



A Three-Generation Study of Acculturation and Identity of the Russian Minority in the Republic of North Ossetia–Alania



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Abstract

This article examines relationships between social identities and acculturation strategies of Russians (the ethnic minority) in the Republic of North Ossetia–Alania (RNO-A). The sample included 109 grandparent–parent–adolescent triads from ethnically Russian families ($N = 327$). We assessed acculturation strategies, ethnic and national identities (identification with the Russian Federation), republican identity (with the RNO-A), regional identity (with North Caucasus), and religious identity. EFA combined five identities in two factors, labeled Russian ethnocultural identity (comprising ethnic, national, and religious identities) and North-Caucasian regional identity (comprising identities involving the republic and region). The means of the identity factors remained remarkably stable across generations, with a somewhat stronger Russian ethnocultural identity. A structural equation model revealed that Russian ethnocultural identity was a negative predictor of assimilation (the least preferred acculturation strategy), whereas North-Caucasian regional identity was a positive predictor of integration (the most preferred strategy) in all generations. We concluded that Russian ethnocultural identity is important for maintaining the heritage culture whereas North-Caucasian regional identity promotes participation of ethnic Russians in the multicultural North-Ossetian society.

Keywords

integration, assimilation, social identity, ethnic Russian minority, generation, North Caucasus

There is a growing recognition of the need to examine multiple identities among ethnic minorities in multicultural societies in combination with their acculturation (e.g., Bélanger & Verkuyten, 2010; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Dimitrova, Bender, Chasiotis, & van de Vijver, 2013; Kwak & Berry, 2001). The interplay between identity and acculturation of minority groups is an intriguing

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theoretical issue. The two have been treated as separate, independent phenomena (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993); however, ethnic and national identities have also been viewed as part of the acculturation process (Phinney, 1990; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001); finally, acculturation strategies have been treated as being dependent on cultural identity (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Salazar & Salazar, 1998). This study examined links between social identities (based on ethnicity, nation, religion, republic, and region) and acculturation strategies among minority Russian adolescents, their parents, and grandparents in the Republic of North Ossetia–Alania (RNO-A).

Nowadays, post-Soviet citizens undergo rapid and deep changes in society, with possible ramifications for their values and social identities. During the Soviet period, the so-called “Soviet” identity was the most inclusive social identity that united all citizens of the former USSR regardless of their ethnic or religious background. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, this identity has been gradually replaced by other inclusive, yet often less comprehensive identities, such as national (meant here as identification with the Russian Federation), religious, regional, republic (RNO-A), local, and place identities. The salience and loci of identification differ across groups. Thus, it has been found that the non-Russian population perceived identification with the Russian Federation (“Russian citizens”) as almost the same as “ethnic Russian identity,” which led to low levels of identification with it; on the contrary, the “Caucasian” identity, which is a regional identity, became very important for the indigenous population of this region, but not for ethnic Russians or representatives of other ethnic groups who migrated there from other regions of Russian Federation (Lepshokova, Lebedeva, & van de Vijver, 2018).

After the collapse of the USSR, the status of ethnic Russians and the attitudes of the dominant ethnic groups toward them have changed both in the newly independent states (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Jaakkola, & Reuter, 2006; Lebedeva, Tatarko, & Berry, 2016) and the republics of the Russian Federation (Denisova & Ulanov, 2003; Karpets, 2010). The status of ethnic Russians in these republics is dual: They are an ethnic minority in their specific republic, but they are the ethnic majority in the (larger) Russian Federation. Ethnic Russians have been living in RNO-A for more than 200 years, being the second largest ethnic group after the Ossetians (the dominant ethnic group). These societal changes in the recent past provide an interesting context to study the process of acculturation of Russians in RNO-A in intergenerational perspective because members of different generations had their socialization and acculturation in differing social contexts of interethnic relations in RNO-A.

Social Identities of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities

Building a social identity is a dynamic, lifelong process that depends on family, peers, sociocultural context, and many other factors. Erikson (1968) described identity formation as the central developmental task of adolescence. He suggested that when social identity is acquired, it should ideally be accompanied by a sense of security and self-confidence. Challenges in the process of identity formation can lead to negative consequences, including role confusion, negative identity, and uncertainty. The process of identity formation is important for adolescents in multicultural societies, mainly adolescents from families of migrants and ethnic minorities (Dimitrova, Bender, Chasiotis, & van de Vijver, 2013). In contexts where cultures clash (or are perceived as such), developing a sense of community, national, or bicultural identity can become salient, notably in later generations (Phinney, 2003).

The literature reveals that changes in the identity of migrants and minorities are assumed to mainly involve ethnic, national, cultural, and religious identities (Dimitrova, Chasiotis, Bender, & van de Vijver, 2014; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Yet some authors also studied identification with the majority group (Gong, 2007); host national identity (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013); provincial identity (Berry & Kalin, 1995); hybrid identities based on mixed features of language,

territory, and ethnicity (Sarkar & Allen, 2007); place identity (Rico & Jennings, 2012); and linguistic identity (Isaeva, Adams, & van de Vijver, in press). In the process of acculturation, according to Flannery, Reise, and Yu (2001), a new ethnic identity can also be constructed (e.g., Chicanos in America). Acquired cultural group identities help individuals to adapt successfully in multicultural societies (Chao & Moon, 2005).

