Does the context matter? Attitudes towards multiculturalism amongst Russian students in Estonia, Latvia and Russian Federation

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Abstract

Current paper uses CIVED and ICCS data to investigate how much differ attitudes of Russian 14-year old students towards multiculturalism in Latvia, Estonia and Russian Federation. In order to perform this task we construct four clusters – multicultural, modest nationalist, cosmopolitan and nationalist. Cluster analysis revealed that Russian adolescents in Estonia and Latvia tend to be closer to the each other than to their peers in the Russian Federation. More than 60% of Russian students in Baltic States belong to the cosmopolitan cluster that is about three times higher than in Russia. Their membership in both nationalist clusters remains lower than for entire national samples in each country. This finding suggests that special position of Russians in Estonian and Latvian education system and local societies have an effect on students' attitudes.

Keywords: native and non-native students, multiculturalism, cosmopolitism, patriotism attitudes towards immigrants

Introduction

Multiculturalism has risen profoundly into educational agenda of the European countries because recent political events and survey findings demonstrate how complicated is the integration of immigrants into nation states. Despite of high political priority the TALIS survey revealed that teachers and heads of schools rank multiculturalism as the least important criteria in evaluation of teachers' work (OECD 2009); in the ICCS only 10% of teachers considered equipping students with effective strategies to fight xenophobia and racism as an important aim of the civic and citizenship education (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, Losito 2010). Thus, implementation of multicultural education may be at risk if the students share the same vision.

Current paper aims to investigate attitudes of 14-year old students towards multiculturalism in three Eastern European societies - Estonia, Latvia and the Russian Federation. All three

countries share common political history as republics of the former USSR. When the Soviet Union collapsed, Estonia and Latvia inherited a large non-native population represented mainly by Russians. The share of titular nation that before the WW2 was around 80% has fallen by the end of 1980-s to 69 % in Estonia and to 59% in Latvia. Third Baltic country – Lithuania did not suffer from the massive Soviet immigration and Lithuanians compose still 84% of the population. This resulted in different citizenship and integration policy, which for us was a reason to exclude Lithuania from the current analysis.

After regaining the state independence in 1991 Latvia and Estonia restored their prewar national citizenship. In result, a third of population, mostly Russian speakers, has been demoted to the status of denizens. Smith et al. call the emerged regime "ethnic democracies" (1998:95), where the core nation discourse forms the cornerstone of identity politics. Language laws adopted in Estonia and Latvia in the end of 1980s/first half of 1990s declared core nation languages the official state languages demoting the Russian language from the previous *lingua franca* position. In parallel to this logic of restoration of ethnic democracies Estonia and Latvia adopted laws on cultural autonomy and declared that multicultural rights for the citizen-polity are guaranteed. However, national integration programs that aimed at accommodating non-native population to the local culture and society have been by far more dominant in shaping public discourses and policies. This official approach regarded integration as. The effect of different policy discourses on education was that schools with non-state language of education (mainly Russian) were preserved, but a universal national curriculum was made compulsory for all educational establishments. These circumstances put Russian students in Estonia, Latvia and Russian Federation into different position. In the former countries they are a minority that has to adjust to the educational vision of the dominant nation, in Russia Russian students belong to the titular nation. One can assume that Russian students in Latvia and Estonia show higher support towards multiculturalism due to the high relevance of the issue to their everyday life experience.

Although youth political attitudes and activism has been subject for several studies, there are very few of them, which include data of both European and non-European countries. Large cross-national surveys carried out by the IEA in 1999 (CIVED) and 2009 (ICCS) are amongst these few. This gives us almost unique opportunity to investigate how students with similar

ethnic background have adjusted to the societies, which after the collapse of the Soviet Union went along different paths.

Estonia, Latvia and Russia: Civic education policy in transition

After the breakdown of Soviet totalitarian regime all three countries started to reform their education policy and introduced democratic civic education. In Estonia and Russia civic education was established as a mandatory separate subject, Latvia integrated civics into block of social sciences (Council, 2004; Commission, 2005). Probably because of the separate subject status the Estonian national curriculum devotes to the civic education more hours than Latvia (Commission, 2005). Although all countries several times revised civic education policies, Latvia still differs from Estonia and Russian Federation. In addition to preferring integrated approach to the separate subject it also puts more stress on extra-curricular activities (Schulz et al, 2010).

