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Author(s): Stasulane, Anita; Wilska, Terhi-Anna

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Chapter

Acculturation Orientations among Russian Youth in Finland

Anita Stasulane and Terhi-Anna Wilska

Abstract

Despite the fact that much academic attention has been directed to the acculturation of immigrants in Finland, the need to more fully understand how immigrants cope with acculturation is timely. Since the Russian-speaking immigrants represent the biggest immigrant group in Finland, this chapter explores the acculturation orientations among Russian immigrant youth approached from the angle of the festive culture. The findings are based on the data of ethnographic observation and qualitative interviews (n 16) conducted in the central part of Finland. To capture the nuances of dynamic acculturation experiences, the authors applied a bottom-up methodological approach which gives voice to young people. The Introduction familiarises readers with the research context, the objective of the study and its key research questions. Part two explains the data collection methods and describes the methodology used in the research. Part three presents the analysis of young people's experiences at festivities. Building knowledge by mapping customs, traditions and novelty of celebrations, the authors found three acculturation orientations among Russian immigrant youth in Finland: assimilation, integration and separation. Research into festive culture plays a role in exploring immigrant communities, allowing identification of the network of social ties, which reflects the connection of immigrants with both the host culture and the heritage culture.

Keywords: festive culture, assimilation, integration, separation, marginalisation

1. Introduction

Integration of immigrants is one of the most important items on the agenda of social and political discussions taking place in the European Union. Many experts and leaders of some countries have acknowledged that the integration policy thus far pursued has been unsuccessful. It is expected that immigration will follow an upward path in the future, requiring more effective policy for managing it. To implement a targeted integration policy, those who develop it need to have a clear understanding of the integration process. Therefore, studies aimed at gathering information on the integration process, identifying obstacles to integration and measuring its success gain importance with each day. With global migration picking up, research pays increasing attention to acculturation, as integration is one of acculturation strategies.

Acculturation is often understood as a one-way path from heritage culture to host culture. Such understanding is based on the conceptualisation of acculturation observed in the first half of the twentieth century [1, 2]. According this conceptualisation, acculturation occurs "when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" ([2] p. 149). Such understanding means that an immigrant would have to decide whether to accept host culture or remain faithful to heritage culture. In the first half of the twentieth century, biculturalism was rejected, as it was believed that it causes conflicts, stress, isolation and identity confusion [3]. By contrast, today biculturalism is understood as a positive psychological and social type of adaptation [4].

Nowadays, acculturation is understood in a different way: as a choice between "origin" and "destination" cultures ([5] p. 626), emphasising its two-way movement determined by the extent to which immigrants want to preserve their heritage culture and the level of their interest in familiarising themselves with and integrate into host culture [6, 7]. Depending on immigrants' attitudes, acculturation occurs according to several strategies: assimilation, separation, integration and marginalisation [8]. Taking into account the diversity of strategies, the definition of acculturation can be summarised as follows: "the ways people prefer to live in intercultural contact situations" [9]. Assimilation means that immigrants abandon their heritage culture and adopt host culture. Separation is observed when immigrants practise traditions of their heritage culture and do not accept host culture. Integration takes place when immigrants practise their cultural traditions and take over traditions of the host culture simultaneously. Marginalisation arises if immigrants do not retain links with their heritage culture and avoid host culture. The latter acculturation strategy is the least preferred one, but integration can take place if the host country accepts multiculturalism.

Finland, like other European countries, faces challenges posed by immigrant acculturation. Although Finland was not part of migratory routes for a long time, today population with immigrant background represents 8.5% of its population [10]. Arrival of Chilean refugees and Vietnamese in Finland started in the 1970s [11]. The 1990s saw a higher influx of immigrants when the implementation of the migration programme launched by Finnish President Mauno Koivisto started. It was aimed at people who had ethnic Finnish Ingrian ancestry and who inhabited the territories that became part of the USSR after World War II (Ingria – the current Leningrad region). As a result of this programme (1990–2016), so-called rights to resettle were used by approximately 30 thousand people [10].

A series of studies focusing on acculturation of immigrants in Finland have been carried out to find data-based solutions. The impact of acculturation on psychological well-being has been studied by measuring teenagers' acculturative stress, behavioural problems, self-esteem, life satisfaction and sense of mastery [12, 13]. Being well aware of the fact that problems do not arise only after taking up residence in Finland, researchers have explored the ways in which immigrants' well-being is affected not only by postmigration factors but also by premigration issues [14]. To investigate the process of immigrants' psychological, sociocultural and socio-economic adaptation, data on immigrants from the USSR were collected for eight years (1961–1976). Findings show that the success of immigrants' adaptation is driven by sociocultural adaptation measured as the proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading and writing Finnish [15]. Taking account of the fact that the process of acculturation is affected by attitudes of both immigrants and the host society, it has been analysed

whether the acculturation orientations of the immigrants and the hosts are concordant or discordant [16]. It is a comparative study analysing the data collected in Germany, Israel and Finland. The study concludes that the acculturation profiles of hosts and immigrants are discordant in Finland.

Discussions on the process of immigrant acculturation in Finnish society gained pace after the refugee crisis (2015), heightening academic interest in this issue as well. Although the acculturation orientations are most frequently explored from the perspective of immigrants, there are examples of studies carried out from a different angle. When exploring the attitude of Finnish society, focus is placed on the question concerning the immigrant acculturation orientations preferred by Finnish teenagers [17]. When investigating the relationship between feelings of prejudice and support for acculturation preferences, it has been concluded that Finnish teenagers are inclined towards supporting integration rather than assimilation of Russian immigrants. The comparative study on the impact of media use on acculturation conducted in the Russian communities of Finland and Latvia should be mentioned among the most recent studies. The findings show that Russian immigrants in both countries scored closer to biculturalism than monoculturalism [18].