Social Identity and Acculturation Strategies

Some studies have focused on social identity (ethnic, national) and acculturation as two significant, yet separate phenomena of minority groups (Farver et al., 2002; LaFromboise et al., 1993). Other studies regarded ethnic and national identities as a part of the acculturation process (Phinney, 1990; Phinney et al., 2001). There are also studies that addressed acculturation strategies as based on cultural identity. For example, Berry and Kalin (1995) and Salazar and Salazar (1998) analyzed acculturation strategies from the perspective of the importance of two aspects of identity: identification with the own ethnic group and identification with the dominant society. The authors noted that when both identities are strong, migrants can achieve an integration strategy. When neither nor any other identity dominates, their strategy is closer to marginalization; when one identity strongly prevails over the other, the strategy moves toward assimilation or separation (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Salazar & Salazar, 1998).

The relationship between identities and acculturation strategies has been analyzed in many studies. Berry and Sabatier (2010), in their cross-cultural study of second-generation immigrants in Canada and France, found that ethnic identity was positively correlated with separation and negatively with integration, and that civic identity was positively correlated with integration and negatively with separation. Umaña-Taylor and Updegraff (2007), studying Latin American adolescents, obtained similar results. Georgas and Papastylianou (1998) studied ethnic Greeks who were repatriated to Greece from Albania, Russia, Australia, Canada, and the United States; the authors found that ethnic Greek identity was positively correlated with assimilation and that a mixed identity (e.g., Albanian Greek or Russian Greek) was positively correlated with integration. Indigenous identity (e.g., Albanian) was positively correlated with separation. Laroche, Kim, Hui, and Tomiuk (1998) obtained similar results in their study of French-Canadians. Dimitrova et al. (2013) found that among Turkish-Bulgarian adolescents in Bulgaria, Turkish ethnic identity was more pronounced than their Bulgarian identity. As expected, the Turkish identity was positively related to the tendency to maintain one's heritage culture, whereas the Bulgarian identity was associated with the adoption of the national culture.

In studies on the relationship between multiculturalism, assimilation, and identities in ethnic minorities in the Netherlands (van Osch & Breugelmans, 2012; Verkuyten, 2005), it was found that in minority groups' endorsement of multiculturalism correlated positively with identification with their own ethnic group and with in-group evaluation. The preference for assimilation in minority groups is associated with low identification with their ethnic group and a less positive in-group evaluation.

Some authors regard acculturation as a predictor of ethnic or national identity. Liebkind (2006) noted that acculturation can be conceptualized as a broader construct than ethnic and national identities, encompassing a wide range of behaviors, attitudes, and values that change during intercultural contacts. The author argued that identity changes are influenced by the attitudes of migrants and ethnic minorities toward the continuity of heritage culture or the orientation toward the dominant culture (Liebkind, 2006). Flannery and colleagues (2001) also suggested that migrants' acculturation attitudes in the process of acculturation predict their adoption of the new culture, the continuity of the origin country culture, and the building of a new ethnic identity.

Integration and Assimilation Among Migrants and Ethnic Minorities

Most studies of acculturation strategies of migrants and ethnic minorities recognized the strategy of integration as promoting the most successful psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). However, some studies have pointed to the importance of an assimilation strategy for a successful adaptation of migrants and ethnic minorities as well (Greenman & Xie, 2008; Harker, 2001; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Horenczyk, & Kinunen, 2011). There is now growing appreciation that the success of an acculturation strategy depends not only on the preference of the migrants but also on the contextual conditions; for example, integration requires a certain tolerance of the dominant group toward expressions of the immigrant culture. In the absence of such tolerance, assimilation could be a more viable strategy (Ward, 2013). Verkuyten (2005) has shown that members of minority groups in the Netherlands were more likely to endorse multiculturalism than assimilationist thinking, presumably due to the public policy support of integration. van Osch and Breugelmans (2012) found similar results in their study of five groups of minorities in the Netherlands; more support for a multicultural society was found among first-generation migrants than among second-generation migrants.

