et al. 1985), which measures perceived quality of life and has been translated into the Estonian (Realo 2007) and the Russian language (Roccas et al. 2000). The SES includes items such as "I think I am in all respects a respectable person, at least not less than others", and the SWLS, statements such as "Up until now, I have achieved everything I ever wanted in life." The Cronbach alphas in the current study were, for the SES, .76 (.76 for Est; .72 for Rus and .80 for Rus-Est), for the SWLS, .79 (.79 for Est; .77 for Rus and .78 for Rus-Est) and, for the whole scale, .84 (.84 for Est; .81 for Rus and .85 for Rus-Est). The factor structure was highly congruent between the Est and Min groups: Tucker's congruence coefficient for the SES as well as the SWLS scales was .99.

The measures described above all used a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from -2 - 'completely disagree' to 2 - 'completely agree'.

- (4) **The multiple identity questionnaire** consisted of a list including 26 social categories. The respondents were asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from -2 ('I oppose myself to the group') to 2 ('a very important group for me'), the degree to which they feel attached to each of these categories, ranging from -2 to 2 -. Besides identifications related to Estonia (Estonian citizen, Estonian inhabitant, etc.) which may hold different meanings for the subgroups (and were therefore excluded), factor analysis grouped the rest of the identifications into 5 large categories: (1) global European; (2) ethnic-regional; (3) professional / membership in voluntary organizations; (4) musical interests; (5) close networks: friends, neighbours, family.

In addition to the above, we also asked for background data with respect to the participants' age, gender, education, citizenship, experience of living abroad, language proficiency, ethnic origin of parents, etc., but also regarding their attitudes towards identity questions such as 'In your mind, is it possible to belong at the same time to several ethnic groups?' The participants could choose between the Estonian and the Russian-language version of the questionnaire.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Internal structure of the Estonian Open Identity scale

Using principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation, we sought to identify those components of Estonian national identity that are valid across different ethnic and age groups. As the first stage, all 1597 respondents were considered as a single sample. Later, the validity of factor structure was checked separately in different subsamples. Although three factors had eigenvalues larger than 1, the shape of the scree plot suggested a two-factor solution. The two factors referred to two main topics related to our research questions: (1) **national pride** and (2) support for **multicultural national identity** (referred to below as 'multicultural identity'). In addition to national pride (1) the three-factor model would have made a distinction between two aspects of multicultural identity: support for multiculturalism on the personal (2a) and state (2b) level. However, since certain item loadings in the two latter factors were almost equal, and considering the scree plot [E3] and a partial overlap between the two factors of multicultural identity, we decided to base further analysis on the two-factor solution.

As all but one item loaded strongly on only one of the two factors (i.e., more than |.40|) we decided to retain 20 items. One item was dropped due to its ambiguous meaning for different respondents – several Russian respondents said they were disturbed by the statement 'I do not mind if different ethnic groups live in Estonia, *as long as they respect Estonian laws*', taking it as a suggestion that they do not respect Estonian laws. The final scale accounted for 48.2% of the total variance (national pride subscale = 33.4 % and multicultural identity subscale = 14.8%). See factor loadings in the two last columns of Table 3. The overall

reliability of the 20-item scale was .84; Cronbach alphas for the national pride and multicultural identity subscales were .90 and .68, respectively.

The same factor structure was found also in the Est and Min groups, Tucker's congruence coefficient being .98 and .95 for national pride and multicultural identity subscales respectively. Only one item ('I feel connected with all people living in Estonia, no matter what their ethnic background') had equally strong factor loadings in national pride and multicultural identity factors in the Estonian group.

### 3.2. Ethnic and national identity among different subgroups

Secondly, we inquired which of the above-mentioned perspectives (melting pot, multicultural or the group dominance) best described the Estonian national identity and its relationship to ethnic identities of the different subgroups. We calculated the mean scores and correlations between ethnic and national identities in the Est and Min groups, in the last case also distinguishing between respondents belonging to Rus and Rus-Est subgroups.

