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Research article

The Relationship between Multicultural Ideology, Social Identities and Perceived Permeability of Social Boundaries for Russians in the Post-Soviet Space: The Case of Estonia

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Abstract. Intercultural interaction in the post-Soviet space is determined by several factors, including: the number of Russians in a given country; the country's internal policy regarding the Russian culture and language (which determines the nature of intercultural contacts), as well as cultural distance and the degree of similarity between groups. The authors of this article conducted a study to examine the relationship between multicultural ideology, social identity and the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in Estonia. The sample consisted of representatives of the Estonian majority (233 persons, aged 18–70 years, mean age = 33 years) and the Russian minority (186 persons, aged 18–75 years, mean age = 32 years). Paper versions of the questionnaire were distributed to Russian and Estonian respondents. The procedure used the PROCESS Macro moderation analysis method. The results showed that, among both the Estonians and Russians, support for multicultural ideology had no significant impact on the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians. However, place identity would contribute to the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in both groups. The strong ethnic identity of the Russians in the Estonian context would hinder the Russians' perception of the permeability of social boundaries.

Keywords: ethnic identity, civic identity, Soviet identity, European identity, place identity, permeability of social boundaries, perceived security, Russians, Estonia

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Introduction

The post-Soviet space is a vast cultural and economic region that unites countries with similar pasts and presents. The economic systems of the post-Soviet countries remain closely interconnected, and many people in the republics of the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation have family ties.

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Thirty years after the collapse of the USSR, modern Russia and other independent republics continue to develop and improve intercultural relations. The population of the republics in the post-Soviet space, having changed their ethnic status, is adapting to new political and cultural conditions, while the ethnic majority of the post-Soviet republics faces the problem of regulating relations with ethnic minorities of Russians. The demographic landscape of ethnic Russians in the post-Soviet republics has changed significantly since 1991. Initially, there had been about 25 million ethnic Russians living in these republics. However, by the early 2010s, this number had declined to approximately 14.5 million¹. This decline reflects broader trends in migration and demographic shifts following the Soviet Union's collapse.

Thus, the study of intercultural relations is relevant and important for understanding the mechanisms of interaction between the ethnic majority and the Russian-speaking community.

The role of perceived permeability in the context inclusiveness

A multicultural state, in which representatives of various cultural groups live, faces difficulties associated with regulating relations between these ethnic groups. Firstly, there is the issue of attitudes towards cultural diversity and the implications of how open the boundaries are between ethnic majority and minority groups. Secondly, there is the issue of the context inclusiveness. As noted by Grigoriev and Berry (2021), these issues are addressed through the following aspects: (1) analysis of attitudes towards representatives of different ethnic groups, in particular, the degree of tolerance in society towards other groups; (2) determination of the status of groups in society, *i.e.*, the existence of privileged, dominant groups and the potential for providing equal rights to members of various cultural communities and groups; (3) assessment of the possibilities for social interaction within the community, *i.e.*, the level of existing conditions for creating a favorable or conflictual intercultural environment; and (4) development of a strategy for intercultural cohesion in society, in particular, determination of state policy regarding cultural diversity.

In states pursuing a policy of nationalization, including the post-Soviet countries, the management of ethnocultural diversity is often based on ethnocentrism and a wary attitude towards cultural diversity, which leads to assimilationist beliefs (Letnyakov, 2019). This approach raises questions about the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the sociocultural context for ethnocultural minorities in these countries, especially for the Russian ethnic minority, which is one of the most represented. In countries with an inclusive sociocultural context, cultural diversity is seen as a value and is effectively used to solve pressing problems faced by society, with the active participation of members of ethnocultural minorities or migrant groups in the life of the majority and society as a whole. On the contrary, in countries with a predominantly exclusionary sociocultural environment, diversity can lead to interethnic conflicts, fragmentation and

