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The integration of Russian-speaking immigrants to Finland: A social psychological perspective

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Abstract Russian-speakers represent the oldest and biggest immigrant group in Finland, with the majority of them having migrated to the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union in early 1990s. This chapter gives an overview of their integration with a focus on social psychological studies. Integration is a multifaceted phenomenon which includes immigrants' acquisition of new socio-cultural skills, forming of new social relationships, and psychological adjustment. When looking at integration from these perspectives, Russian-speaking immigrants have adjusted quite well. They form and cherish ties to both Finnish society and Russian culture, and have a positive outlook on their future in Finland. However, there are challenges too: Russian-speakers often face mistrust and discrimination in the labor market and other spheres of life. The studies reviewed here show that engaging in positive intergroup contact with majority Finns is crucial for the integration of Russian-speakers, as it promotes their adaptation and fuels positive attitudes towards the Finnish majority and other immigrant groups living in the country. In line with recommendations given by minority rights experts and international organizations, we conclude that the integration efforts of this significant and rapidly growing immigrant group should be met with a more efficient and holistic integration program.

1 Russian-speakers in Finland

In the end of 2017, there were almost 80 000 people speaking Russian as their mother tongue (Statistics Finland 2017a), constituting ca. 20% of people with a foreign background in Finland. Over the past centuries, different groups of Russian-speakers have resided in the geographical area of Finland (for an overview, see Leskinen and Karvonen 2012). While Finland was under the Swedish rule (13th and 14th Century–1809), serfs were brought to Finland from Russia, and in times of the Russian rule (1809-1917), many Russian authorities, officers and merchants moved to Finland. After Finland gained independence in 1917, many refugees from Soviet Russia came to Finland: in mid 1920s, there were over 30 000 Russians living in the country. However, most of them continued their journey to bigger emigrant communities in Europe, and during the World War II, there were only ca. 15 000 Russians in Finland. Immigration from the Soviet Union to Finland was quite rare, with marriage being the main reason to migrate. However, in the 1990s, immigration started to increase again. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, ethnic returnee status was given to Ingrian Finns (i.e. descendants of Finns emigrated from Finland to Russia between the 17th and the beginning of the 20th century) and to other ethnic Finns living in Russia and Soviet successor states. Since then, ethnic remigration, family ties, work and studying have been the most common reasons for migrating to Finland. According to the most recent statistics at hand (Statistics Finland 2017b), approximately 60 percent of people of Russian or Former Soviet Union (FSU) origin in Finland are women, largely due to multicultural marriages between Finnish men and Russian women. Indeed, Russian is among the most common home languages of multicultural families in Finland (Statistics Finland 2017c), and family reasons account for two thirds of immigration from Russia and the FSU to Finland (Castaneda et al. 2014).

In this chapter, we will present an overview of the social psychological research program on the integration of Russian-speaking immigrants conducted at the University of Helsinki over the past decade or so. As social psychologists interested in understanding processes underlying integration, we were concerned with questions of intergroup relations, well-being, identity formation and societal participation. Quantitative studies focusing on these aspects of integration are presented in the first sections of this chapter, while in section 2.8, we take a qualitative perspective on immigrant integration. There, as social psychologists interested in the social construction of reality, we examine identities and national belonging as discursively constructed in everyday interaction. For example, we pay attention to how intergroup relations are negotiated in talk and texts.

The majority of the studies presented here were conducted in projects focusing on perceived discrimination among immigrants to Finland (SYREENI), long-term adaptation of Ingrian Finns (INPRES/LADA), mutual intergroup relations between majority Finns and the Russian-speaking minority (MIRIPS-FI), and inter-minority relations between Russian, Estonian and Somalian immigrants (SINI). Space will

be given also to some single but not less important studies, such as a field-experiment on the labor market discrimination of Russian-speakers in Finland. It should also be noted that another comprehensive report (Varjonen et al. 2017) has recently reviewed the situation of Russian-speaking immigrants and organizations in Finland. We have that report to thank for a large part of the summarizing work.