Russian-speaking immigrants make up one of the largest groups of immigrants in Finland. This has been driven by Finland's geographic location adjacent to Russia and particularly by the above migration programme. Given that the reasons behind migration are manifold, the Finnish Immigration Service distinguishes between three types of immigrants, using different terms: returnees (in Finnish – *paluumuuttaja*), refugees (*pakolainen*) or forced immigrants and voluntary immigrants (*maahanmuuttaja*). Those who moved to Finland from the USSR or the Russian Federation within the migration programme offered by the state can be referred to as returnees from the legal point of view. However, social sciences consider them voluntary immigrants. They face identical immigrant acculturation problems, as they moved to Finland after they had already lost the cultural ties (first and foremost—the language) with the country of origin of their ancestors. Therefore, the term *Russian immigrants* is used in this chapter without making a distinction between ethnic identity and linguistic identity. From a historical point of view, in this particular case, we cannot talk about returnees, as ethnic Finnish Ingrians, who inhabited the territories incorporated into the USSR, moved to Finland. Despite their ethnic origin, people who moved to Finland from the USSR or the Russian Federation continue to speak Russian within the family and consume products of Russian media and culture, as well as establish organisations whose purpose is to preserve Russian culture. Taking account of the fact that Finland remains an attractive destination for immigrants, particularly after the war started by Russia against Ukraine (2022), it is expected that the number of the Russian immigrants will increase further.

The quantitative research approach has been mostly used when exploring both attitudes of immigrant acculturation and expectations of the host society. The qualitative approach is applied rather infrequently when conducting studies. The authors of this chapter hope to contribute to raising awareness on the acculturation of immigrants in Finland based on their experience analysed using qualitative research methods. One peculiarity of the chapter is that immigrants are given their chance to have a voice. Another peculiarity relates to the analysis of the of immigrants' experience gained from celebrating festivities.

The central research question of the chapter is: how does a dialogue between the heritage culture and the host culture develop when celebrating festivities? An essential part of models for the integration of immigrant culture [19] is customs,

traditions and novelty of celebration. Today, anthropologists pay particular attention to festivities as social or religious rituals that strengthen social ties [20, 21]. Research into festive culture plays a role in exploring immigrant communities, allowing identification of the network of social ties which reflects the connection of immigrants with both the host culture and the origin culture. The interviews with young people conducted during the fieldwork provide an insight into the festivities celebrated in their families and the way it is done, how the Russian community preserves its traditions of celebrating festivities and what the manifestations of the interaction between Russian and Finnish festive culture are in Finland. The answers to these questions help identify the acculturation orientations of the younger generation coming from the Russian community.

2. Data collection and the research methodology

The study among Russian youth living in Finland was carried out from 1 October to 31 December, 2021. A city located in the central part of Finland was chosen as a study site. The city is home to 144 thousand people, of which 136 thousand use Finnish, 293—Swedish, 16—Sami and 8052—other languages in a family environment on a daily basis. Study participants believe that approximately 2000 Russians live in this Finnish city (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, 26 October, 2021).

To ensure the anonymity of study participants, the chapter reveals neither the location where the study was conducted nor the group names. Meanwhile, references to interviews include the pseudonyms chosen by study participants themselves, and all data that could disclose their identity directly or indirectly have been anonymised.

The sample was selected using the non-probability sampling technique. Study participants were chosen by means of both purposive sampling and the snowball method. Purposive sampling was employed when selecting groups of Russian immigrants living in Finland; these groups have emerged around cultural activities and involve young people. The snowball method was used to identify Russian-speaking youth who arrived in Finland in early childhood or who were born in this country. These young people find themselves in Finland as a result of their parents' choice who used the Finnish migration programme to resettle to Finland from the USSR, later – the Russian Federation.

The sample consisted of Russian-speaking young people – members of groups where the Russian language is a tool of communication and intergenerational transmission of cultural traditions: in the religious community, in the group of learning Russian and two groups dedicated to the preservation of cultural traditions. It was important for the researcher to seek support from gatekeepers at the beginning of field work. Group leaders understood the relevance of the study and provided their support to the researcher by emailing the informed consent forms containing the researcher's contact information to all their group members. Due to the positive attitude of group leaders, the researcher could participate in group events and make ethnographic observations. The informal socialisation between the researcher and group members played a crucial role in the fieldwork, as the young people whom the researcher had approached personally during events agreed to be interviewed rather than those who had received information from group leaders. The informal socialisation led to a high response rate: all young people approached by the researcher agreed

to be interviewed, except one person who changed his/her mind to participate in the interview and showed no willingness to contact the researcher.

The major obstacles to recruiting interviewees were: first, young people's busy schedules (work, studies, social, cultural and sports activities) and second, the Covid-19 pandemic. Although Finland had not introduced gathering restrictions during the fieldwork and group activities were not restricted as long as epidemiological safety regulations were complied with, an account had to be taken of the fact that the epidemiological situation could change abruptly. Interviews were planned carefully for weeks ahead. Only one of them was a face-to-face interview, but others were conducted via the Zoom platform because of the uncertain epidemiological situation. All interviewees, except one, turned on the video camera and contacted the researcher face-to-face during the interview.

The key research instruments used were participatory observation and interviews. Participatory observation was made on a regular basis over a three-month period, several times a week, peaking on Saturdays and Sundays. 16 individual qualitative interviews were carried out during the fieldwork: 3 group leaders (aged 46–51) and 13 young people most of whom were 19–23 years old were interviewed, but the ages of two interviewees were 34 and 35. The dominant presence of females in the groups led to the following breakdown of interviewees by gender: 12 women and 4 men.