Generational Studies of Acculturation Strategies and Social Identity

The intergenerational correspondence in values, attitudes, and identities within families has gained more and more interest in the last years (Phalet & Schönplflug, 2001; Trommsdorff, 2009). Researchers noted that intergenerational similarities and differences may be due to actual transmission processes between generations, but the similarities may also be due to influences from the general sociocultural context in society (Albert, Trommsdorff, & Wisnubrata, 2009; Boehnke, 2001; Vedder, Berry, Sabatier, & Sam, 2009). Researches on acculturation and identity have mostly studied adolescent samples (Ng Tseung-Wong & Verkuyten, 2013; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007; Verkuyten, 2005). However, some studies have focused on representatives of two generations. A study of intergenerational differences in the choice of acculturation strategy among members of three groups of migrants in Canada (Koreans, Vietnamese, and East Indians) found that Vietnamese and Korean adolescents were more focused on integration, and the East-Indian adolescents more on assimilation whereas their parents were more focused on separation (Kwak & Berry, 2001). Similar evidence for intergenerational differences in preference for an integration strategy by children compared with their parents was obtained in several other studies (Chung & Okazaki, 1991; Kurian, 1986; Matsuoka, 1990; Nguyen & Williams, 1989; Rosenthal, Ranieri, & Klimidis, 1996).

Sabatier (2008) studied ethnic and national identity among second-generation immigrant adolescents in France. Results pointed to the independence of ethnic and national affirmations. Parents' contribution to adolescents' cultural identity was not limited to ethnic orientation; parents also contributed in a positive way to adolescents' national identity. Some studies examine the relationship between multicultural ideology and acculturation strategies in two generations. Bélanger and Verkuyten (2010) tested the relation between Chinese–Canadian, Chinese–Dutch identity and acculturation attitudes among the second-generation Chinese in Canada and the Netherlands. Kwak and Berry (2001) found intergenerational differences in relationships between the acculturation strategies of immigrants (parents and children) and their attitudes to maintaining their language and culture, and to endogenous marriages.

Our research focused on the relationships of five social identities (ethnic, national, religious, republican, and regional) in two possible cultures for identification (with heritage and dominant

cultures) and integration and assimilation as acculturation strategies (focused on adoption in the host society) among three generations of the Russian minority in RNO-A.

Sociocultural Context of RNO-A

RNO-A is one of the seven republics of the North Caucasus; it is included in the North Caucasus Federal District of the Russian Federation. It is a multicultural republic, members of more than 100 ethnic groups live there. The dominant group (Ossetians) accounts for 64.5% of the population, Russians are the second largest ethnic group with a 20.6% share. More than 80% of Ossetians and all ethnic Russians are Christian Orthodox (*Itogi*, 2012; Korovina, 2013). Russians have been living in RNO-A for more than 200 years. Migration of ethnic Russians to Ossetia was the most active in the period of 1920-1930. Russians played a significant role in the socioeconomic development of RNO-A during the Soviet period (Denisova & Ulanov, 2003).

Establishing the status of Russians in RNO-A in common “majority-minority” terms has to be done with caution: Russians are the minority in RNO-A, but the majority in the Russian Federation as a whole. In addition, the population dynamics of ethnic Russians has significantly changed during the last 70 years: Russians constituted around 50% of the RNO-A population in the period from 1940-1970, about 30% in the period from 1970-1990, and 20% in 2010 (*Itogi*, 2004, 2012; “Vsesoyuznaya,” 2015). Many researchers wrote about changes in a self-identification of the Russians in North Ossetia–Alania since the late 1990s, when they started to consider themselves as an ethnic minority (Belozerov, 2001; Soldatova, 1998; Vorobyov, 2001).

There were different periods of interethnic relations between Ossetians and ethnic Russians during the 20th century when identities of different generations were developed. The 1940-1980 period was characterized by the implementation of an “internationalist” ideology, interethnic relations were favorable, and ethnic Russians played a significant role in the socioeconomic, technical, political, and cultural development of North Ossetia (Balikoev, Koybaev, & Balikoev, 2015; Gateev, 2006). In the period from 1980 to 2000 (the collapse of the Soviet Union), the significance of ethnic identity of Ossetians increased remarkably, the ethnic Ossetian elite aspired sovereignty of the republic, and interethnic tension increased. Russians were forced out of the republic, which is the basis of the mass migration of ethnic Russians from RNO-A in this period (Belozerov, 2001; Dzadziev, 2008; Vorobyov, 2001). Nevertheless, since 2000, attitudes toward the Russians in RNO-A became again more positive (*Migratsiya*, 2013); in the early 2000s, 63% of ethnic Russians were satisfied with the interethnic relations and the republic was evaluated as the most favorable place for Russians in the North Caucasus (Denisova & Ulanov, 2003). Yet, due to the hierarchical structure of Ossetian society, the incorporation of Russians into the regional political and business elites remained difficult. Social stratification contributed to the formation of various sectors of society along ethnic lines. For example, ethnic Ossetians continue to dominate in the parliament of RNO-A (Dzadziev, 2008).

Research on strategies of intercultural relations showed that the majority of Ossetians and Russians living in RNO-A prefer to interact on the basis of an equal status (Gutsunaeva, 2010), and these ethnic groups are oriented toward integration (Kobakhidze, 2005); still, Russians prefer equality to Ossetians more than the latter do (Gutsunaeva, 2010). This is especially evident in business (Kobakhidze, 2005): Russians are more open for joint Russian–Ossetian activities than Ossetians (Gurieva, 1997, 2010). They demonstrate a higher willingness to cooperate on group as well as interpersonal level (Gutsunaeva, 2010). Despite the high level of acceptance of Russians by Ossetians (Gurieva, 1997, 2010), the latter frequently demonstrate isolationist attitudes, tend to favor endogenous marriages, and are often not prepared to accept a person from another ethnic group as a supervisor (Kobakhidze, 2005).