In terms of substance civic education in these post-Soviet countries has both similarities and differences. Typically to this region it has been closely linked to teaching of constitutionalism, national history and patriotism (Froumin, 2004). Thus, in the end of 1990-s Estonia, Latvia and Russia promoted "patriotic model of civic education", which was the US dominant paradigm in 1960s (Williams 2003). Differently from Russia national curricula of Latvia and Estonia did specifically address issue of ethnic minorities. Yet, the approach was ethnocentric defining the priority direction of curricula as development of national culture, into which education should help "others" to accommodate. Also, both curricula avoid calling minorities by their names (Russian, Ukrainians, Jews, etc.) and use terms "non-natives", "non-Estonians/Latvians" and "other-language speakers" instead. Thus, even if the ideas of multiculturalism are formally declared, they are understood in a very narrow way: that of nationality and national culture (Asser, Trasberg, Vassilchenko, 2004).

In turn of Millennium the curriculum approach becomes slightly more open and liberal, which at least partly can be explained by the impact of European organizations (Jurado, 2003). All three countries become members of the Council of Europe and OSCE; Estonia and Latvia joined also the EU. These organizations led national policy makers to reconsider significance

of human rights, ethnic tolerance and multiculturalism for the civic education that resulted with their inclusion into curriculum. Based on the national experts (Karpenko, 2009, Zimenkova, 2009) and the ICCS National Context Survey (Schulz et al, 2010) one can suggest that issues of national identities and intercultural tolerance are less pronounced in Russia Federation than in two Baltic States. Some researcher (Jurado, 2003; Kruusvall, Vetik, Berry, 2009) claim that better policy enforcement tools of the EU may explain this.

Previous research on citizenship education in multicultural settings

Literature on interethnic relations relevant to the current paper can be broadly grouped around two large areas. The first deals with adaptation of immigrants or ethnic minorities to the larger society; the second focuses on citizenship education for multicultural population. Citizenship education is a subject highly sensitive to the out-of school social environments and effects of formal teaching and learning are mediated by the group identities and perception of social position in society. Therefore we briefly review both strands of research.

Adaptation to the larger society

J.Berry has introduced the concept of intercultural strategies to highlight the idea, that ideology and policy of the dominant group has an effect on the strategies how minority groups make their lives in society (Berry, Phinney, Sam, Vedder, 2006). For example, strong connotations to the nation-state model in Latvia and Estonian may hinder smooth integration of Russian minorities into local societies and create different personal strategies for adaptation (Kruusvall, Vetik, Berry, 2009).

Remarkable share of Russians in Baltic States have opted to "competitive assimilation" strategy, which means that migrant nationality will ensure for their offspring education in titular nation language in order to secure them good opportunities for upward mobility at labor market. Such rational individuals will accept "the nationalizing state" and its rules, providing that they can later see economic and social benefits. (Smith et al, 1998, 111-112). Language and tradition of their ethnic group are not so highly valued. As growth in

attendance amongst Russian-speakers at Estonian and Latvian schools indicates that has been a popular perspective.

Tabel 1.

Enrolment in general schools by language of instruction.

	EST		LVA	
	1999	2009	1999	2009
Main language	71,7	80,6	64,9	73,5
Russian, other languages	28,3	19,4	35,1	26,4

Source: Statistics Estonia, Statistics Latvia

Yet, this rational option tells little if anything about attitudes of non-native population towards nationalism or multiculturalism. Majority of studies, conducted in Estonia in this field found that non-Estonians have less salient ethnic identity than Estonians (Vihalemm, Masso, 2002; Nimmerfeldt, 2008). They describe themselves more often than members of titular nation on the basis of linguistic similarities or citizenship status (Nimmerfeldt, 2009). This indicates on possibility that a cosmopolitan, extra-territorial identity will develop within Russian diaspora in Baltic States. Vihalemm and Kalmus (2009) find this option particularly attractive for the young generation, which is more open to the global consumer culture and world-wide media. Indeed, Russian adolescents in Estonia has stronger feeling of belonging to the Europe and to the world in comparison to Estonians; also, their intention to emigrate permanently to some another country has increased during 1990s (Toots, Idnurm, Ševeljova, 2006). Consequently, based on theoretical accounts and empirical findings one can expect that Russian students in Estonia and Latvia tend to support more cosmopolitan than national value orientations.