Compared with the Min group, national pride in the Est group was considerably stronger and ethnic pride slightly stronger. On the other hand, Min showed considerably higher values of multicultural identity. While in the Est group the respondents' ethnic and national pride were similar in strength, in the Min sample the respondents' ethnic pride was clearly higher than national pride. Interestingly enough, in the Rus-Est subgroup the gap between ethnic and national pride was smaller (but still significant). Comparing the Rus and Rus-Est subgroups, the more open orientation of the avowedly bicultural Rus-Est subgroup showed also in their lower scores of ethnic differentiation and in their stronger multicultural identity. For details, see Table 1.

As we had expected, in all subgroups ethnic differentiation was strongly but negatively correlated with multicultural identity, indicating that people who do not consider ethnic differences important find it easier to accept Estonia as a multicultural state and support the view that bicultural identity is possible and that it should be valued.

**Table 1. Mean scores for ethnic pride (EP), ethnic differentiation (ED), national pride (NP) and multicultural identity (MI) for different subgroups**

	Ethnic Estonians	Ethnic Russians and other minorities	t-value	Incl. self-categorized as Russian	Incl. self-categorized as Russian-Estonian	t-value
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>		<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	
EP	1.18 (.64)	0.95 (.69)	7.05***	1.01 (.68)	0.81 (.68)	-3.39***
ED	-0.55 (.75)	-0.65 (.76)	2.64**	-0.53 (.73)	-0.82 (.75)	-4.61***
NP	1.20 (.57)	0.23 (.82)	27.80***	0.04 (.75)	0.59 (.77)	8.28***
MI	0.67 (.69)	1.12 (.60)	-13.08***	1.01 (.57)	1.29 (.61)	5.35***

Note: \*,  $p < .05$ ; \*\*,  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*,  $p < .001$

**Table 2. Correlations between ethnic pride (EP), ethnic differentiation (ED), national pride (NP) and multicultural identity (MI) for ethnic Estonian (upper part, below diagonal) and ethnic Russian and other minorities (upper part, above diagonal), and based on self-categorization Russian (lower part, below diagonal) and Russian-Estonian (lower part, above diagonal) subsamples.**

Estonians ( <i>n</i> = 975)	Russians and other minorities ( <i>n</i> = 622)			
	EP	ED	NP	MI
EP		-.03	.07	.28***
ED	.05		-.27***	-.43***
NP	.66***	.02		.24***
MI	-.00	-.49***	.05	
Russians ( <i>n</i> = 377)	Russian-Estonians ( <i>n</i> = 211)			
	EP	ED	NP	MI
EP		.10	.17*	.26***
ED	-.18***		-.14*	-.36***
NP	.08	-.29***		.05
MI	.36***	-.44***	.25***	

Note: \*,  $p < .05$ ; \*\*,  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*,  $p < .001$

In the Est group, ethnic and national pride showed a strong positive correlation while in the Rus-Est subgroup this correlation, although clearly present, was much weaker. In the Rus subgroup, however, ethnic and national pride were independent of each other but were both positively correlated with multicultural identity and negatively with ethnic differentiation. For detailed results, see Table 2.

### 3.3. Exploring Estonian Open Identity (EOI)

As the next step, we tried to clarify which identity aspects were considered equally relevant in both the Est and the Min group. For this, we first analyzed the mean scores of single EOI items. As shown in Table 3, none of the items in the EOI scale received equal scores in both groups. Thus, we selected the items that (1) differed least in the mean scores, (2) had received positive scores in both groups ( $M > 0$ ) and (3) reflected the topics of national pride and multicultural identity (both on personal and state level). Most statements that tackled multiculturalism in general terms and did not specifically relate to the Estonian context were excluded at this stage. Similar analyses were performed in each of the three subsamples: Est, Rus and Rus-Est. As was to be expected, the Rus-Est scores in all national pride items fell between those of Est and Rus. All personal level multicultural identity scores of the Rus-Est subgroup were stronger than those recorded in the Est and Rus subgroups, whose scores in this respect were similar. As for state-level multicultural identity, both the Rus and the Rus-Est subgroup expressed similar views which were more positive than those expressed by the Est group.