This chapter is based on various studies conducted by a number of colleagues in our research group.¹ For the sake of readability, we will summarize the research results obtained without specifying each publication. However, a list of our publications that this overview is based on is given at the end of this chapter. When discussing studies published by other researchers, detailed reference information is always given. For the sake of clarity, we will refer to Russian-speakers or Russian-speaking immigrants when talking about studies on the integration of all immigrants from Russia or FSU who speak Russian. We will specifically refer to Ingrian Finns and Estonians when describing their integration, or when comparing it with that of ethnic Russians. Familiarity with Russian culture and Russian language unites the different groups of migrants from the FSU and Russia, and also explains why they are referred to generally as ‘Russian-speakers’ in Finland. However, when talking about the integration of this group, it is important to remember also its heterogeneity.

2 Integration: indicators, challenges and remedies

Immigrant integration can be approached from several angles. The so-called ABCD model of acculturation has identified four areas of changes resulting from migration: affective (e.g. stress), sociocultural (e.g. day-to-day activities and language use), cognitive (e.g. identification, attitudes and values), and developmental (e.g. personal growth) (Oppedal 2006; Ward et al. 2001; see also Berry, Phinney et al. 2006). In addition, some researchers have argued for the importance of fifth, economic (E) dimension of integration (Aycan and Berry 1996). In the following sections, we will touch upon all these inter-related dimensions of integration, and focus especially on socio-economic situation, social relations, well-being, and participation in society among Russian-speaking immigrants in Finland. We will also discuss discrimination as a factor hindering integration, and collective action of Russian-speaking immigrants as a way to challenge their disadvantaged position. The last two sections will be dedicated to our longitudinal studies on the pre-and post-migration adaptation of Ingrian Finns, and to our qualitative studies on the integration of Russian-speaking immigrants.

¹ Social Psychological Research Programme on Intergroup Relations in Finland, known as the ESSO group (see <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/esso-group/>).

2.1 Socio-economic adaptation

When looking at the socio-economic adaptation of Russian-speakers in Finland, it is important to note that this group belongs to the most highly educated immigrant groups in Finland. In our nation-wide survey studies, their average level of education measured in years (ca. 13) has been equal to, if not better, than that of majority Finns. However, the high level of their education is not directly reflected in their employment rate. According to the most recent statistics at hand (summarized in Varjonen et al. 2017), the employment rate of Russian-speaking men (52.7%) and women (47.1%) is more or less equal to that of all foreign language speakers in Finland (men 53.6%; women 45.1%), but lower than that of the Finnish-speaking majority (men 66.9%; women 70.9%). Päivinen (2017) has noted that the employment rate of people with Russian background improves quite fast, from 20% to 50% in ten years of residence in Finland. Another recent study (Nieminen et al. 2015) took into account also shorter fixed-term contracts and part-time jobs, and suggested that the level of employment among Russian-speakers is reaching that of the Finnish majority.

However, a question can be raised whether the jobs of Russian-speaking immigrants correspond to their level of education, and what are their opportunities for career development. We know, for example, that while there generally tends to be a positive correlation between immigrants' wage level and length of residence in a country, the median wage of immigrants from Russia has not increased in a similar fashion (Päivinen 2017). At least two possible reasons for this should be brought up. First, until the closing down of the ethnic remigration program in 2017, a considerable share of Russian-speaking migrants to Finland were Ingrian Finns (see e.g. Prindiville 2015). They migrated, on average, in older age than immigrants coming to work or study in Finland. Second, research has shown that Russian-speaking immigrants are victims of labor market discrimination (see Sect. 2.5).

In what kind of positions do Russian-speaking immigrants work, then? The employment statistics covered in a recent study by Nieminen and colleagues (2015) show that the share of senior salaried employees (23%) is almost two times smaller among Russian-speaking immigrants than among people from EU/EFTA countries or North America (45%). However, this share is a bit bigger than in other studied immigrant groups outside Western Europe and North America (shares ranging around 20%). The share of salaried employees among people with Russian or Soviet backgrounds is 31%, which is bigger than among immigrants from other studied countries (shares ranging between 17-25%). Entrepreneurship is not common among Russian-speaking immigrants in Finland: their share (9%) is among the smallest compared with other groups with foreign backgrounds.