Approaches in citizenship education

Debate between nationalists, multiculturalists and cosmopolitans in the field of education has long history (Feinberg, McDonough, 2003). It is mediated by the larger society, which probably explains why it has been more common in US, partially in Western Europe but just emerging in the post communist world. One of the issues that have been debated is the role and importance of patriotism in citizenship education. Brighouse (2003), Williams (2003) and

Kymlicka (2001) question the appropriateness of teaching civic education in the framework of patriotism and national history. According to Kymlicka, by glorifying history citizenship education has often discouraged personal autonomy and promoted passive loyalty, not a critical attitude towards political authority or broad-mindedness towards cultural differences. This close link to the history has caused another strand of criticism. Several researchers (Kiwan 2007, Weller 2007, Starkey 2000, Ichilov, 2007) argue that established civic education is too heavily oriented towards nation states and national citizenship that does not match to today's socio-demographic realities. "The unifying effect of citizenship that was traditionally founded on a shared collective memory, cultural togetherness, and nationality could be missing in multicultural societies" (Ichilov, 2007).

When analyzing two alternative traditions of citizenship – republican and liberal, studies found that the former, which is common in Continental Europe, leaves less room for multiculturalism compared to the liberal tradition (Starkey 2000). Since post-Soviet countries follow the republican tradition, it is not surprising that patriotism and loyalty to the nation state form the core of citizenship education in this region (Froumin 2005, Karpenko 2009). This ethnocentric approach is arguable especially critical in ethnically divided societies where minority students can see the formal civic education as an attempt to suppress their cultural identity and to "domesticate" them (Farnen 2003, Ichilov 2007). Having a low trust towards formal civic education they may turn to alternative value sets, including those provided by multicultural or cosmopolitan citizenship. Taking the patterns of identity formation amongst Russian youth in Baltic States, the cosmopolitan alternative seems more feasible. This assumption is supported also by the findings of the CIVED. The study revealed that despite the uniform national curriculum Estonian and non-Estonian students differ in citizenship model preferences. Non-Estonians score higher at social movement than conventional citizenship scale and are oriented towards participation primarily in local community (Toots 2004). Both these features are accordant with the model of cosmopolitan citizenship (Weller2007).

In sum, research literature addressing issues of multiculturalism in formal civic education tends to be quite critical in evaluating current state of affairs. The underlying conclusion is that formal teaching lags behind of social changes occurred in larger society. Curricula are still made in accordance to the ideal of a nation-state democracy whereas in real life these

boundaries are getting blurred by multinational character of societies and increasing globalization.

Research questions and hypotheses

Literature review urged us to reformulate our initial research task. Instead of studying a dichotomy monocultural *versus* multicultural value orientations, we will focus on three models – monoculturalism (nationalism), multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism. To find out, whether and to what extent larger social context has an effect on respective attitudes of non-native students, we set following research questions:

1) To what extent attitudes towards multiculturalism in Estonia, Latvia and Russian Federation vary? Significant variance suggests that national curriculum and integration policies have an effect.

2) Do attitudes of Russian students in Estonian and Latvia differ from those in Russian Federation? If Russian students in two Baltic countries form a similar group that differs from students in Russian Federation one can argue that their position as non-natives matters here.

3) Which individual characteristics are typical for multicultural oriented and for nationalistic oriented students? The answer allows defining educational possibilities in enhancing tolerance and fighting xenophobia.

Method and data

The paper combines variable-oriented and case-oriented research detecting similarities, but also explaining diversity between cases. Case-oriented research is found to be especially powerful in studying complex phenomena (Hantrais 2009). Attitude towards multiculturalism amongst students who share a common ethnic identity but live in different politico-cultural context is certainly such a complex phenomenon.