In addition, studies showed that ethnic identity is more significant for Ossetians compared with Russians, and this tendency is increasing (Gurieva, 1997, 2010; Kobakhidze, 2005; Vereshchagina, 2010). Russians are more likely to identify themselves with the Russian Federation: more than 50% consider themselves primarily Russia's citizens (Gurieva, 1997, 2010; Kobakhidze, 2005; Kolosov & O'Loughlin, 2010; Soldatova, 1998; Vereshchagina, 2010). Quite surprisingly, ethnic Russians in RNO-A had a stronger republic (RNO-A) identity than Ossetians did. In addition, religious identity was salient for more than half of the Russians but only for 16.5% of Ossetians (Soldatova, 1998).

Based on the analysis of the sociocultural context of RNO-A, we can conclude that intercultural relations between Ossetians and ethnic Russians were largely favorable in the last 70 years (a three generation-period of ethnic socialization and acculturation) and the long-term residence of the Russians in RNO-A helped to establish their republic and region identities.

Analysis of the previous research allows us also to suppose that social identities might predict acculturation strategies of Russians in RNO-A but not vice versa. Why do we expect this? First, most of the previous studies focused on acculturation of migrants or ethnic minorities who moved to another country and adapted to the culture of the host society (Liebkind, 2006; Phinney et al., 2001; Verkuyten, 2005). We studied three generations of Russians who were born in RNO-A and lived there during all their life. The acculturation context of this republic was rather consistent and favorable for Russians in each generation although, as argued above, there were some changes in attitudes toward Russians across the last decades. The Russians who grew up in RNO-A absorbed both their heritage culture and the culture of the dominant society, and developed a Russian ethnic identity as well as Ossetian (republic) and North-Caucasian (regional) cultural identities. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the changed population dynamics of RNO-A created conditions that could lead to identity changes. We were interested in ramifications of these societal changes. We expect that these changes are primarily about new and changing identities due to the collapse of the former Soviet Union; therefore, these changes most likely affect identities more and earlier than acculturation strategies, which makes it plausible to use identity to predict acculturation. Moreover, we were mainly interested in how ethnic Russians dealt with Ossetian culture; therefore, we were mainly interested in the acculturation strategies that involve a positive relationship with the Ossetian culture, being assimilation and integration.

We tested the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Social identities of ethnic Russians associated with their heritage culture (ethnic, national, religious) will be negatively related with the preference for the assimilation strategy in each generation of Russians in RNO-A.

Hypothesis 2: Social identities associated with the host society (republic and region) will be positively related with the preference for the integration strategy in each generation of Russians in RNO-A.

Method

Participants

We gathered data in RNO-A ($N = 109$ grandparent–parent–late adolescent triads from ethnic Russian families; $N = 327$) using purposive sampling. More details can be found in Table 1.

In total, 28.4% of adolescents, 4.6% of parents, and 9.2% of grandparents had an incomplete secondary education; 29.4% adolescents, 6.4% of parents, and 13.8% of grandparents completed secondary education; 13.8% adolescents, 25.7% of parents, and 30.3% of grandparents completed specialized secondary vocational education; 28.4% of late adolescents, 61.5% of parents, and 46.8% of grandparents completed higher professional education. In preliminary analyses, for

Table 1. Gender and Age Characteristics of the Sample.

Respondents	N	Gender		Age			
		n Male (%)	n Female (%)	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Adolescents/young adults	109	34 (32)	74 (68)	15	25	18.5	2.80
Parents	109	29 (27)	79 (73)	36	61	44.6	6.31
Grandparents	109	25 (25)	75 (75)	54	91	69.8	8.90

Russian minority members (adolescents, parents, grandparents), we found no sizable interactions between generation and gender, Wilks's $\Lambda = .928$, $F(21, 905) = 1.144$, $p = .295$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$; and age, Wilks's $\Lambda = .907$, $F(21, 905) = 1.499$, $p = .070$, $\eta_p^2 = .032$, on the attitudinal measures. Educational differences showed significant generation differences, Wilks's $\Lambda = .880$, $F(21, 905) = 1.967$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .042$.

Procedure

The adolescent and young adult participants were recruited from schools and universities in RNO-A. Parents of the school students filled out the questionnaires at parental meetings at the schools. Then the parents were asked to distribute the questionnaires among their parents (the grandparents of the school students). The grandparents filled questionnaires in at home and passed them on to their grandchildren, who returned completed questionnaires to the researchers.

The university students were asked to distribute questionnaires among their parents and grandparents. Student's parents and grandparents received questionnaires, filled them in, and then passed them on to their children and grandchildren. The university students returned completed questionnaires to the researcher who administrated the survey. Respondents were not remunerated.