Our studies conducted among Ingrian Finns, Russians and Estonians in Finland have shown that over time, with improving language skills, the labor market position the immigrants' has generally improved. Also more broadly speaking, proficiency in Finnish is crucial for coping with daily hassles and stress related to settling to a new country. But also attitudes and social networks play a role. A comparative

study among Russian-speaking immigrants living in Finland and Israel showed that a separation attitude (i.e. being in close contact with co-ethnics but distancing oneself both from the mainstream culture) hindered socio-economic adaptation of Russian-speakers in Finland. For finding a job and for career development, it is important to be well connected also with national majority members – especially in a country culturally as homogeneous as Finland. Indeed, social relations with majority Finns are an important part of the integration of Russian-speakers in Finland, as we will discuss in the next section.

2.2 Social relations

Finland's Russian-speaking population mainly resides in Helsinki metropolitan area and in other bigger cities, but also in smaller towns near the Eastern border, the proportion of Russian-speakers is significant. In many counties in Eastern Finland, Russian-speakers constitute 40-60 percent of all speakers of foreign languages (Varjonen et al. 2017). Indeed, immigration brings people with different cultural backgrounds into contact, and social relations with host nationals are crucial for psychological adaptation (e.g. identities, attitudes, well-being), socio-cultural adaptation (i.e. feeling of being able to understand, cope with and act within the new environment; Ward and Kennedy 1999) as well as more tangible parts of integration (e.g. housing, employment). According to a survey on the well-being of biggest immigrant groups in Finland, only one third of Russian-speaking immigrants had at least one good Finnish friend, and on average, members of this group had two Finnish friends (Castaneda et al. 2012). However, Russian-speaking immigrants seem to be willing to engage in more contact: over eighty percent of the Russian citizens participating in a survey by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2013) wanted to have more Finnish acquaintances.

Positive intergroup contact with majority Finns has an important function beyond socially active life: it also promotes positive attitudes towards the majority as well as towards other immigrant groups living in Finland. In the end, the process of integration is about meeting in halfway: in order to feel secure in the new homeland, an immigrant needs not only to master certain cultural skills to function effectively in a new environment, but also feel that the majority group is willing to step forward as a partner in the integration process. This is what our longitudinal results showed. The less immigrants perceived difficulties in coping with the new environment soon after migration, the more positive were their later perceptions of majority Finns' willingness to engage in contact with them. This perceived good will of the majority further alleviated feelings of being threatened by the majority. The capability to cope with and function in the new cultural environment contributes to the ability to understand the local way of communication, making it easier to make more accurate interpretations of interaction.

Previous acculturation psychological research has shown that besides ties to the national majority, also ties to one's ethnic minority group are crucial for immigrant integration (e.g. Berry et al. 2006). Indeed, while feelings of belonging to the ethnic minority community foster well-being and integration, they have also often been found to predict positive attitudes towards other ethnic groups. However, our studies among Russian-speaking immigrants have shown that overly positive feelings about the value (or even superiority) of Russian culture are related to prejudiced attitudes and weaker support for multicultural ideology stressing equality and appreciation of cultural differences. Promisingly, there is evidence that even extended contact (Wright et al. 1997), i.e. knowing that another Russian-speaker has a friend from other ethnic minority group, fuels positive attitudes towards the members of this outgroup. This is encouraging, as in the light of our data, the opportunities for getting to know people from other ethnic groups vary greatly in different parts of the country, and direct contacts between Russian-speakers and other immigrant groups are not very common. Versatile social networks promote integration, and also well-being as one central indicator of it.

2.3 Health and well-being

A comprehensive study on immigrants' well-being in Finland (Castaneda et al. 2012) recently showed that on average, people of Russian origin were less satisfied with their health than the general population in Finland. There are worrying signs especially regarding the mental health of Russian-speaking women: in a study by Castaneda and colleagues (2012), one in four women of Russian origin had experienced severe symptoms of depression and anxiety. As pointed out by Kerkkänen and Säävälä (2015), this might be partly due to the drop in socio-economic and professional status after migration to Finland, as the rate of employment is lower among Russian-speaking women than among men (while the reverse is true among Finnish majority population). However, in tests of physical function, Russian immigrants performed quite well, and Russian men assessed their work ability to be as good as that of men in the general population. Key factors related to poorer well-being among Russian-speakers included limited language skills and perceived discrimination (see also Sect. 2.5).