¹ Ryazanov, S. (2015, December 20). Figures of the Russian World. On the Situation of Russians on the Ruins of the Empire. *Svobodnaya pressa*. (In Russ.) Retrieved from <https://svpressa.ru/politic/article/138693/> 21 January 2024

a decrease in trust in society, which in turn can lead to various social, political and economic problems. Members of ethnocultural minorities or migrant groups may find themselves marginalized from the majority and society at large (Mm, 2019). When discussing inclusionary and exclusionary contexts, it is essential to consider not only the objective factors related to social policies, practices and legislation on migrant integration, but also the subjectively perceived elements of inclusiveness and exclusiveness in this context (Antonio, Monteiro, 2019). The perceived permeability of social boundaries is one of the indicators of the context inclusiveness (Lepshokova, 2020). It reflects a person's perception of the possibility of overcoming the boundaries separating his/her group and another group and being accepted into that other group. In the context of intercultural relations, the permeability of social boundaries means the possibility of being integrated into the majority group and society as a whole. The permeability of social boundaries is important for inclusiveness because if the boundaries are perceived as permeable, this may stimulate the desire to join another group (Ellemers et al., 1990), which in turn increases the desire to be included in these groups. When the social boundaries are perceived as more permeable, members of both groups (majority and minority) are more willing to interact. This leads to more frequent and positive interactions, reduced stresses and stereotypes, improved intercultural relationships, and the integration of immigrants and minority groups into society (Loh et al., 2010). Conversely, when the social boundaries are viewed as less flexible, this results in the development of negative perceptions of the other group based on preconceived notions and biases. This, in turn, leads to avoidance of interactions and exclusion of immigrant and minority groups from public spheres (Echabe, Castro, 1996).

For the social boundaries to appear permeable, it is important that there be a certain degree of commonality and similarity between members of different groups. Perceived similarity underlies the formation of social relationships (McPherson et al., 2001). If group categorization is based on specific social characteristics, groups may be perceived as more homogeneous, in which case the permeability of social boundaries becomes desirable and leads to positive consequences (Zhang et al., 2014). The intra-subjective social basis for categorization may be social identities, which reflect both the fact of perceived membership in a social group and the value and emotional evaluation of such membership (Tajfel, 1978).

The formation of social identity is based on the process of self-categorization, i.e., attributing oneself to a group with certain characteristics. A person can simultaneously belong to several different social groups, thereby forming a complex social identity. There are also higher-order identities, namely supra-ethnic/national identities. They allow people from different ethnic, cultural and national groups to consolidate around some common higher-order attribute, e.g., 'European' or, which is also relevant for Russians abroad, 'Soviet person'. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many nations faced the need to rethink their identity, which led to various processes and trends. Understanding this phenomenon is important for analyzing modern changes and the dynamics of identification processes in the countries of the former USSR.

Research shows that the expression of identities is crucial in interethnic relations. In a study of the host population's perceptions of migrants in Moscow, it was found that the positivity of national (civic) identity favors the integration attitudes of migrants, while the positivity of ethnic identity of Russians favors the preference for separation of migrants and is negatively associated with the expectation of assimilation on the part of the majority (Lebedeva, Tatarko, 2009). It is important to note that, if the host majority has low life satisfaction, a pronounced civic identity hinders the expectation of integration and favors expectations of assimilation and separation (Lepshokova, Tatarko, 2019).

The presence of a supra-ethnic identity has a beneficial effect on promoting peaceful relationships between different ethnic groups. In particular, among the EU population, identifying as European is associated with a favorable attitude towards immigration, whether from other EU countries or non-European countries (Curtis, 2014).

The perceived permeability of social boundaries is associated with the subjective assessment of the benefits or harms of cultural diversity and specific ethnocultural groups. In this context, multicultural ideology, which recognizes and positively values cultural differences and boundaries between groups to achieve equality, diversity and egalitarian inclusion of all groups in society, is considered an influential factor. Support for multicultural ideology reduces the perceived threat, helps overcome ethnocultural stereotypes and more positively evaluates members of other racial groups (Rosenthal, Levy, 2010; Ward, Masgoret, 2006; Todd, Galinsky, 2012). Research shows that supporters of multiculturalism evaluate representatives of other races more positively than supporters of colorblindness (Richeson, Nussbaum, 2004).