Sample

Data of Estonia, Latvia and Russian Federation in CIVED and ICCS are used to carry out the analyses. CIVED surveyed 2129 students in Russian Federation, 2572 students in Latvia and 3434 students in Estonia (Torney-Purta et al. 2001). The ICCS database includes 2743 respondents in Estonia, 2761 in Latvia and 4295 in Russian Federation.

In order to define the non-native students we used explicit stratum information. The reasons to choose this variable were twofold. Firstly, school as a social environment plays an important role in building identities. Secondly, division between language of instruction and ethnic background of the student is almost identical. According to the ICCS data, a heavy majority of students in schools with Russian language of tuition speak Russian also at home (98,2% in Estonia, 93,3% in Latvia); in schools with titular language of instruction percentages of students with Estonian or Latvian as a home language is 95,6% and 89,5% respectively. The situation in Russian Federation is similar - 93% of surveyed students speak Russian at home. Within CIVED national samples there were 1177 students with Russian as language of instruction in Estonia (34,3% of the national sample) and 807 students in Latvia (31,4%). Within ICCS national samples there were 500 students with Russian language of instruction in Estonia (18,2% of the national sample) and 664 students in Latvia (24%).

Variables chosen for the analysis

To investigate patterns of students' attitudes on multiculturalism we used k-means cluster analysis by clustering units that have identical value factors. Analyses included the following 10 variables presented in both CIVED and ICCS student questionnaire:

1. Learning about the country's history as characteristics of a good citizen

2. All ethnic groups should have an equal chance to get a good education

3. All ethnic groups should have an equal chance to get good jobs

4. Members of all ethnic groups should be encouraged to run in elections for political office

5. Schools should teach students to respect members of all ethnic groups

6. Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue speaking their own language

7. Immigrant children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have

8. Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue their own customs and lifestyle

9. The <flag of country of test> is important to me

10. I have great respect for <country of test>

According to our assumption, agreement with statements on rights of ethnic minorities and immigrants will contribute to the multiculturalism, and agreement with statements on knowing one's country history and respecting the country and its flag will contribute to the patriotic attitudes (monoculturalism).

Cluster characteristics

After rerunning the analysis with different number of clusters we determined four-cluster model as at best satisfying our research purposes and having good statistical properties in terms of large distance between final cluster centers and high F values. Based on mean value of variables we labeled the clusters in the following way:

1- *Friendly patriots or multiculturalists* have the most positive attitudes towards equality of opportunities for ethnic groups and immigrants; at the same time they value highly national history, national flag and feel great respect for their country.

2- *Modest nationalists* have in general supportive attitudes towards minorities and immigrants. Yet, differently from the first cluster they "agree completely" in all three items related to the patriotism, whereas in other items they do not demonstrate as strong support. The general attitude towards minorities and immigrants can be labeled as "Let them be".

3- *Cosmopolitans* are quite close to the second cluster demonstrating supportive, but not enthusiastic attitudes in all ten variables. Differently from the modest nationalists' national history, flag and the country are not very important for them.

4- *Nationalists* form the most radical group with remarkable degree of hostility towards all mentioned rights and opportunities for minorities and immigrants except the right to equal education. Degree of radicalism has increased in 2009 compared to the 1999.

In general, the distance is largest (3,601) between the first and the fourth cluster; the former being open toward others and in parallel highly valuing patriotism, the latter being hostile towards others and valuing only patriotism. The fourth cluster is also the only one, which demonstrates remarkable change in degree of agreement in ten year period. Cases are quite evenly distributed across four clusters, although in 2009 the distribution becomes somewhat more contrasting.

Tabel 2. Distribution of cases among clusters in %, (N=9422 in CIVED 1999; N =5236 in ICCS2009)

Cluster	CIVED 1999	ICCS 2009
1.Multiculturalists	35,3	33,1
2.Modest nationalists	22,5	36,8
3.Cosmopolitans	23,8	21,3
4.Nationalists	18,4	8,8

Having defined these four clusters we proceed to the next steps in order to answer our research questions. Firstly we look at the distribution of clusters among national samples in three countries; secondly we extract from Estonian and Latvian national samples students of Russian schools and investigate their clustering within 1999-2009; and finally – by running regression we try to define, which individual characteristics tend to be typical for students in two opposite groups – in multicultural cluster and nationalistic cluster.