Interviews with group leaders were conducted in a narrative form; that is, they were unstructured interviews allowing group leaders to tell their story. This provided the opportunity for group leaders to express their opinion and to elaborate on the topics and problems of concern to them. Semi-structured interviews were used for working with the young people; that is, these were undertaken and followed previously developed sets of questions, frequently changing their sequence and posing more in-depth questions [22]. The interviews took place in the language used within the young people's families, that is, Russian, with their average length being one hour. These were recorded in an audio format and later transcribed into the Russian language, noting emotions and longer pauses in the text and observing the accepted norms for transcription in research [23]. The interviews were listened to again after transcription to avoid mistakes, with the anonymisation of data being carried out simultaneously.

No ethically dubious situations arose during the course of the study. Having familiarised themselves with the information on the purpose of the study, its performance, interviewees' rights, data anonymisation and storage rules, all interviewees confirmed their participation in the study. Before each interview, young people were encouraged to ask questions concerning the information sheet, and the answers provided were open and meaningful.

Qualitative content analysis, which is not strictly regulated, was used as a research instrument [24] and provided the opportunity for the researcher to be flexible [25, 26]. Acculturation indicators which were the object of the analysis were clearly defined on the commencement of the content analysis, and a word, sentence or several sentences which formed a unified concept were used as a unit of analysis [26]. As the number of interviews was not large, they were coded manually: the main categories or codes were initially identified and were then divided up into subcategories or subcodes. In this way, analysis was done by following the text [27]. Codes were created based on interview data, and in turn, after reviewing the created codes, they were evaluated according to their correspondence to the conceptual framework, the goals of the research and the research questions. In this way, a deductive and inductive method was applied to the data analysis [24].

3. Festivities as an indicator of sociocultural adaptations

Celebrating festivities is an integral part of young people's life; therefore, interviewees willingly talked about the festivities they usually celebrate and the way it is done. Due to the fact that the fieldwork was carried out during the last months of the year, young people first mentioned Christmas and the New Year.

3.1 Festivities of religious origin

As a result of cultural interaction, families of the interviewed youth celebrate "both Finnish and Russian festivities" (Anna, female, 20 years old, student, November 17, 2021.). However, young people drew a clear line between Russian and Western culture during interviews: "Question: What festivities does your family celebrate? Answer: It is the Russian festivities that we celebrate, we also celebrate Western festivities" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). Differences between the Gregorian and Julian calendars dominated in separation of Russian culture from European culture. "In Finland Christmas is on December 25 unlike in [Russian] Orthodoxy [on January 7]" (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021). Russian immigrant groups make a clear distinction between Russian and Finnish cultural traditions; for example, young people said during interviews that their group attends "their [Finnish] Christmas [celebration]" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021) and that December 25 is "their [Finnish] Christmas, their *Joulu*" (Alisa, female, 19 years old, student, December 1, 2021). Moreover, mixed families also make a distinction between Christmas traditions: "Q: What kind of festivities do you celebrate at home? A: We celebrate the "Finnish" Christmas. Usually together with my dad's parents, that is, together with my grandma and grandpa from that side" (Lermontov, female, 23 years old, student, November 19, 2021). It is easier for mixed families to make their choice regarding the celebration of Christmas according to Finnish traditions, as "there's no Christmas in Russia, there's only the New Year" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021). This view reflects young people's understanding that the same festivities are celebrated differently and with varying degrees of intensity in different cultures.

As to the celebration of "Finnish" Christmas, it was emphasised in one case that it was the "most favourite festivity" of the interviewee's family (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021), but in another case, it was added that "["Finnish"] Christmas is important for us, but we don't celebrate it every year" (Karla, female, 19 years old, student, November 19, 2021). Although young people have absorbed the Christmas traditions specific to Finnish culture, they do not always enjoy them: "Typical Finnish Christmas. The traditional Finnish food, we give gifts – the same things recur each year. All relatives arrive, we spend time together, go to sauna, eat the same food [year after year]" (Lola, female, 21 years old, student, December 14, 2021).

During interviews, Christmas celebration on December 25 was described as an informed choice: "After our arrival in Finland we, for some reason, decided to celebrate Christmas, although many Russian families that have arrived in Finland or were born here, they celebrate the New Year. But it is Christmas that we celebrate" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021). Interviewees attributed the celebration of Christmas on December 25 to belonging to Finland. This came to light when young people talked about their future plans, that is, what kind of festivities they would like to celebrate in their own families: "I'd love to continue the Christmas

tradition, since I believe that if we live in Finland, it is important to celebrate Finnish festivities. Other children will talk about Christmas but if we don't have Christmas, it will be very sad, I think. Therefore, Christmas in my own family will be a family festivity with gifts" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

According to the Russian youth living in Finland, Christmas has no religious value. Interviewees did not refer to the religious attributes of this festivity, and they did not mention attending church. As a result of cultural interaction, Russian families have adopted the Christmas celebration elements that are typical of Finnish culture. It should be made clear that gifts are not given at Christmas in Russia and that Christmas is celebrated in church rather than in the family circle. By contrast, Russian youth in Finland try to find a sense of family even in the event of the divorce of parents. "I celebrate in my family. I usually spend half a day together with my father, at best, but as evening approaches I go to my mum and celebrate together with her family" (Lola, female, 21 years old, student, December 14, 2021). It should be emphasised that group events at Christmas organised by the Russian community are complemented by elements of Finnish culture: "Q: What did you celebrate yesterday? A: We celebrated Christmas. We prepared a programme, we had porridge and different cakes, and tea, coffee. We just sat together, ate and drank, then we had a quiz, one member of the group even sang for us. Then everyone bought gifts for each other and distributed them. Q: What kind of songs did she sing? A: Some kind of Finish Christmas songs" (Karla, female, 19 years old, student, November 19, 2021).