The combination of social identities and support for multicultural ideology can influence the flexibility of social boundaries. For instance, according to Morrison et al. (2010), in a multicultural society, a strong ethnic identity may contribute to disengagement and result in discriminatory attitudes and bias against immigrants. At the same time, the combination of Soviet identity and belief in multiculturalism may potentially lead to the blurring of social barriers for the Russians living in Armenia (Bultseva et al., 2021). However, more research is needed to understand how various social identities and support for multiculturalism play out in diverse environments.

On the socio-cultural context and intercultural relations in Estonia

Intercultural interaction is determined by several factors, including: the number of Russians in a given country; the country's internal policy regarding the Russian culture and language (which determines the nature of intercultural contacts), as well as cultural distance and the degree of similarity between groups. This study investigated the complex interaction between multicultural ideology, social identity and the permeability of social boundaries among the Russian population in Estonia.

The Russian diaspora in Estonia is a heterogeneous group. The population of Estonia is diverse, encompassing both indigenous inhabitants whose ancestry spans generations within the region and individuals who migrated during the

Soviet era (Trifonova, 2021). It also includes more recent arrivals. The migration policies of the Soviet era contributed significantly to the presence of a large Russian population in Estonia, according to Fein (2005).

Between 1918 and 1940, Estonia's population was largely homogeneous: Estonians made up 88% of the total. Ethnic Russians made up 8%, and other nationalities made up the remaining 4%. However, between 1945 and 1989, significant demographic shifts occurred. The total Estonian population declined from 100,000 to 965,000 during this period. At the same time, the non-Estonian population increased from 23,000 to 602,000 by 1989 (Vihalemm, Seppel, & Leppik, 2020). These changes can be explained by a combination of factors that arose as early as the 1940s. World War II resulted in losses among Estonians and emigration to Western countries. In addition, the deportation of Estonians in March 1949 further affected the demographic landscape. Concurrently, Soviet migration policy contributed to an increase in the number of Russian-speaking residents in Estonia. During the Soviet period, various social institutions also developed within the country.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Estonia's state policy underwent significant changes. Before independence, the policy priority was the Russian-speaking population. However, after gaining sovereignty, Estonia refocused its attention on promoting the growth and development of the Estonian nation.

The profound societal transformations that took place in the early 1990s led to a number of social, psychological, economic, and cultural challenges for the Russian diaspora in Estonia. This prompted the Estonian government to initiate and implement an integration policy in 1998, which continues to this day (Vetik, 2011).

These two distinct periods have given rise to numerous difficulties both within these communities and in broader intercultural relations. Issues such as language conflicts, disparities in acquisition of citizenship or access to education, and opportunities in the labor market remain unresolved.

Estonia's independence in 1991 brought about significant social and political changes. This period was marked by growing disunity between the Russian-speaking and Estonian communities, as well as new difficulties in creating a common civic identity. Citizenship was automatically granted only to the indigenous population, who had previously been considered citizens of the first Estonian Republic, and their descendants (Vetik R., 2019, Gruber D., 2012). The rest of the country's inhabitants, who constituted about one third of the total population, were treated as foreigners: they were guaranteed permanent residence permits, but in order to obtain Estonian citizenship they had to live in the country for a certain period of time and speak Estonian. As a result of this law, the Russian-speaking population, which had previously constituted a majority, began to be regarded as a minority and then as immigrants in Estonia. The Russian language in Estonia has no official status, although it is widely used in everyday communication (about 30% of the population consider it their mother tongue) and is the main language of teaching. This situation contributed to the formation of reactive and resistant identities among members of the Russian minority, which indicates diffi-

culties in adapting to the social and cultural environment. Reactive identity, or ‘identity of differences’, is formed as a result of an individual’s perception of differences from the surrounding society, which does not contribute to a favorable perception of interethnic relations with the majority.