Measures

The study used scales from the Mutual Intercultural Relations In Plural Societies (MIRIPS) questionnaire (<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/cacr/research/mirips>), translated into Russian and adapted for use in Russia (Lebedeva & Tatarko, 2009):

Ethnic identity (six items, for example, "I am proud to be Russian"; $\alpha_{\text{adolescents}} = .83$, $\alpha_{\text{parents}} = .85$, $\alpha_{\text{grandparents}} = .85$).

National identity (six items, for example, "I feel proud when I hear the anthem of Russia"; $\alpha_{\text{adolescents}} = .93$, $\alpha_{\text{parents}} = .95$, $\alpha_{\text{grandparents}} = .97$).

Religious identity (five items, for example, "My religious identity is an important part of me" [Verkuyten, 2007; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007]; $\alpha_{\text{adolescents}} = .91$, $\alpha_{\text{parents}} = .92$, $\alpha_{\text{grandparents}} = .91$).

Republic (RNO-A) identity (four items, for example, "I feel like a representative/resident of the Republic of North Ossetia–Alania" [developed by the members of International Laboratory for Socio-Cultural Research]; $\alpha_{\text{adolescents}} = .93$, $\alpha_{\text{parents}} = .95$, $\alpha_{\text{grandparents}} = .90$).

Region (North Caucasian) identity (four items, for example, "I feel like a part of the Caucasian culture" [developed by the members of International Laboratory for Socio-Cultural Research]; $\alpha_{\text{adolescents}} = .94$, $\alpha_{\text{parents}} = .95$, $\alpha_{\text{grandparents}} = .95$).

Acculturation strategies: integration (three items, for example, "It is important to me to be fluent in both Ossetian and Russian languages"; $\alpha_{\text{adolescents}} = .72$, $\alpha_{\text{parents}} = .85$, $\alpha_{\text{grandparents}} = .86$);

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis Loadings of Social Identities Among Representatives of Three Generations of Russians.

Social identities	Adolescents		Parents		Grandparents	
	F1 ^a	F2 ^b	F1	F2	F1	F2
Ethnic	.880	.181	.931	.076	.903	.011
National	.860	.330	.912	.204	.885	.186
Religious	.779	.053	.617	.403	.642	.335
Republican	.504	.744	.550	.649	.364	.828
Regional (North-Caucasian)	.039	.940	.073	.958	.016	.955
% explained by the factor	59	20	60	19	54	24

^aF1: Russian ethnocultural identity.

^bF2: North-Caucasian regional identity.

assimilation (four items, for example, “I prefer social activities which involve Ossetians only”; $\alpha_{\text{adolescents}} = .87$, $\alpha_{\text{parents}} = .90$, $\alpha_{\text{grandparents}} = .91$).

Sociodemographic data. We asked our participants about their personal background characteristics (gender, age, education, and ethnicity).

Statistical Analyses

We used the following methods of data processing: descriptive statistics, Cronbach’s α , exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, MANOVA, and multigroup path analysis (with SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 22.0).

Results

Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFAs)

To reduce the number of different social identities, we used EFA (principal components, rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization). Five social identities—ethnic, national, religious, republican, and regional (North Caucasian)—were combined into two factors (see Table 2). The first factor, labeled “Russian ethnocultural identity,” included ethnic, national, and religious identities and explained 59% of variance in the adolescents’ sample, 60% in the parental sample, and 54% in the grandparental sample, $\alpha_{\text{adolescents}} = .94$, $\alpha_{\text{parents}} = .94$, $\alpha_{\text{grandparents}} = .94$. The second factor, labeled “North-Caucasian regional identity,” included republican and regional identities and explained 20% of variance in the adolescents’ sample, 19% in the parental sample, and 24% in the grandparental sample, $\alpha_{\text{adolescents}} = .93$, $\alpha_{\text{parents}} = .93$, $\alpha_{\text{grandparents}} = .94$. We computed the factorial agreement across the groups (van de Vijver & Leung, 1997) and found values of Tucker’s phi well above .90, suggesting identity of both factors across the generations.

Path Model

We tested the hypothesized relationships between the identities and the acculturation strategies in the three generations of Russians, using multigroup structural equation modeling. In the tested model, we included relationships between two higher order identities, obtained in EFA (Russian ethnocultural identity and North Caucasus regional identity), combining the initial five social identities (ethnic, national, religious, regional, and republican) and the two acculturation strategies (integration and assimilation).

Table 3. Fit Indices of the Multigroup Path Model of the Relationships Between Identities and Acculturation Strategies in Three Generations of Russians.