According to the interview data, in the case of Christmas, elements of Russian culture are gradually replaced by elements of the Finnish traditional culture. An interviewee said, "in my childhood *Ded Moroz* [Grandfather Frost] usually came and gave gifts to children. Since we don't have children for the time being, I and my wife, we don't need *Ded Moroz*. Later on, when we have children, we'll have to sustain this culture, as it is said that *Ded Moroz* comes from Finland, from Lapland. He is known as *Joulupukki*, that Santa" (Bil, male, 34 years old, ITC specialist, December 12, 2021).

Unlike Christmas, interviewees referred to church in relation to Easter without mentioning the religious significance of this festivity. Young people talked about "Russian Easter", meaning celebrations according to the Julian calendar. The interviewee emphasised that it is only the "Russian Easter" that his family celebrates: "We have the Orthodox Church therefore we celebrate Easter. We somehow don't celebrate Finnish Easter, but when Easter is celebrated in Finland and people have holidays, it is clear that we stay at home" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). The interviewee, by making a distinction between Orthodoxy as a Russian denomination and Lutheranism as a Finnish denomination, has not taken account of the fact that a significant part of Finnish people are Orthodox believers, and the Finnish Orthodox Church celebrates its festivals according to the Gregorian calendar. Data of another interview suggest that Russian immigrants consider the calendar a dividing line between Orthodoxy and Protestantism; therefore, the family celebrates both "Russian" and "Finnish" Easter. "Q: What festivities does your family celebrate? A: We celebrate Easter two times: Orthodox Easter and Finnish Lutheran Easter. Q: Why two times? A: My parents are believers, and it is important for them to celebrate "Russian" [Easter], but since we live in Finland, we also celebrate "Finnish" [Easter]" (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021).

As to the Easter traditions practised in the family, it was said: "Well, we don't do anything special at Easter" (Lola, female, 21 years old, student, December 14, 2021). Interviewees mentioned making *paskha* and dying eggs as the main Easter attributes (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). These traditions have

not been preserved by all Russian immigrant families (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021).

According to the interviewees, Easter in Finland is a syncretic festival – "a very mixed culture having a little bit of everything" (Alisa, female, 19 years old, student, December 1, 2021). Russian youth have identified the traditional Finnish culture elements characteristic of Easter and talked about them positively: "At Easter, children here [in Finland] wear costumes, collect sweets. Easter costumes: somebody dresses up as a rabbit, somebody is a girl with freckles, red cheeks and a braid. It is a common thing here, it is the good *noita*, a witch, but with freckles, a neckerchief, very brightly dressed. Most probably, this costume is easiest to make. With freckles and a braid. My mum always dressed me up like this" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

3.2 Festivities of traditional culture

Juhannus, the summer solstice, stands out in the Finnish festivity culture. It is actively celebrated, and this has been observed by the Russian youth living in Finland. An interviewee, when describing solstice celebration in Finland, pointed to the individualism inherent in Finnish mentality: "[..] *Juhannus*, we have this festival, then they [Finns] celebrate wholeheartedly, and even then [only] together with the family. They always celebrate by themselves" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). A bonfire, staying awake all night, alcohol and fun were mentioned as attributes of summer solstice: "There is usually a large bonfire, and… bonfires are made in all cities, in all possible places, people don't sleep and just drink a lot. Nobody sleeps. Everybody is having fun" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

In the case of the summer solstice, it was evident that the Russian youth were open to the host country's festive culture, but at the same time, these young people remained faithful to their heritage culture. "We celebrate Finnish festivities in summer. We also celebrate Russian festivities. It is sort of our tradition" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). Russian young people have celebrated the summer solstice together with relatives of their own age and have gained new experience: "Over the past two years, I was part of my sisters' company, that is, together with their [Russian-speaking] friends, I had fun together with my sisters throughout the night. We just sat, had fun, welcomed the dawn… Very peacefully. Having fun, peacefully, keeping an eye on the bonfire. I didn't celebrate [the summer solstice] before" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021). Young people did not talk about other traditions related to the celebration of *Juhannus*, thus implying that they are not familiar with these traditions: "Q: What is the traditional food of this festivity? A: There is no such food, I think. No such food. None" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

Russian immigrant groups do not organise a joint celebration of the summer solstice. On the one hand, this could be explained by the vacation period that makes it difficult to organise group events. On the other hand, this points to the desire of the Russian community to preserve, first and foremost, its traditional culture, for instance, by organising the celebration of Maslenica. Speaking about Maslenica and the related activities, the group leader emphasised the openness of the Finns: "Even Finns look forward to it [Maslenica]" (Veronika, female, 55 years old, school student, October 11, 2021). The local government has allowed the group to organise this celebration in the city square, sports stadium or at a course for skiing. This illustrates

both the scope of the event and the enthusiastic response of Russian immigrants and the Finnish community. When describing the celebration, the group leader pointed to the particularly fascinating atmosphere of Maslenica: "We make it loud, cheerful, with music and [folk] dances on the street, with the obligatory pancakes and different bright elements" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). Such an extensive celebration requires financial support, and the group has often encountered obstacles, but it has always coped with them: "When we are very short of money, we, for example, cannot invite anybody, organise a musical show, then we organise just an open sports day, but it is still Maslenica" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). The interview data suggest that it is the Russian traditional culture that makes the local community of the host country interested in it and creates a favourable environment for intercultural dialogue.