Research from the early 2000s showed that the Russian community in Estonia lacked a strong identity and was becoming increasingly heterogeneous, losing its Russian roots (Vihalemm, Masso, 2003). A recent study by Nimmerfeldt (2013) revealed that a significant proportion (55%) of second-generation Russian immigrants in Estonia identify themselves as Estonian citizens. This study, conducted between 2010 and 2011, examined the factors influencing the sense of belonging among this demographic group. These factors included citizenship status, experiences of discrimination, perceived threats to cultural identity, interethnic relationships, attachment to their country of origin, ethnic self-identification, parental views and attitudes, and socio-demographic characteristics such as age (18–25 and 26–35). It was found that the perceived threat to cultural identity had the greatest negative impact on the sense of belonging to Estonia (people who experienced this fear were 8.83 times less likely to have a feeling of belonging to Estonia). Those who planned to leave the country in the future were 2.23 times less likely to have a feeling of belonging to Estonia than those who did not plan to leave. People who did not think of Russia as their home were 3.33 times more likely to feel a sense of belonging to Estonia. Many felt forced assimilation by Estonia, *e.g.*, through educational reforms that included the Estonian language. According to Vetik (2011), a significant majority of Russian citizens living in Estonia considered Estonia their homeland. In particular, 66% of respondents expressed this opinion. In contrast, 14% did not consider Estonia their home. Another 20% adhered to dual loyalty, identifying themselves with both Russia and Estonia.

As the largest ethnic minority in Estonia, comprising 24% of the total population, the Russians foster a sense of solidarity and mutual support in their community. Despite the complex interethnic relations, the overall situation in the country is quite stable, which prevents a mass exodus of Russians from the country (Simonyan, Kochegarova, 2015).

It is important to note that very little research has been conducted on the permeability of social boundaries and its determinants in the post-Soviet countries. This study is focused on the relationship between social identities and support for multicultural ideology and the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians. A special feature of this study is that it examines this topic from the perspective of both the ethnic majority and the Russians as an ethnic minority. The perceived permeability of social boundaries for the Russians will reflect personal experience rather than abstract perceptions and attitudes. The results of the study can be used to improve interethnic relations in Estonia and other post-Soviet countries.

This study examines the permeability of social boundaries in the context of post-Soviet societies, in particular Estonia. The authors seek to understand how

social identities influence the perception of these boundaries and what role multicultural ideology plays in these relations. **The main research question** examines the impact of multicultural ideology on the relationship between social identities and their perception of the permeability of social borders among the Russians living in post-Soviet states, with a focus on Estonia.

Methods

Participants. To examine the quantitative relationship between support for multicultural ideology, social identities and border permeability among the Russians, the data for both the ethnic majority and the Russian minority were cleared of any missing values. The ethnic majority sample in Estonia consisted of 233 persons aged 18–70 (mean age = 33 years), including men (51%) and women (49%). Among them, 51% had secondary education and 31% had higher education. The Russian minority sample consisted of 186 persons (who identified themselves as Russians) aged 18–75 (mean age = 32 years), including men (30%) and women (70%). Among them, 47% had secondary education and 37% had higher education.

Procedure. The data for this research project entitled *The New Russian Diaspora 30 Years Later: Identity, Social Capital, Intercultural Relations* were gathered between 2020 and 2022 as part of the RNF Project No. 20-18-00268.

The data collection process used a traditional questionnaire format developed in collaboration with researchers from Tallinn University. The participants were asked to complete the survey electronically via their personal email addresses. To ensure accessibility, the questionnaire was translated into Estonian by native speakers and language instructors affiliated with Tallinn University. We obtained informed consent from all the participants, and the participants completed the questionnaire only if they agreed to the terms. In this study, some of the respondents' answers were used for a more extensive comprehensive questionnaire. In particular, their answers to the questions about the permeability of social boundaries support for multicultural ideology and social identities were taken into account. The answers to the block of questions on social and demographic characteristics were also used to describe the sample.