Model	χ^2 (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	CFI	ΔCFI	RMSEA	$\Delta RMSEA$
Configural invariance	44.41 (27)	—	.979	—	.045	—
Measurement weights	62.24 (41)	17.83 (14)	.974	.005	.040	.005
Structural covariances	70.60 (47)	7.36 (6)	.971	.003	.039	.001
Measurement residuals	105.15 (65)	35.45 (18)	.951	.020	.044	.005

Note. CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

The structural covariance model was the most restrictive model with an adequate fit (see Table 3). Figure 1 presents the standardized coefficients of the multigroup path model of the relationships of identities and acculturation strategies for the three generations of Russians in RNO-A. The results showed that the North-Caucasian regional identity (combining identities, associated with the host society: republic and regional) was positively associated with integration, whereas Russian ethnocultural identity (combining identities associated with the heritage culture: ethnic, national, and religious) had a negative relationship with assimilation. These findings imply that across three generations of ethnic Russian minority in RNO-A, integration is linked to the development of their North-Caucasian regional identity, whereas a preference for assimilation is unlikely to be accompanied by a strong Russian ethnocultural identity. We tested the model by controlling for sex, age, and education. Standardized regression weights testing the same model using data that did not control for gender and education were similar.

Mean Generational Differences

To test intergenerational differences, we compared the average of the scale scores (based on the EFAs reported in Table 2): Russian ethnocultural identity and North-Caucasian regional identity and acculturation strategies: assimilation and integration between generations. We conducted the analyses separately for identities and acculturation strategies.

The MANOVA with generation and gender as independent variables and Russian ethnocultural identity and North-Caucasian regional identity as dependent variables showed nonsignificant multivariate main effects: generation: Wilks's $\Lambda = .995$, $F(4, 640) = 1.124$, $p = .326$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$; gender: Wilks's $\Lambda = .993$, $F(2, 320) = 1.203$, $p = .302$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$; and interaction of generation and gender: Wilks's $\Lambda = .976$, $F(2, 324) = 1.929$, $p = .104$, $\eta_p^2 = .012$. ANOVAs on the individual measures were also nonsignificant (see Table 4). We conclude that there are no significant intergenerational and gender differences in these combined social identities.

Then we compared the acculturation preferences between different generations. The MANOVA with generation and gender as independent variables and acculturation strategies (integration and assimilation) as dependent variables showed a significant multivariate main effect for generation: Wilks's $\Lambda = .974$, $F(4, 640) = 2.099$, $p = .049$, $\eta_p^2 = .023$; a nonsignificant multivariate main effect for gender: Wilks's $\Lambda = .993$, $F(2, 320) = 1.203$, $p = .30$, $\eta_p^2 = .003$; and a nonsignificant multivariate main effect for the interaction of generation and gender: Wilks's $\Lambda = .976$, $F(4, 640) = 1.929$, $p = .104$, $\eta_p^2 = .012$. ANOVAs on the individual measures showed only a significant generation effect of integration, $F(3, 324) = 4.752$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .043$ (see Table 4); the integration scores of the grandparents were smaller than the integration scores of the other generations: The difference between the adolescents and the grandparents was significant while differences between the adolescents and the parents, as well as between the parents and the grandparents were insignificant. An inspection of Table 4 reveals that assimilation scores were very low and integration scores were very high for all three generations of the Russians in RNO-A.

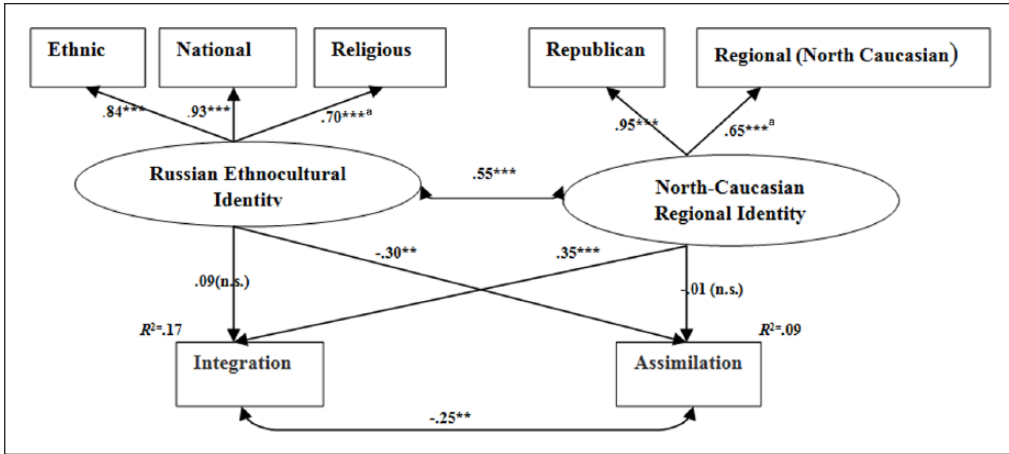


Figure 1. Multigroup path model of the relationships of social identities and acculturation strategies for three generations of Russians in RNO-A.

Note. The parameters represent standardized coefficients for the structural residuals model. RNO-A = Republic of North Ossetia–Alania.

^aThe variable fixed at a value of 1 in the nonstandardized solution.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4. Comparison of Combined Social Identities and the Acculturation Strategies of Representatives of Three Generations of Russians (Maximum Score = 5).