**Table 3. Mean scores and factor loadings of single items of Estonian Open Identity Scale among ethnic Estonians (Est), and ethnic Russians and other minorities (Min), sorted by smallest difference between the groups' scores.**

	Mean scores		t-value	Absolute difference between mean scores	Factor loadings	
	Est	Min			NP	MI
MP <u>An opportunity to belong to several cultures at the same time makes one's life richer.</u>	1.04	1.26	-4.65	0.22	.17	<b>.68</b>
MP A person may belong simultaneously to different ethnic groups.	0.64	0.90	-4.59	0.25	.04	<b>.64</b>
NP <u>I feel connected to all people living in Estonia, no matter what is their ethnic background.</u>	0.60	0.34	4.48	0.26	<b>.47</b>	.29
I do not mind that different ethnic groups live in Estonia, as long as they respect Estonian laws.	1.57	1.27	7.06	0.30		
MP <u>In my opinion someone cannot be simultaneously a representative of Estonian and of some other culture. (R)</u>	0.36	0.68	-5.12	0.32	.03	<b>.65</b>
MS <u>In Estonia one should respect different views about history.</u>	0.45	0.79	-5.73	0.34	-.06	<b>.41</b>
NP <u>I like being both an Estonian and a European / I like being related to both Estonia and Europe. (Russian version)</u>	1.26	0.82	8.89	0.44	<b>.58</b>	.31
MS <u>It does not disturb me that people of different ethnic origins live in Estonia.</u>	0.86	1.34	-8.25	0.48	-.04	<b>.66</b>
MS <u>In my opinion only ethnic Estonians should live in Estonia. (R)</u>	0.75	1.38	-11.04	0.63	-.10	<b>.66</b>
NP <u>I am really satisfied with the achievements of Estonia and Estonian people.</u>	1.35	0.52	17.25	0.83	<b>.76</b>	-.05
MS <u>Estonia could be more open to other cultures.</u>	0.61	1.46	-17.21	0.85	-.29	<b>.60</b>
NP I feel connected to Estonians all over the world.	0.62	-0.33	16.50	0.95	<b>.69</b>	-.08
NP Taking part in Estonian music events strengthens my feeling of belonging to Estonia.	0.95	-0.01	16.35	0.96	<b>.69</b>	-.15
NP <u>I do not feel deep connection to Estonian land and nature. (R)</u>	1.23	0.26	16.62	0.97	<b>.65</b>	.03
NP <u>I am proud that Estonia is known as a successful small country.</u>	1.40	0.41	18.82	0.99	<b>.75</b>	-.02
NP <u>For me it is / it would be important to be an Estonian citizen.</u>	1.38	0.36	19.45	1.02	<b>.75</b>	-.07
NP <u>I do not usually celebrate Estonian national holidays and do not miss them either. (R)</u>	1.27	0.22	17.70	1.05	<b>.69</b>	-.08
NP I like to say that I am from Estonia/ of Estonian background.	1.46	0.38	21.80	1.08	<b>.79</b>	-.05

**Table 3.** Continued

	Mean scores		t-value	Absolute difference between mean scores	Factor loadings	
	Est	Min			NP	MI
NP <u>There is nothing to be proud of in Estonian history. (R)</u>	1.45	0.31	21.22	1.14	<b>.73</b>	-.00
NP <u>I feel connected to everybody who speaks Estonian.</u>	1.27	0.04	23.93	1.24	<b>.79</b>	-.06
NP <u>Seeing the Estonian flag, I have often felt proud.</u>	1.33	-0.26	30.12	1.59	<b>.84</b>	-.12

*Note.* N = 1595. (R) denotes reversed items. Loadings larger than |.30| are boldfaced. NP, national identity; MI, multicultural identity; MP, multicultural identity on personal level; MN, multicultural identity on national level; 13 items that best describe the concept of Estonian Open Identity are underlined.