Results

The comparison of clusters among total national samples in 1999 and 2009 suggests that diversity among countries as well as within countries is increasing. In 1999 the largest number of students in all three countries belonged to the second cluster (modest nationalists), next in ranking was the fourth cluster (nationalists). All three – Estonia, Latvia and the Russian Federation, show similar distribution both in terms of cluster ranking and their proportional distribution.

In 2009 modestly nationalistic cluster is constantly the largest, but strongly nationalistic cluster has dropped to the bottom position in all three countries. However, this cannot be interpreted straightforwardly as decline of nationalism amongst adolescents. K-means clustering technique is at least partially responsible for this outcome. It keeps variables constant and objects shuffle from cluster to cluster. In 2009 the nationalist cluster has become more radical (intolerant) and therefore the algorithm removed students with modestly supportive towards minorities' rights attitudes to another cluster. Thus, there are fewer students with nationalistic attitudes but they are more intolerant to minorities than a decade ago.

Another important trend is that with years countries become more different in terms of clusters' shares. Estonia demonstrates the most homogenous distribution and Latvia the most unequal. 51,1% of students in Latvia represent modestly nationalistic cluster, whereas "friendly patriots" (i.e. multiculturalists) are represented only by 11, 5%. Latvia has also highest share of fourth cluster (19,3%), which is characterized by disagreement with equal opportunities of minorities and immigrants to keep own customs and language. Thus, in contrary to our preliminary assumption, two Baltic States do not make up a uniform pattern, which would differ from that in Russian Federation. Let us remember, that besides of several communalities Latvian curriculum had also important differences in the way how civic education is approached.

Our second research question asked, whether attitudes of Russian students in Estonian and Latvia differ from those in Russian Federation? If Russian students in two Baltic countries form a similar group that differs from students in Russian Federation one can argue that their position as non-natives matters here.

Let us firstly look, if the cluster distribution amongst Russian students in Baltic States has changed within ten years. The analysis shows that only one cluster – multiculturalists, has remained intact; all three others have been heavily reshuffled. The importance of modestly nationalist cluster has decreased and share of cosmopolitan cluster increased. The radically nationalist cluster has also declined, especially in Estonia, where only 1% of Russian speaking students are allocated to this group. In substantial terms this shift means that about two thirds of Russian speaking adolescents in Estonia and Latvia put equal value to the patriotic feelings and rights of immigrants and minorities. Yet, neither patriotism nor equal rights seem to be very important for them.

Adding to the Russian students in Baltic States their peers in the Russian Federation one can see that adolescents in Latvia and Estonia tend to be closer to each other and different from students in Russia (Figure 1). They are significantly more cosmopolitan than Estonians and Latvians, or Russians in Russian Federation. Low share of multicultural cluster and both nationalist clusters strengthens the conclusion that patriotic feelings are not strong amongst non-native students in Baltic States.
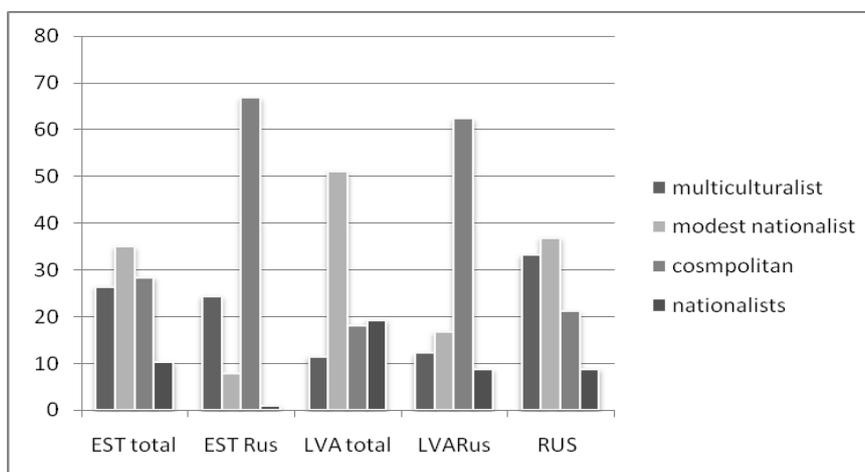