Instruments. All the scales of this study were developed in accordance with Likert scales. These scales (except for the permeability of social boundaries) range in agreement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The consistency-reliability index (Cronbach's alpha) of each of the scales was within acceptable limits ($\alpha > 0.70$).

The scales measuring social identities consisted of 4 items each and were based on the following instruments: *the ethnic identity scale* (example statement: "I consider myself Russian/Estonian") from J.W. Berry's *MIRIPS Questionnaire*; *the national (civic) identity scale* (example statement: "I consider myself a citizen of Estonia"); *the religious identity scale* (example statement: "My religious affiliation is an important part of who I am"); *the ethnic identity scale* (Verkuyten,

Yildiz, 2007); *the place identity scale* (example statement: “I feel at home here”) (Droseltis and Vignoles 2010); *and the Soviet identity scale* (example statement: “I consider myself a Soviet person”) (Velkova, 2020).

Support for multicultural ideology was assessed using a shortened version of *The Revised Multicultural Ideology Scale*. This scale, jointly developed by the research team and J.W. Berry during the work on the RNF project No. 15-18-00029, measures attitudes towards cultural diversity and inclusiveness. Here is an example statement used in the scale: “In Estonia, the attitude towards people does not depend on their ethnicity”. The respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed with the statements about the life of different ethnic groups in Estonia.

The study investigated the perceived ease with which the Russians, as a minority group, can integrate into Estonian society. This was assessed using *The Social Boundary Permeability Scale* developed by Ramos et al. (2016). The participants were asked to rate the level of difficulty of four statements regarding the integration of a Russian person into Estonian society on a scale from 1 (extremely difficult) to 5 (extremely easy).

The scale consistency was analyzed using Cronbach’s α in the ethnic majority and minority groups. All the scales were consistent with scores meeting the requirements ($\alpha > 0.7$).

Mathematical and statistical data processing. The data were processed using SPSS version 22 software. The questionnaires were cleared of unreliable answers, and then a regression analysis followed. The analysis was carried out using the PROCESS Macro multiple linear regression and moderation analysis methods. The characteristics of the models including Fisher’s test, model significance and coefficient of determination were identified. The size and statistical significance of standardized regression coefficients and moderating effects were also assessed. Multicultural ideology, social identities (ethnic, civic, religious, Soviet, European and place identity) and their interaction were used as independent variables. The study successfully identified unique relationships between multicultural ideology, social identity and the permeability of social boundaries among the Russians living in both Estonian and Russian communities in Estonia.

Results and discussion

Tables 1–6 present the results on how support for multicultural ideology influences the relationship between social identities and perceptions of the permeability of social boundaries among the Russians living in Estonia. These tables also analyze both direct and indirect moderating effects in this relationship. The results for the Estonian ethnic majority/Russian ethnic minority are given with a slash. Model 1 shows the effect of multicultural ideology in each table. Model 2 shows the effects of multicultural ideology and social identity, and Model 3 shows the effects of multicultural ideology, social identity and their interaction.

Table 1

Moderation analysis of the relationship between multicultural ideology, ethnic identity and the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in the Estonian / Russian groups

Variability / Model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Multicultural ideology (β)	-0.11 / -0.09	0.11 / -0.02	-0.11 / -0.01
Ethnic identity (β)	–	0.10 / -0.28**	0.13 / -0.23**
Interaction of multicultural ideology and ethnic identity (β)	–	–	-0.37** / 0.08
R2	0.01 / 0.01	0.02 / 0.08	0.07 / 0.09
F	2.96 / 1.52	2.77 / 8.35**	5.86** / 5.95**

Note. ** $p < 0.01$; data for the Estonians/Russians are presented with a slash.