	Adolescents	Parents	Grandparents	Effect of generation		Effect of gender	
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	F(3, 324)	η_p^2	F(1, 324)	η_p^2
Social identities							
Russian ethnocultural identity	4.01 (0.80)	4.04 (0.77)	4.10 (0.80)	2.280	.014	1.271	.006
North-Caucasian regional identity	3.74 (0.86)	3.68 (0.91)	3.70 (0.96)	0.996	.006	0.939	.003
Acculturation strategies							
Integration	4.17 (0.80) _a	4.12 (0.93) _{a,b}	3.87 (1.06) _b	4.752	.043**	0.767	.007
Assimilation	1.74 (0.83) _a	1.76 (0.84) _a	1.91 (0.88) _a	0.302	.003	0.507	.005

Note: Means with different subscripts are significantly different in Least Significant Differences post hoc tests ($p < .05$). ** $p < .01$.

We argued in the introduction that in the context of our study, identities can be taken to predict acculturation strategies. However, theoretically the acculturation strategies (integration and assimilation) might be used to predict these two combined identities as well. To investigate this possibility, we tested an alternative model with acculturation strategies (integration and assimilation) as independent variables and identities as dependent variables. The model tested is similar to Figure 1, but now with arrows going from acculturation to the identity factors. The model fit of the alternative model was slightly poorer compared with our previous model: configural invariance— $\chi^2(df) = 65.68 (30)$, comparative fit index (CFI) = .956, root mean

square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .061. The more restrictive models also showed a slightly poorer fit than the model in which identity predicted acculturation strategies (integration and assimilation; Table 3). Although the fit statistics are not directly comparable, these findings tentatively suggest that our initial theoretical model that postulated the paths going from identities to acculturation preferences fits our empirical data better than a model with the paths going in the opposite directions, which is in line with the theoretical argument we described in the introduction. Obviously, given the cross-sectional nature of our data, we cannot exclude a bidirectional nature of identity acculturation relationship during the long-term acculturation process including three generations.

In summary, we can conclude that our theoretical model testing associations of identities and acculturation strategies showed that the Russian ethnocultural identity and the North-Caucasian regional identity are related in the same way for Russian adolescents, parents, and grandparents. These identities show different relations to acculturation strategies: a stronger sense of belonging to the culture of origin predicted a weaker tendency to opt for assimilation, whereas North-Caucasian regional identity predicted a more pronounced preference for integration. In addition, we found that the Russian ethnocultural identity, the North-Caucasian regional identity, and the preference for assimilation did not show significant intergenerational differences. However, the preference for the integration strategy was significantly higher among adolescents compared with their grandparents while differences in preferences for the integration strategy among adolescents and their parents as well as among parents and grandparents failed to reach significance.

Discussion

The current study explored Russian ethnocultural and North-Caucasian regional identities, as well as assimilation and integration acculturation strategies among ethnic Russian adolescents, parents, and grandparents in RNO-A. Our results showed that the identification with the heritage culture and identification with the dominant culture did not differ among the three generations of ethnic Russians in RNO-A. Our results partly corresponded to the results of Phinney (2003), who observed that generation was not a significant predictor of ethnic identity changes.

However, in many studies, the effect of generation on identity change was discovered. Verkuyten, Thijs, and Stevens (2012) found that Moroccan–Dutch Muslim adolescents have a higher level of national identity than their parents, but a lower level of religious and ethnic identity. Previously, Maliepaard, Lubbers, and Gijsberts (2010) found that representatives of the second generation of Muslim minorities (Turks and Moroccans) had weaker ethnic and religious identity than representatives of the first generation in the Netherlands. The results obtained by Dimitrova, Ferrer-Wreder, and Trost (2015) indicated that Roma youth were lower on endorsement of ethnic identity than their parents. Platt (2014) showed that both public and private forms of identification with the majority increase across generations, and minority heritage identities tend to become less salient among minority ethnic groups in Britain. In our case, the salience of the Russian ethnocultural identity and endorsement of the regional North-Caucasian identity did not differ in three generations of the ethnic Russian minority in RNO-A. We might explain such intergenerational stability by the favorable sociocultural context of RNO-A for the Russian minority. Previous research of multicultural relations in RNO-A showed that mutual positive intercultural attitudes correspond to the ideology of multiculturalism in the RNO-A and promote the psychological well-being of both groups' members (Galyapina & Lebedeva, 2016). In addition, migration took place many generations ago in our study whereas much acculturation studies in Western Europe and the United States typically involve more recent immigrants. The combination of favorable conditions and the fact that all participants lived their entire life in RNO-A (among the late adolescents, 97.3% were born in RNO-A; among their parents, 89% were born

in RNO-A and 9.2% moved there more than 25 years ago; among the grandparents, 85.4% were born in RNO-A and 11.9% moved there more than 55 years ago) makes it likely that identities and acculturation strategies have stabilized.