Figure 1.Distribution of native and non-native students within clusters, %. Data source: ICCS 2009

Our third research question aimed to find out what individual characteristics are typical for cluster members. We selected two most contrasting clusters – multiculturalists and nationalists and run regression analysis. Most correlations between cluster type and separate

variables were quite weak, especially in the nationalist cluster. Nevertheless, the overall pattern of relations was consistent.

Tabel 3. Standardized Beta coefficients for two clusters; only statistically significant values are shown.

	Multicultural cluster	Nationalist cluster
Expected education	-,03	
Gender of student (female)	,03	**-,09**
Support for political parties	,02	-,004
Parent`s highest occupational status	,02	-,02
Parent`s interest in pol. and soc. issues	-,04	
Home literacy		,03
Highest parental educational level		,05
National CIVIC knowledge score	,08	-,02
Discussion of pol. and soc. issues	,02	,03
Support for democratic values	**,25**	-,04
Conventional citizenship	**,15**	-,05
Interest in pol. and soc. issues	,05	**-,07**
Trust in civic institutions	,09	**-,09**
Participate in future illegal protest	-,06	,05
Openness in class discussion	,01	-,05
Student - teacher relations	,07	-,05
Self - concept in politics	,04	-,04
Adjusted R Square	**0,18**	**0,07**

Data source: ICCS 2009

Contrary to the expectations individual socio-cultural characteristics (parents' education and occupational status, home literacy resources, expected education) seem to be related neither to multiculturalism nor nationalism. Quite surprisingly even the explanatory power of the civic knowledge score appeared to be very low. What matters most, are support for democratic values and for conventional citizenship, trust in political institutions and school democracy. Members of the multicultural cluster have in all relevant scales mean values above the international average, whereas members of nationalist cluster score below the international average. The latter group is more likely to be engaged in illegal protest activities, although they are not interested in political and social issues.

Conclusion

Were investigated differences of attitudes of 14-year old Russian students towards nationalism, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism in Latvia, Estonia and Russian Federation using data from the CIVED 1999 and ICCS 2009. Generally speaking students' attitudes have become more salient than at the time of the first survey, where all three countries were just in the middle of transition to democracy. The largest membership is in the modest nationalist cluster, which is characterized by the generally supportive but not enthusiastic attitudes towards cultural rights of ethnic minorities and immigrants. Almost the same proportion of students is member of the multicultural cluster, which strongly supports both patriotic symbols and rights of minority groups. 8,8% of students belong to the nationalist cluster, which is characterized by support to the patriotic symbols and disagreement with the rights of minorities.

Russian adolescents in Estonia and Latvia tend to be closer to the each other than to their peers in the Russian Federation. More than 60% of Russian students in Baltic States belong to the cosmopolitan cluster that is about three times higher than in Russia. Their membership in both nationalist clusters remains lower than for entire national samples in each country. This finding suggests that special position of Russians in Estonian and Latvian education system and local societies have an effect on students' attitudes.

Our attempt to define individual characteristics of the members in multicultural and nationalistic cluster was not that successful. Most correlations were weak and the total exploratory power of the model low. We found that multiculturalism is linked to the support to the democratic values, conventional citizenship and institutional trust, whereas the opposite is true for nationalist cluster. Members of the latter are more likely boys, but in the former gender has no remarkable impact.

Overall conclusion is that mono- or multicultural attitudes are integral part of the broader set of value orientations. Thus, promotion of democratic values can advance also intercultural tolerance. Various aspects of social capital as trust towards institutions, interpersonal trust in school context and political self-efficacy contribute also to the multicultural attitudes and decrease likelihood of hostility towards "others".

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