Importantly, immigrants' health and well-being after migration is often determined by health status in the pre-migration stage. Moreover, our longitudinal studies among Ingrian Finns showed that well-being of immigrants is also affected by expectations formed in the stage of preparing for the forthcoming migration. Namely, stress related to migration, anticipated difficulties in functioning in the new environment, and anticipated discrimination predicted poorer psychological well-being after migration, perceived difficulties in coping with daily hassles, and experiences of discrimination after migration. We also found that the fulfillment of pre-migration expectations plays a role for later adaptation. Interestingly, expectations and experiences related to work and economic welfare did not affect Ingrian Finns'

well-being after migration. However, the more expectations related to family and social relations were exceeded by actual experiences, the better were life satisfaction and the general mood of the immigrants studied. These findings highlight the importance of social relationships and the context-dependent nature of immigrants' wellbeing: not same policies and practical solutions fit every immigrant group in every life situation and every context.

When analyzing individual-level changes in life satisfaction and self-esteem between the pre-migration stage (2008) and three follow-ups (until 2013), we surprisingly found opposite patterns for the two indicators of well-being studied. Life satisfaction increased from pre-migration to the first post-migration measurement point, after which it stabilized. However, self-esteem decreased throughout the time period. Thus, when looking at the well-being of Russian-speaking migrants based on our results, it is hard to say whether migration has been a blessing or a curse. It seems that while the challenges posed by the integration process may challenge the self-esteem of immigrants, the level of life satisfaction tells a positive message about their general view on life.

Finally, social, economic and health-related outcomes of integration are often interrelated, and with accumulating hardships, there is a risk of social exclusion. According to Mannila and Reuter (2009), for social exclusion to be a risk factor, one must experience disadvantage in at least two of these three spheres of life: unemployment, subjective poverty, and perceived poor health. In their study conducted among Russian and Estonian immigrants in Finland, 20% of Russian-speaking participants (compared to 6% of Estonian participants and 17% of ethnic Finns) were categorized as being in risk for social exclusion (see also Brylka et al. 2018, for Russian-speakers in Finland and Estonia). Evidence of accumulating risks was found especially among Russian-speakers who had been living in Finland either less than five years or longer than ten years. Thus, integration is not always a linear process heading for the better. To combat social exclusion, efforts should be made to ease participation in society.

2.4 Membership and participation in society

A key determinant of participation in society is feeling of belonging: to be interested in actively taking part in a group of any size, one needs to see the group and its advantage as one's own. For immigrants and other ethnic minority group members, this means dual identification: identification with both the ethnic minority group and the national group. One way to assess belonging is to look at the degree to which immigrants have acquired and have been granted Finnish citizenship. In recent years, the number of Russian citizens granted with Finnish citizenship has increased greatly (Varjonen et al. 2017). There are no statistics about exact numbers of Finnish citizens with Russian or Soviet background, but we know that in the 2010s, the biggest group granted with Finnish citizenship were the Russians, and that there

were approximately 30 000 dual citizens of Finland and Russia (Statistics Finland 2017d).

Another way to assess belonging is to look at immigrants' identification profiles: how they categorize themselves, how strongly they feel to be members of ethnic and national groups, and how they see the value of these group memberships. In a comparative study on the link between objective belonging (i.e. citizenship) and subjective belonging (i.e. socio-political integration) of Russian-speakers in three countries in the Baltic region, we found that Russian-speakers were typically quite well integrated but took a critical stance towards their group's position in the society. In Finland and Norway, integration and assimilation were more common than in Estonia, where integration and citizenship policies are not as inclusive as in the other two countries (see MIPEX 2015).