Altogether 13 items were then selected for inclusion in a new EOI scale: 7 of these belonged to national pride and 6 to multicultural identity factors (4 state-level and 2 personal-level items), see the underlined items in Table 3. In order to test the factor structure of this new version of the EOI scale, principal axis factor analysis was carried out with varimax rotation. The two-factor structure persisted in the total sample (explaining 47.1% of the total variance) while the situation in the subsamples varied considerably. In the Rus subgroup almost all[E4] multicultural identity items from the original scale had now equally strong loadings in the national pride factor and only one item ('Estonia could be more open to other cultures') related clearly to one, the multicultural identity factor. This shows that for the Rus subgroup the selected items represented a single integral concept of Estonian identity. Among ethnic Estonians the factor structure was clearer, with only two items ('I feel connected to all people living in Estonia, no matter what their ethnic background' and 'I like being both an Estonian and a European') having similar loadings in both factors. We see it as an indication that for the Est group national pride and multicultural identity are separate issues. In the bicultural Rus-Est subgroup, the analysis returned two factors – national pride and state-level multicultural identity. The fact that personal-level multicultural identity items loaded equally into both of these factors may be interpreted to suggest that in this subgroup being a multicultural person is perceived as a uniting element of the EOI. The internal reliability of the reduced 13-item scale was satisfactory (Cronbach  $\alpha = 0.77$ ).

Although subsample analysis established no clear factor structure across different groups, we decided to calculate the mean values for the new national pride and new multicultural identity scale in order to compare these to the values obtained for the respective subscales of the original scale. Next, we calculated the correlation values of ethnic pride to the new national pride subscale and to the new

multicultural identity subscale. Although all groups demonstrated a positive correlation between the EOI (calculated as the sum of new national pride and new multicultural identity) and ethnic pride, the strongest correlation was still demonstrated by the Est group. The correlations in the Rus and Rus-Est subgroups, however, were quite similar. Apparently, the EOI was equally strong among the Est group and the Rus-Est subgroup, while the respondents in the Rus subgroup had a significantly lower yet positive mean score (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Estonian Open Identity (EOI): means, standard deviations (in brackets) and correlations to ethnic pride (EP).**

		Ethnic Estonians	Ethnic Russians and other minorities	t-value	Incl. self-categorized as Russian	Incl. self-categorized as Russian-Estonian	t-value
<i>M(SD)</i>	EOI	.97(.48)	.76(.58)	7.80***	.62(.58)	1.01(.50)	-8.20***
	NewNI	1.21(.57)	.42(.82)	22.71***	.23(.80)	.76(.73)	-8.00***
	NewMI	.68(.71)	1.15(.61)	-13.80***	1.07(.62)	1.29(.60)	-4.14***
<i>R</i>	EOI-EP	.39***	.23***		.28***	.31***	
	NewNP-EP	.59***	.09*		.10	.19**	
	NewMI-EP	.01	.33***		.41***	.29***	

*Note:* newNP, new version of national pride subscale; newMI, new version of the multicultural national identity subscale; \*,  $p < .05$ ; \*\*,  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*,  $p < .001$

### 3.4. Estonian Open Identity – predictors and outcomes

One of the most important questions of identity change in acculturation process is, of course, whether people with a higher EOI also report a higher life satisfaction rate. A reformulation of this question is whether those who report a higher life satisfaction rate are more eager to develop a stronger EOI – i.e., how the EOI relates to self-esteem and life satisfaction. For comparison, Table 5 also shows correlation figures for ethnic pride and ethnic differentiation on the one hand and psychological well-being (i.e., self-esteem and life satisfaction) on the other. Among all groups both ethnic pride and the EOI were positively correlated to self-esteem and to life-satisfaction. However, in the Rus-Est subgroup the pattern of correlation differs: the respondents' well-being is less dependent on their ethnic pride and more on high EOI and low ethnic differentiation.

In order to identify factors that may support the development of EOI, we performed a multiple regression analysis that treated various psychological measures and demographic and attitudinal data as independent variables and EOI as the dependent variable. Previous analyses had shown that the Rus-Est subgroup is clearly different from the Rus subgroup in their formation of EOI. Therefore, we performed the analyses separately for three groups: Est, Rus and Rus-Est. The analyses also included other measures, such as multiple identity (which was

included as an independent variable). In order to avoid a possible overlap with ethnic identity, we excluded ethnic, regional and Estonia-related identifications of the multi-identity measure from the analysis.