As an aside, we note that the ethnic Russians are neither completely assimilated nor completely separated, which shows that integration can be a viable acculturation option with long-term sustainability in some contexts. Our study underscores the idea that integration needs a context of mutual acceptance to be viable (Ward, 2013). Interestingly, in all three generations, the Russian ethnocultural identity was more salient than the North-Caucasian regional identity. Similar results were obtained by Dimitrova and colleagues (2013) in two generations of Turkish Bulgarians: In both the youth and their parents, their Turkish ethnic identity was more pronounced than their Bulgarian identity, which is not surprising given the rampant discrimination of the group. Our study showed that Russians of all three generations are more oriented toward the integration than toward the assimilation in RNO-A, Russian adolescents were the most and grandparents were the least focused on integration. The low preference of the assimilation strategy did not differ among adolescents and their parents and grandparents. This low endorsement of assimilation and strong preference for integration may have emerged over the acculturation history of the group as a long-term viable option to deal with both cultures.

Our results partly correspond with studies of intergenerational differences in the acculturation strategies of three groups of migrants in Canada (Koreans, Vietnamese, and East Indians). The authors found that Vietnamese and Korean adolescents were more focused on integration than their parents (Kwak & Berry, 2001). Lau et al. (2005) found that Mexican American youth prefer assimilation and integration strategies more compared with their parents. Similar evidence, obtained in several other studies, showed that children were more focused on integration than their parents (Chung & Okazaki, 1991; Kurian, 1986; Matsuoka, 1990; Nguyen & Williams, 1989; Rosenthal et al., 1996). It may be noted that in our study, immigration took on average place much longer ago than in the Canadian studies. As a consequence, any preference to balance the cultures at hand may have become stable after multiple generations, whereas acculturative changes in the Canadian context may not yet have stabilized.

Multigroup path analysis showed that the Russian ethnocultural identity of all three generations of ethnic Russians in RNO-A significantly and negatively related to their assimilation strategy, while their North-Caucasian regional identity significantly and positively related to their integration strategy. These results allowed us to argue that in all generations of Russians, the strong Russian ethnocultural identity makes assimilation and the accompanying loss of ethnic culture unlikely, and the strong North-Caucasian regional identity promotes their preference of integration. Our results correspond with the results of the study of Turkish adolescents in Bulgaria (Dimitrova et al., 2013), where the Turkish identity of adolescents was positively related to the tendency to maintain one's heritage culture, whereas the Bulgarian identity was associated with the adoption of the national culture.

In part, our results are also consistent with the data obtained by Berry and Sabatier (2010) in a study of four ethnic groups of migrants in Canada ($n = 323$, comprising Greeks, Haitians, Italians, and Vietnamese) and five ethnic groups in France ($n = 395$, Algerians, immigrants from the Antilles, Moroccans, Portuguese, and Vietnamese), where a positive correlation between the identity of the host society (national identity) and the choice of an integration acculturation strategy was found.

Conclusion

There is growing interest in cross-cultural psychology in addressing the link between acculturation and its context. The initially widely supported idea that combining both cultures is the best way of dealing with acculturation demands has come under scrutiny; it has become clear that the feasibility of such a combination will depend not only on whether immigrants prefer this option but also on what the dominant group likes to see. If the dominant group only accepts assimilation,

the bicultural pursuit may not be the feasible. Our study fits in this tradition that addresses the link between acculturation and environment. What is special in our study is that we addressed groups that have been living together for extended periods of time but were subjected to recent consequential political changes (after the collapse of the Soviet Union). All in all, we found that the acculturation aspects that we studied, acculturation strategies and related identities, showed considerable consistency across generations, despite the substantial political differences experienced by each generation. So it appears that RNO-A is a rather stable acculturation context for ethnic Russians and that the often observed generational differences found among immigrant groups in affluent Western countries were not confirmed. The Russian ethnocultural identity continues to be strong across all generations and assimilation continues to be a nonviable option.

Our study was based on the idea that in the context of a long-term peaceful intercultural coexistence, social identity might predict acculturation preferences. In support of this model, we found that among ethnic Russians of three generations in RNO-A their heritage Russian ethnocultural identity prevented their assimilation strategy and their North-Caucasian regional identity promoted their preference for the integration strategy. The alternative model with acculturation preferences as predictors and identities as dependent variables tested in our research demonstrated poorer fit indices than our initial theoretical model. Obviously, we do not deny the bidirectional character of the relationships of identities and acculturation strategies in long-term acculturation process.

Limitations

An important limitation of this study is that it was conducted in a society in which both the ethnic minority and most of the representatives of the ethnic majority belong to the same religious denomination and in which interethnic relations are favorable. We do not claim that our results will generalize to other republics in the North Caucasus, let alone beyond that region. To test our conclusions, it is necessary to conduct similar research in societies with visible cultural (religious) differences and possible interethnic tension among different groups of migrants and ethnic minorities. Small samples, the cross-sectional character of the research, and “snowball” sampling technique are other limitations of our study. However, the unique set of the participants including three generations of the same family collected for the aims of the research enabled us to mitigate these limitations and obtain interesting results.

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