While the ethnic and national identification of Russian-speaking immigrants in Finland has not been studied comprehensively, we know more about the identification patterns of Ingrian-Finns, studied in our longitudinal research program on re-migration. In the last stage of our study when the remigrants had lived in Finland approximately three years, they identified most strongly with Ingrian Finns, strongly with Russians, and quite strongly also with members of the Finnish society. Somewhat worryingly, even though the mean levels of perceived discrimination were not very high, a notable part of our research participants doubted if they will ever be accepted as full members of society (see also Sect. 2.5 and 2.8). This might be partly reflected in the fact that the majority of the Ingrian Finns studied had not acquired Finnish citizenship. Does this mean that the ethnic and national identities of Russian-speaking immigrants are impossible to reconcile? In another study conducted among Russian-speaking adolescents, we found that their Russian and Finnish identities appeared as oppositional only when one wished to maintain the Russian heritage culture and perceived pressure from the Finnish majority to let go of it. When this pressure was not perceived, ethnic and national identification were independent of each other – thus, for these youth it was possible to regard oneself as a Russian and a Finn at the same time.

One interesting perspective to societal membership and participation is the experience of psychological ownership of a country. In our comparative study among Russian-speaking immigrants and Finnish majority members, we examined the role of regarding Finland as one's (and one's ingroups') own. For both immigrants and majority members, higher levels of Finnish identification were associated with higher levels of psychological ownership of Finland. However, higher psychological ownership was associated with less positive attitudes towards Russian-speaking immigrants among majority Finns, but with more positive attitudes towards Finns among immigrants. Thus, it seems that while seeing the country as one's own enhances integration of immigrants, majority group members still need to loosen their grip over the ownership of Finland for harmonious intergroup relations to emerge.

2.5 Perceived discrimination a challenge to integration

The conflictual history and current political disputes between Finland and its Eastern neighbor are reflected in the attitudes of majority Finns towards Russian-speaking immigrants. A longitudinal study of Finns' immigration attitudes between 1987 and 2007 showed that on average, the attitudes have been reserved over time, and that Russians belong to the least welcome immigrant groups together with the Somalis (Jaakkola 2009). A recent example comes from a heated discussion on whether Russian-Finnish dual citizens may hold military posts (e.g., Yle News 8.2. 2018). This discussion has evolved around whether dual citizens have dual loyalties: whether they can be trusted with access to information on national security, and whether they could be affected by the interests of Russia. Our study conducted among young majority Finns showed that dual citizens were perceived as less loyal towards Finland than Russian-speakers with only Finnish citizenship, but as more loyal than Russian-speakers with only Russian citizenship. The less loyal towards Finland Russian-speaking immigrants were perceived to be, the less willing majority Finns were to support action that would improve Russian-speakers' social position in Finland. Thus, echoing the findings gained in Germany and the Netherlands, the other two research contexts of our study, dual citizenship seems to evoke fears of divided group loyalties among national majority group members.

From the victim's perspective, prejudice is often manifested in ethnic discrimination. In Finland, both objectively attested and subjectively perceived discrimination towards Russian-speaking immigrants has been a persistent problem. According to a comprehensive survey on minorities and discrimination within the EU (EU-MIDIS, 2009), approximately every fourth Russian-speaking immigrant had experienced ethnic discrimination in the past twelve months. According to a more recent study (Castaneda et al. 2012), almost a third of participants studied had experienced impolite behavior because of their background, and around every fifth participant reported name calling and verbal abuse. The most typical place to encounter unjust treatment or discrimination against Russian-speakers was the streets, but there were also cases in which the perpetrator had been a police (7%), a social welfare authority (9%) or a member of teaching staff (16%). A total of 13 percent of Russian-speaking participants reported to be discriminated against when looking for housing. Further indisputable evidence of discrimination against Russian-speakers comes from our field experiment on recruitment in semi-skilled office, restaurant, driver and construction jobs. The results revealed that Russian-named applicants had to send twice as many job applications as those with a Finnish name, in order to receive an invitation to a job interview. In sum, these studies tell about the widespread suspicion and unjust treatment faced by Russian-speaking immigrants.