**Table 5. Estonian Open Identity, ethnic pride and ethnic differentiation correlations to psychological well-being among ethnic Estonians and two subsamples of Russians living in Estonia (self-categorized as Russian or Russian-Estonian).**

		EP	ED	Estonian language skills	EOI
Ethnic Estonians	Self-esteem	.20***	-.06*	.02	.17***
	Life satisfaction	.22***	-.05	.09*	.20***
Ethnic Russians	Self-esteem	.20***	-.03	.23***	.13*
	Life satisfaction	.16**	-.02	.20***	.23***
Russian- Estonians	Self-esteem	.16*	-.11	.22**	.30***
	Life satisfaction	.03	-.27***	.20**	.26***

Note: \*,  $p < .05$ ; \*\*,  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*,  $p < .001$

Low ethnic differentiation and high ethnic pride were among the strongest positive predictors of EOI for all groups with the exception of the Rus group whose ethnic pride related to EOI positively but weakly. In the Est group other strong predictors of EOI included gender (women showed stronger EOI), support for multicultural group identification (positive responses to the question *In Your opinion, is it possible to belong to several ethnic groups at the same time?*) and a strong European and cosmopolitan identification. Surprisingly, (1) older respondents in the Rus group scored higher in EOI than their younger groupmates. A strong EOI in that group was also predicted by (2) the attribution of considerable relevance to European and cosmopolitan as well as (3) professional identifications, (4) higher life satisfaction and (5) an understanding that one can belong simultaneously to several ethnic groups. Among the Rus-Est subgroup, good Estonian language skills and a close network of friends and family tended to strengthen the EOI. For detailed results, see Table 6.

Finally, we tested the correlations between the EOI and other regional, cultural and Estonia-related identifications (measured by means of the corresponding statements in the multiple identity questionnaire). For comparison, Table 7 also shows the correlations of the above-mentioned identifications and ethnic pride. Strong positive correlations between the EOI and Estonia-related identifications (Estonian citizen, person living in Estonia, Estonian speaker) in all groups support the validity of EOI as an identity that includes both an Estonian and a civic component. For the Est group, ethnic pride showed a stronger correlation to Estonia-related identifications than EOI, while EOI related more strongly to global and multicultural identities (cosmopolitan, European, multicultural person). The latter relationship was also valid for the Rus and Rus-Est groups.

Table 6. Multiple regression analysis ( $\beta$ s) for predicting Estonian Open Identity.

	Ethnic Estonians	Ethnic Russians	Estonian-Russians
EP	.32***	.11*	.31***
ED	-.25***	-.34***	-.19**
Life satisfaction	.07*	.15**	.09
Self-esteem	.01	.02	.08
Age	.01	.20***	.06
Gender	.11***	.04	.03
Citizenship	.03	.03	.14*
Estonian language skills	.02	.06	.21**
'In your opinion, is it possible to belong to several ethnic groups at the same time?'	-.19***	-.12*	-.12
Has lived abroad for a longer period	.05	-.00	-.02
Has parents are from different ethnic origins	-.01	-.05	.02
Multi-identity: global-European	.14***	.12*	.09
Multi-identity: professional	.02	.13**	-.05
Multi-identity – musical	.05	-.02	.02
Multi-identity – close net	.06*	-.04	.21**
$R^2$	.38***	.37***	.38***
$F$	40.2	14.4	7.8

Note: \*,  $p < .05$ ; \*\*,  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*,  $p < .001$

Table 7. Correlations between Estonian Open Identity (EOI) and ethnic pride (EP) to different regional, cultural and Estonia-related identifications.

	Ethnic Estonians		Ethnic Russians		Russian-Estonians	
	EOI	EP	EOI	EP	EOI	EP
world citizen	.27***	.07*	.21***	.21***	.15*	-.01
European	.32***	.19***	.28***	.03	.18**	.01
person of Baltic origin	.17***	.21***	.30***	.26***	.23***	.22***
member of my ethnic group	.31***	.54***	.12*	.45***	.22***	.48***
inhabitant of my region	.28***	.41***	.17***	.25***	.27***	.35***
Estonian citizen	.34***	.46***	.40***	.07	.51***	.13
person of Estonian origin	.34***	.43***	-.02	-.02	.20**	-.06
person living in Estonia	.31***	.37***	.41***	.20***	.54***	.18**
Estonian-speaker	.33***	.39***	.35***	.10	.41***	.07
multicultural person	.22***	.06*	.35***	.21***	.39***	.27***