As we can see in Table 1, for the Estonian group, the analysis of moderating effects showed that, when the respondents expressed their ethnic identity at a low level, there was a weak positive correlation between their support for multicultural ideology and the degree to which the social structures of Estonian society were open and inclusionary towards the Russians. ($\beta = 0.11$, $p = 0.22$). When the respondents expressed a moderate level of ethnic identity, their support for multiculturalism showed a weak, although statistically insignificant, negative correlation with the perceived openness of Estonian society towards the Russians ($\beta = -0.12$, $p = 0.08$).

However, when the respondents strongly identified with Soviet ideology, their support for multiculturalism showed a clear and statistically significant negative relationship with the perceived inclusivity of Estonian society for the Russians ($\beta = -0.27$, $p < 0.01$). No significant moderating effects were found in the Russian group.

Table 2

Moderation analysis of the relationship between multicultural ideology, civic identity and the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in the Estonian / Russian groups

Variability / Model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Multicultural ideology (β)	-0.11 / -0.09	-0.10 / -0.11	-0.13 / -0.14
Civic identity (β)	–	0.11 / 0.25**	0.09 / 0.21**
Interaction of multicultural ideology (β) and civic identity	–	–	-0.24* / 0.05
R2	0.01 / 0.01	0.03 / 0.07	0.05 / 0.07
F	2.96 / 1.52	3.02 / 6.98**	4.08** / 4.72**

Note. ** $p < 0.01$; data for the Estonians/Russians are presented with a slash.

According to the data in Table 2, in the Estonian group, the analysis of moderating effects showed that, when the respondents from the ethnic majority exhibited a low sense of civic identity, their support for multicultural ideology showed a weak positive correlation with the openness of Estonian society towards the Russians ($\beta = 0.01, p = 0.89$). However, as civic identity strengthened, this relationship changed to the opposite. Those with a moderate sense of civic identity showed a negligible negative correlation, which suggested that their support for multiculturalism had little impact on the integration of the Russians ($\beta = -0.13, p = 0.05$). Notably, the Estonians with a strong sense of civic identity showed a clear and statistically significant negative correlation. This most likely meant that their support for multicultural ideology was associated with greater social barriers faced by the Russians in Estonian society ($\beta = -0.24, p < 0.01$). No significant moderating effects were found in the Russian group.

Table 3

Moderation analysis of the relationship between multicultural ideology, religious identity and the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in the Estonian / Russian groups

Variability / Model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Multicultural ideology (β)	-0.11 / -0.09	-0.12 / -0.08	-0.11 / -0.09
Religious identity (β)	–	-0.04 / -0.16*	-0.02 / -0.09
Interaction of multicultural ideology (β) and religious identity(β)	–	–	-0.08 / -0.06
R2	0.01 / 0.01	0.01 / 0.03	0.02 / 0.04
F	2.96 / 1.52	1.66 / 3.18*	1.84 / 2.47

Note. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; data for the Estonians/Russians are presented with a slash.

Table 3 shows that no significant moderating effects were found in the groups of the Estonians and Russian respondents.

Table 4

Moderation analysis of the relationship between multicultural ideology, European identity and the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in the Estonian / Russian groups

Variability / Model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Multicultural ideology (β)	-0.11 / -0.09	-0.09 / -0.12	-0.13 / -0.15
European identity (β)	–	-0.06 / 0.11	-0.07 / 0.09
Interaction of multicultural ideology (β) and European identity (β)	–	–	0.14* / -0.01
R2	0.01 / 0.01	0.02 / 0.02	0.03 / 0.02
F	2.96 / 1.52	1.82 / 1.86	2.57 / 1.24

Note. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; data for the Estonians/Russians are presented with a slash.