The ramifications of perceived discrimination become concrete when looking at immigrants' attitudinal and identification patterns and their health. Our longitudinal studies among Russian-speaking immigrants have attested that perceived discrimination diminishes feelings of belonging, weakens identification with the Finnish

society, and fuels negative attitudes towards Finnish majority group members. Also our recent comparative study conducted in Finland, Estonia and Norway showed that in all three countries, the more Russian-speakers identified as Russians and the more they perceived ethnic discrimination, the more negative were their attitudes toward the national majority groups and the more willing they were to engage in action to confront injustice.

As regards well-being, a study by Castaneda and colleagues (2012) showed that especially those who had come to Finland at an early age had experienced more discrimination and traumatic events and had used mental health services more than those who had immigrated later in life (Castaneda et al. 2012). More recently, Castaneda and colleagues (2015) examined the association between perceived discrimination and well-being among three immigrant groups in Finland. The results for Russians indicated that more frequent experiences of ethnic discrimination were associated with mental health symptoms, a lower level of perceived quality of life, feeling unsafe, and decreased trust towards society. This is in line with previous international research attesting that perceived discrimination – especially when pervasive – is harmful for various areas of psychological well-being (see Schmitt, Branscombe et al. 2014).

Given these difficulties, it is important to study how immigrants collectively strive to challenge the inequalities that hinder their integration. What do we know, then, about the social and political activism of Russian-speaking immigrants in Finland?

2.6 Collective action as a way to challenge inequalities

While Russian-speakers' unofficial social networks are quite tight, participation in organizations targeted for Russian-speaking immigrants is not very common (Castaneda et al. 2015; Varjonen et al. 2017). This is at least partly due to the heterogeneity of this group: there is no single organization that would represent people with such various backgrounds and motivations. In the Finnish political sphere, Russian-speakers are not very active, either. According to a survey by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2013), little more than half of the Russian participants regarded voting as important. In the Finnish municipal elections of 2012, only 19% of the Russian-speaking population and 16% of Russian citizens used their vote (Wass and Weide 2015). As candidates, Russian-speakers constitute the biggest group with a foreign background in the municipal elections, but generally speaking, speakers of other than official languages (Finnish and Swedish) are underrepresented in municipal as well as in state-level elections.

We also examined the willingness of Russian-speaking immigrants to promote the rights of Russian-speakers in Finland. The results showed, first, that Russian-speaking immigrants supported collective action when they did not trust the Finnish majority and thought that the majority does not allow them to maintain their cultural

heritage as much as they would like to. In contrast, the more immigrants saw themselves as being full members of society, the less they were inclined to improve Russian-speakers' position in Finland. In other words, while identification with the broader society can be seen as an indicator of integration, being close to the majority also allows immigrants to perceive group boundaries as more permeable, making them less motivated to fight against the inequalities their group is facing. However, this 'ironic effect' of national identification does not make it any less important for integration. For example research by Simon (2011) highlights why it is important to enable full membership and active participation of minorities. While dual (i.e. ethnic and national) identity directs immigrants to moderate, normative action, distancing from broader society is more likely to result in more radical forms of action.

2.7 Integration as change

Immigrant integration can be assessed as a state and as a change. While in the previous sections we evaluated the degree of integration among Russian-speakers from different angles, next we look at their integration as a dynamic process, starting already before crossing state borders. In our longitudinal studies we specifically focused on the pre-migration stage of acculturation process of Ingrian Finns migrating from Russia to Finland. We suggested that this stage is characterized by pre-acculturation changes: the changes experienced after making the decision to emigrate, having contact with the Finnish society, and starting preparations.

The results obtained clearly showed that immigrants come prepared, equipped with pre-existing patterns of psychological, attitudinal and behavioral adaptation (for an overview, see Yijälä 2012). We found, first, that most of the Ingrian Finns studied were oriented towards both preserving Russian culture and being a part of the mainstream Finnish culture in Finland. Second, Ingrian Finns experienced pre-acculturative stress, which was related to the upcoming migration and which largely depended on their expectations regarding their adaptation after migration. Third, post-migration adaptation difficulties were expected especially among Ingrian Finns who were less familiar with Finland, generally less open to changes in life, and who perceived their personal values to be different from those of typical Finns. In all, our results pointed to the crucial role of early contact experiences of potential migrants with their future fellow countrymen. Before migration, it is important not only to provide potential migrants with information, but also support their preparation for the upcoming change in life. To support integration after migration, it is essential to identify the expectations and beliefs of potential migrants, and to assist them in developing positive but realistic expectations regarding later adaptation.