Note: \*,  $p < .05$ ; \*\*,  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*,  $p < .001$ ;

#### 4. Discussion

The need for open identities has been elegantly stated by the famous sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1996:18): "If the *modern* 'problem of identity' is how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the *postmodern* 'problem of

identity' is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open". In the Estonian case, ethnic and national identities of ethnic Estonians have tended to coincide and have formed a single and solid monocultural identity. In the current social context, however, a monocultural national identity is no longer the optimal strategy for everyday communication. The findings of the study described above support the conclusions drawn by Oudenhoven, and Hewstone and Brown (1986) - cultural openness and more tolerant attitudes in ethnic relations are likely to prove psychologically more rewarding and to lead to a better mutual adaptation and increased well-being of all ethnic groups in society.

The results of the reported study provided support for our hypotheses. Estonian national identity would be best characterized by the group dominance perspective as described by Sidanius et al. Compared to the total minority sample, the ethnic Estonian sample demonstrated a stronger national identity, as well as a stronger correlation between the ethnic and national identity. In addition, correlation patterns between ethnic pride and the EOI on the one hand, and various social categories (presented in the multiple identity questionnaire) on the other, proved to be highly similar, suggesting that the meaning of the two identity concepts is equivalent for ethnic Estonians. This overlap is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, following the common ingroup identity model (Gaertner et al. 1993, Hewstone et al. 2002) and the mutual intergroup differentiation model (Hewstone and Brown), it may be perceived as a threat to their identity by minority group members. Secondly, based on the study by Roccas and Brewer (2000), the lower the complexity of social identities the less tolerant people are towards outgroups – hence, an amalgamation of the national and the ethnic identity on the part of the Estonian majority is likely to lead to reduced tolerance of the country's minorities.

The above does not necessarily mean that there is an opposition between ethnic and national identity among Estonia's minorities. With respect to various acculturation models, the actual situation in Estonia (which has yet to register a major impact of the government's integration programmes) could perhaps best be characterized by reference to the bidimensional and fusion models. For respondents who defined themselves as 'Russian', the ethnic and national pride did not correlate, which corresponds to the bidimensional model, while those who defined themselves as Russian-Estonian appear to have developed a new, hyphenated Russian-Estonian identity.

The clear empirical distinction between respondents identifying themselves as Russian-Estonian and respondents preferring the self-categorization 'Russian' was one of the most interesting findings of the study. Previous research has shown that the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia is far from being a homogeneous body (Lauristin and Vihalemm 2008) and that, based on various integration measures, it can be divided into four groups (including, at the one extreme, a 7.5% group indicating no positive association with the Estonian society, and at the other, a 27.5% group who appear to be almost completely integrated). The latter proportion is similar to that of the sample who self-categorized as 'Russian-Estonian' – 33.9%. The analysis of the Rus-Est subgroup revealed that respondents in that

group have clearly formed a bicultural identity. In this case multiculturalism on the personal level – endorsement of the view that one may simultaneously belong to several ethnic groups – is crucial for a stable identity. Similarly, the psychological well-being of bicultural respondents demonstrated a stronger relationship to the EOI than to ethnic pride scores and, within the EOI, their evaluation of multicultural identity items was more positive than in other subgroups.

The central aim of this study was to identify aspects of the Estonian national identity that can be endorsed by different ethnic groups residing in Estonia. The results showed that the EOI (i.e. certain aspects of national pride and support for multicultural national identity) was equally strong among the Estonian and the hyphenated Russian-Estonian group, whereas in the Russian group it was slightly weaker. The relationship between the EOI and ethnic pride in the three groups was relatively similar. It was interesting that for the Estonian group, the EOI appeared to reflect two separate topics: (1) pride in and the feeling of being part of the Estonian state and the Estonian people (which seems to include mainly ethnic Estonians), (2) accepting and supporting Estonia as a multicultural state and seeing multiculturalism as an opportunity. In the Russian group, these topics were intertwined: the respondents in that group said they would be proud to belong to a state that has adopted multicultural policies and supports multiculturalism also on the personal level. By contrast, the Russian-Estonian group considered national pride and state-level multicultural identity as distinct notions. Yet, these were united through multiculturalism on the personal level. This shows the complexity of ethnic and national identity in the Russian-Estonian group – in line with what Roccas and Brewer describe in their paper on the complexity of social identities. As has been stressed by the same authors, along with others (for instance, Sussman 2000), the reported study appears to indicate that the most critical issue for developing a complex identity is awareness of more than one possible ingroup categorization and the recognition that multiple ingroup categories do not have to converge.