3.3 Festivities of popular culture

Halloween, having originated in the Irish traditional culture, has strengthened in the Western culture as a phenomenon of mass popular culture, and it is also present in Finland. It is an indicator of the contradictions in the Russian immigrant community. First, the attitude towards Halloween marks a dividing line between the host country's society and the Russian community in Finland. According to the group leader, Halloween reveals "wide divergences in cultural codes when the Russian cultural code is fundamentally different from the Finnish [code]. Then some kind of difficulties arise, especially when family traditions clash" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021).

Second, Halloween brings to light the diversity of views among Russian immigrants. The group leader, who organises Halloween events, explained that "a couple of people don't celebrate [Halloween], in principle, due to various religious considerations. And, look, the children of my group, for example, don't attend this celebration, although we prepared for it together" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021). The Russian youth take individual decisions regarding their participation in Halloween activities, even if the celebration is organised by the group. However, the dismissive attitude of Orthodox believers towards Halloween has not affected the relations between Russian immigrant groups. "A large share of the [Russian] diaspora attends church, they organise services in Russian here, and children also attend them. Look, they [children] will not come to celebrate Halloween, but they will participate in other events. [..] We are closely linked together, for example, we organise camps in their [Orthodox believers] base" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021).

The leader of another group has observed that "our young people actively engaged in Halloween celebration at one time. But they celebrated for two or three years and then ceased to do so" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). She could not explain why Russian youth living in Finland have lost interest in Halloween, but she saw it in a positive light: "We are glad. Such a festivity... it is not our festivity" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). According to the interview data, this festivity is not very popular in Finland; therefore, the younger generation of Russian immigrants does not actively engage in its celebration: "At Halloween [..] I never dressed up. That is, I arrived [at school] as usual. Somebody had dressed up awfully. But since half of the pupils didn't dress up, I somehow didn't notice this festivity, it somehow hasn't been successful. But there were attempts [to celebrate]" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

The New Year is at the heart of the Russian festivity culture; therefore, young people were particularly emotional when talking about this festivity. "I love the New Year, but I always feel that the New Year could be made more festive [*prazdnichnym*]. I think that my friends or their families usually don't consider it a very important festivity, but I have fun organising a big New Year celebration" (Lermontov, female, 23 years old, student, November 19, 2021). The statement that "both the Finnish and Russian" New Years are celebrated (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021) demonstrated the festivity celebration habits specific to Russian culture: "We are trying to celebrate a Russian-style New Year as far as it's possible" (Lermontov, female, 23 years old, student, November 19, 2021). Interviewees have noticed a significant difference in how this festivity is celebrated in Finnish and Russian cultures. "The Russian New Year – it's a great, more magnificent festivity [*bolshe prazdnichniy*]. It has more *fejerverk*, there is more of everything. But the Finnish [New Year] is much calmer, people just sit together for a while and then carry on doing their own things or do something together with their friends" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021).

Being aware of cultural differences, interviewees pointed to several elements which differentiate the New Year celebration typical of the Russian culture from the Finnish culture. First, the time when the New Year sets in was mentioned, as Finland and Russia are in different time zones. Therefore, the New Year is celebrated twice, that is, according to the Moscow time in the family circle and then according to the Finnish time outside the family. "Q: According to which time do you celebrate the New Year? A: First according to the Moscow time, I think, an hour earlier, but then according to the Finnish [time]. Q: What time do you fire petards on the street? A: Look, immediately when it's twelve o'clock according to the Finnish time, we raise our glasses and then we go out to the street, we watch fireworks, fire [petards]" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

Second, watching Russian TV programmes was mentioned as an element of the New Year celebration typical of Russian culture. It should be added that Russian young people living in Finland gradually distance themselves from watching these programmes. "Parents just have a tradition of listening to the speech made by [Russia's] president, always on the New Year eve" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). The attitude towards watching Russian TV marked a hidden conflict of generational values. "Q: Do you watch Russian TV on the New Year eve? A: Last year my mum switched it on, but then it was just on all the time [*krutilsa*], and we did something else... I wanted to listen to music or something like that. My mum decides, more or less, she says, look, let's switch on, watch them welcome the New Year in Moscow" (Lermontov, female, 23 years old, student, November 19, 2021).

Third, contrary to the political aspect of welcoming the New Year in which young people have little interest, the consumption of "cult" films produced by the Russian film industry at the turn of the year is willingly adopted: "I and my mum watched the "Irony of Fate"" (Lermontov, female, 23 years old, student, November 19, 2021).

Fourth, in cases where Christmas is not celebrated on December 25, the aspect of family spirit becomes more evident during the New Year celebration: "Q: Do you have guests on the New Year eve? A. No, it has always been just family celebration" (Alisa, female, 19 years old, student, December 1, 2021). Interviewees are pleased to welcome the New Year in the family circle: "I love very much to celebrate the New Year together with my family, at least partially, but the family has to be together. Of course, often that is simply not possible, as everybody has his/her own family and

it is impossible to bring everyone together. But we willingly celebrate the New Year together with those who can come" (Alisa, female, 19 years old, student, December 1, 2021). However, the family is not the only environment for welcoming the New Year, as young people admit that they "can entertain or do something else together with friends on the New Year eve... For example, go somewhere" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021). However, the family environment is exactly what young people long for; therefore, their memories were nostalgic: "Some time ago we celebrated the New Year together with granddad and granny in Petersburg. Then somebody visited us, but didn't stay long – just wished a happy New Year and left to go about his/her own business. Frankly, I miss those times when all our family was together: granny, granddad and guests who arrived and left. All this had a special atmosphere" (Alisa, female, 19 years old, student, December 1, 2021).