As immigration to a new country is among the biggest changes one can encounter, it makes people re-examine their values, identities and attitudes. Our longitudinal analysis of the values of Ingrian-Finnish remigrants showed that shortly after

migration, the importance of values emphasizing security and the welfare of all people and the nature was heightened. However, these values were on the decline two years after migration, returning to baseline. In contrast, while the importance of personal success and competence diminished after migration, it increased again in the long run. Thus, although migration brings new challenges to the forefront, after settling to their new life, people turn back to the values they cherished already before migration.

As regards changes in identities and attitudes, we need to focus even more on changes in the environment, as self-concept and attitudes are known to be reactive to events and treatment people face in their everyday life. Not surprisingly, this is what we found when studying attitudinal and identity reactions to perceived ethnic discrimination. While discrimination was not perceived among our participants very often, we could still see notable ramifications. Namely, Ingrian Finns who perceived higher levels of discrimination after migration than they expected to face before migration were more likely to distance themselves from majority Finns in the long run. However, their Russian identity and adherence to Russian culture seemed stable regardless perceived discrimination. This is relieving, as the broader community of Russian-speaking immigrants is a valuable source for social support also for Ingrian Finns, and as positive attitudes towards cultural maintenance are known to aid particularly psychological adaptation. It was also good to note that general trust towards Finnish majority group members stayed quite strong during the period of the longitudinal assessment.

In all, our longitudinal studies revealed many encouraging signs of Ingrian Finns' integration: people were generally satisfied with their life and the decision to migrate, they were willing to integrate in the Finnish society, and saw their future in Finland in a positive light. However, challenges included prolonged unemployment, limited language skills, perceived discrimination and decline in self-esteem. It should be noted that even though their Finnish roots might go back several generations, Ingrian Finns typically regard themselves as Finns, and expect to be treated as fellow Finns after migrating to Finland. Thus, being excluded has come as a surprise, only adding to the painful experience of discrimination. This is among the things we concentrated on in our qualitative studies discussed next.

2.8 Integration as socially constructed in everyday interaction

In our studies utilizing a discursive psychological approach to the integration of Russian-speaking immigrants to Finland, we focused on identities, belonging and citizenship as socially constructed, constantly reinterpreted and renegotiated in everyday interaction. This qualitative analysis adds to the insights gained with a quantitative approach by focusing on people's own ways of presenting themselves and their situations, as well as their ways of challenging the labels and positions imposed by the majority group.

We started by examining how Ingrian Finns construct their ethnic identities before and after migrating from Russia to Finland: how they used category labels, how they accounted for different identities, and what kind of social functions different identity constructions had. Overall, there was much variation in the use of social categories both in pre-and post-migration data. However, some identity constructions were more common than others. While the participants mostly presented themselves as Finns in the pre-migration stage, in the post-migration stage, a larger variety of self-labels was used, and the Finnish identity was explicitly problematized. A key finding was that already in the pre-migration stage, many interviewed immigrants stated that they are regarded as Finns in Russia, and as Russians in Finland. This was portrayed almost as an inevitable destiny of all immigrants from Russia. Related to this it is somewhat surprising that in another study conducted among three different groups of remigrants with Finnish roots, Ingrian Finns tended to downplay their experiences of being discriminated against by normalizing discrimination and emphasizing positive experiences. In contrast, ethnic remigrants from Canada and United States took a more critical stance and challenged the criteria of Finnishness. It is not possible or meaningful to make between-group comparisons or generalizations with this kind of data, but these examples still suggest that in the Finnish context, boundaries of Finnishness are quite tight, and that the case of Ingrian Finns highlights these boundaries in a particular way. In one study, we focused on how characteristics of Finnishness, especially ancestry and language, are employed at institutional, community and interpersonal levels of text and talk. The results showed how the same characteristics can be used to both in- and exclude Ingrian Finns from the group of Finns, and how essentialist notions of who is a 'real' Finn can be used strategically by both state authorities and Ingrian Finns themselves to make claims about their Finnishness and right to remigrate. However, it is important to acknowledge that when identities are negotiated and used, the power to define and ascribe identities is not equally divided between groups. For example, our analysis showed that despite the seemingly clear markers of Finnishness originally used as the basis for remigration legislation, the government's decision to close down the remigration system came down to the issue of identity: who are considered to identify strongly enough as Finns. Thus, the setting of boundaries of 'us' and 'them' is a question of social construction with concrete repercussions.