According to the data in Table 4, in the Estonian group, the analysis of moderating effects showed that, when European identity was relatively low, there was no statistically significant correlation overall ($\beta = -0.02$, $p = 0.83$), but the relationship became significant when the levels of European identity were considered. The Estonians with moderate or high expressions of European identity, who also supported multicultural ideology, tended to be less welcoming of the Russian integration into Estonian society ($\beta = -0.16$, $p = 0.04$ for moderate expression of European identity, $\beta = -0.23$, $p = 0.02$ for high expression of European identity among the Estonians). This suggested that, for this demographic group, multiculturalism might not necessarily mean greater openness towards certain cultural groups, such as Russians. No significant moderating effects were found in the Russian group.

Table 5

Moderation analysis of the relationship between multicultural ideology, Soviet identity and the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in the Estonian / Russian groups

Variability / Model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Multicultural ideology (β)	-0.11 / -0.09	-0.12 / -0.08	-0.13 / -0.09
Soviet identity (β)	–	-0.14* / -0.12	-0.08 / -0.07
Interaction of multicultural ideology (β) and Soviet identity (β)	–	–	0.23** / 0.05
R2	0.01 / 0.01	0.03 / 0.02	0.06 / 0.02
F	2,96 / 1,52	1,52* / 2,02	5,21** / 1,49

Note. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; data for the Estonians/Russians are presented with a slash.

As can be seen from Table 5, the study found a correlation between the level of the respondents' identification with Soviet identity and their support for multiculturalism in Estonia, especially in relation to the integration of Russians into Estonian society.

In the Estonian group, the analysis of moderating effects showed that, when the respondents expressed low levels of Soviet identity, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between their support for multicultural ideology and the degree to which Estonian society was open to the Russian integration ($\beta = -0.22$, $p < 0.01$). In other words, those who identified less with Soviet ideology were more likely to oppose the Russian integration if they supported multiculturalism. However, this relationship weakened as Soviet identification increased. At medium levels of Soviet identification, the correlation remained negative but became statistically insignificant ($\beta = -0.12$, $p = 0.06$). Finally, at high levels of Soviet identification, a weak positive correlation emerged, suggesting that those who strongly identified with Soviet ideology might be more likely to support the Russian integration if they also supported multiculturalism

($\beta = 0.06$, $p = 0.51$). However, this finding was not statistically significant. No significant moderating effects were found in the Russian group.

Table 6

Moderation analysis of the relationship between multicultural ideology, place identity and the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in the Estonian / Russian groups

Variability / Model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Multicultural ideology (β)	–0.11 / –0.09	–0.06 / –0.12	–0.07 / –0.16
Place identity (β)	–	0.29** / 0.21**	0.22** / 0.19*
Interaction of multicultural ideology (β) and place identity (β)	–	–	–0.09 / 0.01
R2	0.01 / 0.01	0.10 / 0.05	0.10 / 0.06
F	2.96 / 1.52	12.10** / 4.91**	8.48** / 3.62**

Note. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; data for Estonians/Russians are presented with a slash.

As shown in Table 6, no significant moderating effects were found in the groups of Estonians and Russian respondents.

The study focused on the factors influencing the permeability of social borders for the Russians in Estonia as an indicator of the inclusiveness of the country’s social and cultural context.

Summarizing the results, we can conclude that among both the Estonians and Russians, support for multicultural ideology does not have a significant impact on the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians. However, place identity contributes to the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in both groups. This is partly supported by previous results of the search for Russians in the post-Soviet space (Trifinova, 2021, Tatarko, Chuykina, 2021, Fein, 2005). Also, some results were different for each group. For example, among the Estonians, Soviet identity hindered the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians. It was also found that, when Estonians had high levels of ethnic, civic and European identities, there is a negative correlation between support for multicultural ideology and the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians. A similar situation was observed when the level of expression of Soviet identity was low among the Estonians. Among the Russians, civic identity was positively associated with the permeability of social boundaries, while ethnic and religious identities had a negative relationship with this indicator.

Thus, multicultural ideology alone does not have a significant impact on the permeability of social boundaries in both groups. Nevertheless, its interaction with social identities shows that under certain conditions it can become an obstacle to the perception of boundaries as permeable from the point of view of Estonians. It is interesting to note that place identity is a common inclusionary identity for both groups, but the set of exclusionary identities differs between the Estonians and Russians in Estonia.