Fifth, welcoming the New Year according to the "old style" is an element differentiating the Russian festivity culture. Although people in Russia and the Russian diaspora often celebrate the New Year according to the Julian calendar as well, the interview data suggest that this habit is disappearing gradually in Russian families living in Finland. "Q: Have you heard about the "old New Year"? A: Well, I've heard, but we never celebrate it. When the "old New Year" is over, we remove decorations, the Christmas tree. It is another festivity when you can have a drink, celebrate again. It is a festivity for Russians, but we in Finland somehow never celebrate it" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

3.4 Historical remembrance days

May 9 stands out among the other remembrance days of Russia's history with its political and ideological character. The celebration of the end of World War II or the Victory Day on May 9 was introduced in 1965. The position adopted by the leaders of two groups is differing with regard to the continuation of this tradition in the Russian diaspora in Finland. The leader of one group underlined in particular that 9 May is "celebrated" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). By contrast, the leader of the other group was opposed to a targeted use of the Victory Day in Russia's ideology. She explained that the celebration of May 9 in Finland "is directly linked to the fact that Russians living here watch Russian TV and that the volume of propaganda crosses borders [*zashkalivayet*]. And parents, naturally, pass on their attitudes to their children" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021). As a result of the politisation of history in Russia, the celebration of May 9 has turned into a secular religion [28]. Being aware of the problem, the leader of the second group explained that she treats the Victory Day "with dignity and respect [*s pochteniyem, s trepetom*]" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021). However, the "exaggeration when children are dressed in uniforms of soldiers and required to do things adults do, which they [children] actually don't understand" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021) is not acceptable to her. Given that the objections to the celebration of the Victory Day may give rise to emotionally charged discussions in the community of Russians living in Finland, the group leader avoids expressing her position actively: "We sort of sidestep this topic. [..] We, rather, do it not because we have doubts, but we just don't want any tensions, we don't want any stress" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021).

The way that the supporters of the leader of the first group celebrate May 9 reveals a desire to find a balance between the use of the Victory Day for the purposes of

propaganda and paying tribute to those who lost their lives in World War II: "There is a place 80 kilometres from here where Soviet soldiers, who died in captivity, are supposedly buried. [..] This is our common place where we get together on 9 May. We clean it up, care for it, lay flowers, light candles, since memory is memory, whatever it is. This is a place where to come and think about the world free of it [war], about friendship among the neighbouring countries living side by side. They must make friends, since a war is the most terrible thing that can happen. [..] Buses full of people hit the road, it's just a place of remembrance" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). Although efforts are made to involve masses of people in the celebration of May 9 ("buses full of people hit the road"), the response is not overwhelming, as people have an opportunity to watch live coverage of the Victory Day celebration in Moscow on Russian TV: "When we are at home, we watch the parade on the Red Square, sometimes I make a dish of Russian cuisine together with my mum. We listen to Putin's speech" (Anna, female, 20 years old, student, November 17, 2021). There is no intergenerational conflict in this particular case; that is, young people do not reject the Victory Day celebrated by the older generation and do not consider that the celebration should be abandoned. However, there are indications that Russian young people living in Finland distance themselves from this event. One of the interviewees said: "9 May is sort of festivity, it is celebrated in Russia, it means nothing to me" (Lola, female, 21 years old, student, December 14, 2021). Festivity culture is one of the factors determining self-identification of the Russian youth living in Finland. "According to festivities, I consider myself to be more Finnish, and I, probably, don't have the feelings Russians have with regard to 9 May" (Bil, male, 34 years old, ITC specialist, December 12, 2021).

Although interviews were conducted before or after the celebration of Finland's Independence Day on December 6, both group leaders and young people mentioned it only when answering the questions directly asked by the researcher. Interviewees are of the opinion that historical remembrance days, including the Independence Day, are marked in Finland without the magnitude characteristic of other cultures. Young people compare the celebration of this holiday in Finland with practices in other countries where crowds of people are attracted. "The magnitude of this celebration cannot be compared to that of the Independence Day celebration in Russia or the USA. In Finland, the magnitude is smaller, much smaller" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). Given that Finnish festivity culture is neither politicised nor oriented towards the mobilisation of the masses, interviewees have not witnessed an active Independence Day celebration at educational institutions: "The only time when it [the Independence Day] was celebrated, it was when Finland celebrated its centenary. Then it was marked at school" (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021).

Flags in the streets and a holiday from school and work were mentioned as attributes of Finland's Independence Day (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021). The interviewee said that "something like a parade is organised in Helsinki, the capital" (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021). When asked why it is not a big celebration for the Finns, an interviewee offered his reflections: "It is a riddle for me, because Finns are nevertheless rather patriotic, but why are they so calm during the celebration? I don't know, maybe there is something in Finnish culture that makes Finns celebrate in a more down-to-earth format. The New Year – it is a major festivity for everyone, but other festivities are not. All people celebrate their festivities very calmly. This is probably related to their culture, mentality" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021).

The celebration of Finland's Independence Day is unattractive to Russian immigrants; therefore, it appears that their participation is low. When asked: "Did you attend the events organised on the occasion of Finland's Independence Day in this city or in Helsinki?", interviewees provided a short answer: "No!" The following obstacles to participation were mentioned: the distance from celebration venues: "I live far away from the [city] centre, Helsinki is very far away from here" (Oleg, male, 46 years old, group leader, December 10, 2021); emotional estrangement: "I feel that the Victory Day on 9 May is my festivity" (Anna, female, 20 years old, student, November 17, 2021); the lack of information about events: "Some events are organised by the city administration" (Oleg, male, 46 years old, group leader, December 10, 2021); and an opportunity to watch the celebration of Finland's Independence Day remotely: "We watch [events] on television, we see the reception by the president" (Oleg, male, 46 years old, group leader, October 10, 2021). Russian immigrants have adopted the widespread practice of Finnish society to closely follow the reception by the president on TV and assess the attire and behaviour of participants in the event [29].