Also when it comes to the rights and responsibilities of immigrants, power between majority and minority groups is not equally distributed, and immigrants have to take a stance on whether to conform or challenge the prevailing status quo. In our interview studies among Russian-, Estonian- and Somali-speaking immigrants and majority Finns, we found that especially Russian- and Estonian-speaking immigrants tended to stress immigrants' responsibility to conform to Finnish mainstream culture. Also, without much problematizing, they presented their group as being lower than majority Finns in the local ethnic hierarchy, and depicted ideal immigrants as polite guests who understand the value of maintaining the mainstream culture. This was sometimes done by referring to immigrants from Somalia as bad examples. We argue that this is one way of presenting the identity of a 'good

immigrant' which can be used to rhetorically pave the way for acceptance as a full member in society. From the viewpoint of equality, this strategy is problematic as it places the responsibility of integration to large extent on the shoulders of immigrants, instead of viewing it as a two-way process. Moreover, stressing solidarity towards the national majority and taking distance to other, culturally more distant and more stigmatized groups reproduce the prevailing ethnic hierarchy and fuel inter-minority discord.

3 To conclude

When talking about Russian-speakers, Finns talk about neighbors within and across state borders. Unfortunately, when thinking of intergroup relations between Finns and Russian-speaking immigrants, the old proverb "good fences make good neighbors" comes easily to mind. This proverb is wisely analyzed in Robert Frost's poem *Mending Wall*: "Before I built a wall I'd ask to know what I was walling in or walling out, and to whom I was like to give offense." As the harmful consequences of walls between 'us' and 'them' can be clearly seen in the studies reviewed above, it would be a high time to consider all the good things being walled out by prejudice and discrimination targeted towards Russian-speaking immigrants.

Luckily, not everything seems gloomy. Generally speaking, Finland fares well in international comparisons regarding integration policies (MIPEX 2015). To give another comparative example, our studies have shown that Russian-speaking immigrants perceive their societal status more positively than the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia. Moreover, studies have shown that the attitudes of majority Finns are, on average, at least neutral, and when looking at indicators like trust, life satisfaction and social networks, Russian-speakers seem to have integrated quite well. It is also worth noting that while Russian-speakers are often met with suspicion in Finland, our results clearly show the power of positive intergroup contact to tackle prejudice and promote harmonious intergroup relations between the national majority and immigrants, as well as between different immigrant groups.

Due to family ties, work and studying, the Russian-speaking population of Finland grows fast, by approximately three thousand people annually. When looking to the future, it will be interesting to see how the position of Russian-speakers develops. For years, there have been calls for stronger minority rights and a more holistic integration program for this group (Daher et al. 2012; Pentikäinen 2015), as well as for taking measures to combat prejudice and discrimination, in particular in the area of employment (ECRI 2013). However, as social psychologists, we highlight the importance of thinking about all this also from the perspectives of communities and individuals. Our studies clearly show the value of creating conditions in which it is possible for immigrants to have a secure sense of belonging to the larger society. Even in the case of Ingrian-Finnish remigrants with exceptionally positive expectations, we have seen that full integration cannot be expected if the newcomers' enthusiasm is met with rejection. Instead, this eagerness towards integration

should be encouraged by opportunities for mutually positive everyday encounters and practices that foster the formation of common Finnish national identity and allow immigrants to maintain other cultural ties as well. This way, the potential of Russian-speakers could be harnessed in a way that would serve both Finland and the immigrants themselves.

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