Conclusion

The perceived permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in Estonia is a complex issue shaped by the confluence of social, cultural and psychological factors that affect majority and minority groups differently. Estonia possesses diverse multicultural attitudes, strong ethnic and civic identities. The impact of these factors on the permeability of social boundaries varies between the majority and minority groups in the country.

It has been found that, for the ethnic majority of Estonia, multicultural ideology *per se* does not affect the permeability of social boundaries for the Russians. However, common identities, such as place identity, contribute to it. It is worth noting that the Russian diaspora in Estonia is extensive and that the historical relationships between Estonians and Russians have been complex. The shared Soviet heritage of the Estonians, which points to a collective past, limits the permeability of boundaries for the Russians in this setting. In addition, the presence of other social identities that are meant to unite the majority and minority, such as civic, Soviet, and European ones, may actually hinder the connection between multicultural ideology and the permeability of social borders for the Russians. This may indicate an intention to separate Russians and prevent them from being part of a common identity in Estonia.

As for the Russian ethnic minority in Estonia, multicultural ideology is not associated with the perceived permeability of social boundaries. A common social identity (civic and local) unites both the majority and minority groups, leading to a sense of openness among the Russians in Estonia. However, the presence of a strong ethnic identity among them creates perceived barriers and limits their perception of soft social borders.

The promotion of multicultural ideology (normative multiculturalism) obstructs the permeability of social boundaries from the side of Estonians with strong European, Soviet, and civic identities to cross social boundaries with Russians.

Among the Russian ethnic minority, there is no connection between support for multicultural ideology (normative multiculturalism) and the perceived permeability of social boundaries for the Russians in this country. In the Estonian context, the expression of ethnic identity among the Russians instead has a more exclusionary function and leads to a feeling of unfair treatment towards the Russians.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many nations faced the need to rethink their identity, which led to various processes and trends. Understanding this phenomenon was partially explored in this project. Some limitations that can be taken into account in future studies include the unevenness of the sample in terms of socio-demographic indicators (gender, age, level of education). The results could form the basis for recommendations for developing policies towards ethnic minorities in the countries of the former USSR.

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Исследовательская статья

Взаимосвязь между мультикультурной идеологией, социальной идентичностью и воспринимаемой проницаемостью социальных границ для россиян на постсоветском пространстве: на примере Эстонии

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Аннотация. Межкультурное взаимодействие на постсоветском пространстве обусловлено несколькими факторами. Прежде всего, это количество русских в той или иной стране; внутренняя политика страны в отношении русской культуры и языка, которая определяет характер межкультурных контактов. Также важна культурная дистанция и степень сходства между группами. В данном исследовании представлена взаимосвязь между мультикультурной идеологией, социальной идентичностью и проницаемостью социальных границ для русских в Эстонии. Для проведения социально-психологического исследования бумажные версии опросника были распространены среди русских и эстонцев. В выборку этнического большинства в Эстонии вошли 233 эстонца в возрасте от 18 до 70 лет, средний возраст – 33 года. В выборку русского меньшинства вошли 186 респондентов, идентифицирующих себя как русские, в возрасте от 18 до 75 лет. Анализ проводился с помощью метода модерационного анализа с использованием Macro Process. Мы пришли к выводу, что среди как эстонцев, так и русских поддержка мультикультурной идеологии не оказывает существенного влияния на проницаемость социальных границ для русских. Однако идентичность места способствует проницаемости социальных границ для русских в обеих группах. Ярко выраженная этническая идентичность русских в эстонском контексте препятствует восприятию русскими проницаемости социальных границ.

Ключевые слова: проницаемость социальных границ, этническая идентичность, гражданская идентичность, европейская идентичность, советская идентичность, идентичность места, воспринимаемая безопасность, русские, Эстония

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