Russian young people in Finland do not actively engage in the celebration of Finland's Independence Day on an individual basis, but events are nevertheless organised in Russian immigrant groups. "6 December is the Independence Day here. We'll definitely have a public… a kind of… an event, organised by ourselves, we also invite some guests. And Finns willingly come to us, as our celebration is a little livelier, different" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). On the one hand, the willingness of Russians living in Finland to celebrate festivities of historical and political nature together with the host country's society is emphasised, but on the other hand, the desire to mark them "differently" is apparent. The interviewee expressed her perplexity as to the best way of celebrating this holiday. Finland's Independence Day is also celebrated in the religious group. The group leader said, "[..] it is a very great holiday for Orthodox believers – the Independence Day. Why? Because it's the day of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker" (Oleg, male, 46 years old, group leader, October 10, 2021). The ethnographic observations made by the researcher confirm this statement. The event of December 6 brought together an unusually large number of participants, and the attributes of religious festival and the historical and political holiday melded during the event organised by the religious group.

4. Discussion

In this chapter, we have tried to find out what the habits, traditions and novelties in the celebration of festivities are telling us about the acculturation orientations of the Russian immigrant youth in Finland. An understanding of how immigrants interpret their behaviour and attitudes is like a window looking upon both their social positioning and self-identification. The qualitative interviews conducted during the fieldwork allow us to have a bottom-up understanding of how Russian immigrant youth "take root" in the host country, how the new understandings gained in the interaction with another culture are accepted and what is the function of heritage culture in the acculturation process.

The study conducted among Russian youth in Finland provides proof that acculturation should be conceptually understood as a process; respectively, it is necessary to "shift from a focus on developmental end-states (like "integration" and

"competence") towards a more process-oriented notion of acculturation that can account for situated, negotiated and often contested developmental trajectories [30]". Mutual adjustment of people coming from different cultural backgrounds is a complex and long process involving both cultural and psychological changes. Therefore, social psychology concepts can be helpful when studying acculturation.

The understanding of the dynamics of the acculturation process can be improved by the social representation theory [31–33]. It explains that an individual's behaviour and relationships with representatives of one or another culture are determined by social representations as collectively constructed systems of meanings. In other words, social representations are socially cognitive systems of values, ideas, beliefs and practices helping an individual in self-orientation as well as orientation in the world [34]. When interacting with a different culture, immigrants meet new social representations and formulate their attitude towards them. Moscovici has observed that, depending on the social setting, individuals may have a different and even absolutely opposite attitude towards one and the same thing or phenomenon. To denote that, Moscovici has introduced the term of *cognitive polyphasia* [35]. It helps us understand that, depending on specific cultural and social and political aspects, immigrants balance between assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation. To classify immigrants according to their acculturation strategies would be an overly simplified approach; yet the data obtained within the framework of our research enable to conclude that Russian immigrant youth balance mainly between assimilation and integration.

Interaction with different cultures yields a variety of identity positions ([36] p. 148), and an individual must find a solution for such polyphony. This results in identity hybridity [37]. The findings among Russian youth in Finland coincide with the conclusions of the research conducted elsewhere. The studies of immigrant youth confirm that biculturalism is characteristic of the young generation of immigrants [38–40]. Researchers have developed theoretical proof that migrants may identify themselves with two cultures at a time [4, 41]. This study conducted among Russian youth in Finland provides an empirical proof that immigrants participate in two cultures: they accept the host culture without giving up the heritage culture. In the case of Russian youth in Finland, we can talk about conformity with Berry's bidimensional acculturation model [8], which is characteristic of the acculturation of individuals in an environment of two different cultural contacts, where the acculturation strategy is determined by the dynamic relationships between an individual's willingness to preserve the ethnic heritage culture and participation in a non-native culture. The existence of biculturalism in the Finnish immigrant environment is determined by the fact that the country is still on its way to a multicultural society where a tridimensional cultural model exists.

Acculturation strategies are unstable, and they are not mutually exclusive [42]. Moreover, the latest research suggests that new acculturation strategies are developing all the time. Under the impact of globalisation, multiple cultural affiliations are emerging [43, 44], as technological innovations provide opportunities of interacting with other cultures in an indirect or intermittent way, thereby resulting in a new acculturation strategy – remote acculturation [45–47]. In the case of Russian young people in Finland, we cannot talk of a remote acculturation orientation, because their interests do not reach beyond the Russian and Finnish cultures. This has been primarily determined by the language proficiency. Fieldwork observations suggest that the Russian young people have a considerably poorer English language proficiency than their Finnish peers, because they spend a lot of free time with

Russian speaking peers and choose Russian language products on social networks, music platforms and media. Hence, the Americanisation characteristic of the Finnish youth culture [48] has not reached the Russian immigrant youth yet.

Host country society expects assimilation or at least integration of immigrants, while immigrants prefer integration [49, 50]. Moreover, the willingness of integration is higher with respect to the well-being indicators (life satisfaction, self-esteem and social adjustment) than with respect to culture [4]. This enables us to understand why the immigrants' orientation towards integration still does not yield the expected results. Those who are oriented towards integration find out that the values of the heritage culture and host country differ. In the case of festivities, the young Russian immigrants in Finland want to celebrate the festivities loudly, splendidly and pompously, and they are perplexed as to why the Finns do not have major celebrations even to mark Finland's National Independence Day on December 6. One culture singles out solidarity as a value, whereas the other praises individuality, which the leader of one group conceptualised using the term of "cultural code".