In order to implement the concept of the EOI in reality, a positive public attitude to multiculturalism on the personal level should be cultivated in Estonia. This attitude should be promoted among the minorities as a good opportunity for integration and it should also be introduced to the majority – of whom currently only two thirds approve of the idea. Yet, unless multiculturalism is accepted by the majority, integration is neither likely nor possible.

Indeed, ethnic Estonians should learn to accept the fact that reality is multicultural and to find positive ways of dealing with the diversity dilemma as expressed by Berry (1997:138): “Diversity is a fact of life; whether it is the ‘spice’ or the ‘irritant’ to people is the fundamental psychological, social, cultural and political issue of our times”. If ethnic Estonians’ national identity could embrace the idea that ethnic Russians and other ethnic minorities living in Estonia are a ‘spice’ for their in-group life rather than an irritating out-group, then it would probably be easier for Russians and also Russian-Estonians to feel pride in “achievements of Estonia and the Estonian people” and “in Estonia as a successful

small country”. Strengthening the low Estonian identity of the sample who categorized themselves as ‘Russians’ is thus a psychological challenge that must be resolved in order for successful acculturation to take place. The latter seems particularly crucial since our analysis showed that the Russian subgroup’s EOI is lower among the younger generation, which means that the hope that integration will take place as a natural self-regulating process with the passage of time may not be realized without external support.

The principal tools of the current integration strategy pursued by Estonia – language teaching and promotion of the Estonian citizenship (which do strengthen the EOI among individuals with a hyphenated Russian-Estonian identity) – do not predict a stronger EOI among people who prefer to self-categorize as Russians. Proficiency in the Estonian language and the fact of holding an Estonian citizenship are obviously important, but higher life satisfaction, better networking and, as we have tried to demonstrate, promotion of bicultural identity may prove even more effective in developing the EOI.

Our exploration of the EOI, its reasons and the possibilities of developing it has shown that a successful acculturation must involve some reciprocity. Both the majority and minority identities in contemporary Estonian society – ethnic as well as national – should become more open and flexible. For the development of a superordinate national identity acceptable to most ethnic groups in the country, an open ethnic identity (high ethnic pride and low group differentiation) is vital. Besides this, wider and more determined support for multicultural attitudes on the personal as well as the national level is needed now.

This article reflects the general research interest of the authors yet also seeks to meet the highly practical need to discover which aspects of the Estonian national identity are culturally and politically open enough to accommodate different ethnic groups living in Estonia. For the past ten years, Estonia has had a governmental integration strategy that is largely based on the bicultural acculturation model: preserving one’s ethnic identity while strengthening the Estonian national identity. However, partly due to the painful history of the country’s alternating occupation by Germany and Russia and partly to the persisting perceptions of various threats to the Estonians’ identity (e.g., a low birth rate, a powerful neighbour across the border, etc.), the Estonian majority’s identity has been rather closed (Valk and Karu-Kletter 2001, Saar 2010) and they appear to be much more likely to adopt an averse attitude to cultural differences in Estonia than members of the Russian minority (Vetik). The lion’s share of the effort expended in implementing the integration strategy has gone into improving the Russians’ and other minorities’ Estonian language proficiency and, more recently, into promoting adoption of the Estonian citizenship. None of the programmes so far conceived by the government has targeted the development of a joint national identity (Ehala 2009). Yet, it is the understanding of the authors of this article that the Estonian national identity has been, and continues to be, ‘occupied’ by ethnic Estonians for most of whom ethnic and national identities coincide, and that without ‘making space’ in the national identity to other ethnic groups settled in Estonia no real progress can be achieved.

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Address:

Aune Valk  
 Estonian Literary Museum  
 Vanemuise 42  
 51003 Tartu, Estonia  
 Tel.: +372 526 7930  
 E-mail: aune.valk@hm.ee

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