Interviews with the young Russians highlighted changes in acculturation orientations depending on the age group. Telling about their first experience of studies at a Finnish school, young people recall their willingness to be like the Finnish children, thus confirming their orientation towards assimilation. During the years of their adolescence, however, they felt as labelled "other" mainly because of their language proficiency, hence they changed their acculturation orientation. They started to stick deliberately to the heritage culture; respectively, their orientation changed from assimilation to integration. With regard to future research, this study conducted among the Russian youth in Finland suggests that it would be worthwhile to focus more actively on children acculturation problems, using the qualitative approach, which would enable a more in-depth understanding of the social challenges faced by children in the acculturation process. Developmental research shows that children see the importance of social categories (ethnicity, gender etc.) and tend to formulate their social identity [51, 52]. Acquiring a social identity is one of the components of children's development. Previous findings show that during early school-age children are exposed to interaction with various social identities and start understanding the relationships between them [53]. Through this experience, they acquire multiple social identities. When deciding, for example, who they want to be friends with, what music they want to listen to and what books they want to read, children start making choices between their heritage culture and the host culture. In order to discover the acculturation orientations of children, it is important to take an account of their experiences.

5. Conclusion

The acculturation concept developed by cultural anthropologists is used to explore changes occurring in different cultural groups when they interact with each other. Meanwhile, psychologists focus on changes experienced by an individual. The authors of this chapter have viewed acculturation from both the collective and individual perspectives. The sample of this study was drawn from young people – members of Russian-speaking groups, and ethnographic observations were made during group events. By contrast, interviews with some young people revealed deeply individual aspects of acculturation, leading to the conclusion that everybody follows his/her own acculturation path. A conclusion from this study is therefore that the acculturation

process is an individual search for balance between preservation of the heritage culture and integration into the host culture, and this process is affected by many factors.

This chapter discusses the acculturation orientations among the Russian youth in Finland by investigating celebration customs of young people. The experience gained by Russian youth from celebrating festivities shows the course of immigrant acculturation in Finland. Out of four acculturation strategies defined in the academic literature (assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation), orientations towards assimilation, integration and separation were identified among the interviewed youth during the fieldwork. The data obtained from the qualitative study do not provide evidence supporting the fact that marginalisation of the Russian youth might be observed in Finland. This would mean distancing from the host culture and alienation from the origin culture.

The study reveals several indicators of Russian youth acculturation orientation. As regarding assimilation, these indicators are: first, adoption of Finnish festive culture traditions in families through an informed choice, giving up Russian traditions; second, young people's efforts towards learning Finnish at the level of a native speaker and difficulties to answer questions beyond common topics in Russian; third, willingness of young people to celebrate festivities together with their Finnish peers. The indicators of Russian youth's orientation towards integration are: first, celebrating festivities within the family according to Russian traditions, complementing them with elements of Finnish festive culture; second, young people's willingness to acquire Russian alongside Finnish to talk freely about various topics in Russian; third, the practice of inviting Finnish friends, acquaintances and the local organisations to festivities of Russian traditional culture; fourth, young people's willingness to broaden the circle of their friends, which consists mainly of Russian-speaking youth, with the local Finnish peers.

The issue of cultural inclusiveness, exclusiveness and the essentialisation of cultural identities directly relates to the family which assists in providing the next generation with the ideal sociocultural inclusivity and helps prevent "culture wars" [54]. During the process of analysing the data, a hidden intergenerational conflict was identified. It is highlighted by the acculturation process: young people move away from the heritage culture, but parents try to stick to it. Although young people did not talk about conflicts with their parents during interviews, data suggest that views on the value of festive traditions vary between generations. Given that acculturation among youth occurs at a faster rate and more easily compared to their parents [55], there is a risk of stirring up an intergenerational conflict. Sharp intergenerational dissonance that might lead to intergenerational "culture lag" [56] was not identified in the study conducted in Finland. However, this conclusion should not be generalised. Data of one interview reveal a sharp intergenerational conflict in the family: the interviewee condemns his/her parents' decision to immigrate to Finland and rejects their encouragement to integrate into Finland, threatening to burn his/her Finnish passport. This individual case shows that sometimes, alongside the dominant assimilation and integration orientations, the orientation towards separation can be observed. It should be added that the data obtained from an interview with one of the group leaders, who particularly emphasised "our" in her narrative, show the orientation towards separation. By making a distinction between "we" and "they", separation is unavoidable.

The data presented in this chapter show that acculturation is not only the issue of accommodation of two cultures; it also involves other aspects that are frequently ignored in exploring acculturation. The interviewed Russian immigrant

youth in Finland pointed to their religious identity that determines the dates when they celebrate their festivities or their political position that determines their participation/nonparticipation in historical remembrance events. This confirms that acculturation is a complex process linked to various systems and fields of social relations, including religion and politics.

This study shows that, in the case of migration, intercultural dialogue does not take place outside an individual but between his/her various identities (a Finn, Russian, Orthodox believer, Lutheran, European, non-European etc.). The experiences of celebrating festivities revealed by young people illustrate that the dialogue between identities is profoundly personal, situational and strongly influenced by the festive heritage culture. Strictly speaking, these conclusions are valid only for the young people who participated in the study. However, there are reasons to believe that the acculturation orientations identified here might be found among other Russian immigrant young people as well.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author details

Anita Stasulane[1]* and Terhi-Anna Wilska[2]

1 Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, Daugavpils University, Daugavpils, Latvia

2 Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

*Address all correspondence to: anita.stasulane@du.lv

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