

Migration imaginations as emotional resource for ethnic minorities: an Estonian case

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Abstract

This working paper examines migration imaginations as an emotional resource for ethnic minorities during young adulthood to explore their human capital independently from their ethnic background. The focus of the paper are negative emotions about the scope and prospects in the current residency in connection to the socialization between the ethnic groups as well as the longing for a 'better place' and imaginaries of an emotional resort through migration. A case study was conducted among final year pupils in Upper Secondary schools in Estonia (age 18-19). By investigating the pre-migration period of students from both the Russian minority and the Estonian majority group, I contribute to the research on migration aspirations of ethnic minorities. The role of minority group membership in migration studies is a prevalent topic (e.g in co-ethnic return migration, see Tsuda 2010, Nekby 2006), nevertheless the projected emotional prospects of migration imaginations for minority group members is rare in the literature. A novum of this research is the data collection during the pre-migration period, which gives an unfiltered view on the expectations and conceptions of prospective migrants. A questionnaire with open- and closed-ended questions (enabling mixed research design) was administered to 151 pupils from eight upper secondary schools throughout Estonia, with 73 members of the Russian minority. Besides demographic data, a great part of the questionnaire concerned the current feelings, longings, dreams and hopes of the participants. A clear tendency of the minority group members for international migration for educational purpose is shown. My analysis argues that this finding is linked to the migration aspirations as an emotional resource for minority group members during their process of developing an ethnic and social identity.

Keywords: Minorities, migration imaginations, Estonia, ethnic identity

Introduction

This is a working paper, and hence it represents research in progress and preliminary results. The paper was designed as deliverable according to the EU regulations within the European Joint Doctorate MOVES and is thus, openly accessible in its work in progress stage. This article is a draft of the final paper and will be progressively updated, thus the findings and interpretations in this version are tentative.

Migration is a widely studied topic and, in many ways, connected to minorities, yet the main research focus so far lies on migration as cause for becoming a minority rather than the other way round. The connection of the topics is distinct, as migration waves in the history led to minority or diasporic communities in about every country in the world (e.g. Medda-Windischer, 2017; Shuval, 2000). Yet, depending on the context, the condition of each group is particular and needs to be treated in a distinct way. Oppression and expulsion were and are still part of this feature, yet, in recent years more focus was laid on the multifaced aspects of minority populations. Many studies started concerning on the identity of minority group members (e.g. Phinney, 1989; Easthope, 2009), as well as the political, societal and legal aspects in the different contexts and how to improve the situation for the minority groups.

This research focuses on migration aspirations and its emotional drivers among minority group members in the phase of adolescence. Ethnicization and polarisation lead often to a hierarchisation in the society, connected with ascribed attitudes for members of certain groups (Sachdev and Bourhis 1991). Thus, categorisation and identification are relational and strongly connected to the society and given context (Cuddy 2008). Therefore, a change of context can provide wider and more open opportunities for an individual to identify and explore the own identity or categorisation. Diaspora scholars mention the myth of return and the utopia of a homeland and a strategy of resilience for diasporas to overcome the daily challenges (Singh 2001). This idea of the imagination of a place and the imagination of a (back)migration did not get much attention in the migration literature so far and only recently a few articles were published concerning this topic (see Bolognani 2016; Salazar 2020; Viteri 2015). To contribute to this gap in the literature the research question addressed in this article is the following:

Which emotional backdrop can be found among minority adolescence in the pre-migration period and how does it influence the imagination of migration, the daily life and identity development?

In order to answer this research question a case study was conducted in Estonia in 2020. Students in their last year of school were polled according to their plans for the following year concerning higher

education and migration. Both ethnic groups, Estonians and Russophones were taken into account in order to see differences in the pattern of both groups.

Background: The Estonian case

Estonia is the northernmost country of the Baltic states in the north-east of Europe. With a population of 1,330,068 (Statistics Estonia 2021), it is one of the smaller countries in Europe. The territory of today's Estonia was occupied by various powers throughout the history. A short period of independence occurred from 1920 to 1940, before the USSR incorporated Estonia again. In 1991 Estonia regained independence and it became a sovereign state (Rannut 2008; McGarry 1998). Since 2005 Estonia is part of the EU.

Estonia hosts a great number of Russian speakers; 322 700 people name Russian as their ethnic Nationality (Statistics Estonia 2021). This has several causes, one main reason is the settlement policy of the USSR in the 20th century, when around 210 000 immigrants from other parts of the USSR were forcibly moved to the territory of Estonia (O'Connor, 2003). Yet also the geographical closeness to Russia and thus the natural movement of people is a factor.

Since Estonia regained independence, Estonian is the only official language and many Russian nationals lost their nationality and became 'Aliens', thus people with a grey passport who are stateless. According to Statistics Estonia on the 1st of January 2020, 1 128 559 inhabitants of Estonia held the Estonian citizenship, 83 989 retain the Russian citizenship, 71 361 were stateless, so-called Aliens (Statistics Estonia 2021). The Alien status excludes its holders from minority rights and political participation (Zabielska in Benedikter 2008).

As the Russian minority in Estonia is not officially recognized as a minority group, there are no policies targeting their needs except the general minority group policies. E.g., that schools can teach 40% of the subjects in a foreign language, private schools are free to teach in any language (Poleshckuk 2016; Shoraka 2010). In Estonia, the Slavic community is mainly concentrated in Tallinn and in the north-eastern parts of the country, especially in the region of Ida-Virumaa, close to the Russian border. Notably in the north-eastern part, ethnic Estonians are often the minority group and Russophones the majority group (Aasland and Fløtten, 2001). In Ida-Virumaa 72,39% of the population is ethnic Russian, another significant amount of the inhabitants are Ukrainian and Belorussian, Estonians make up only 19,32 % of the population (Willis 2019). In such areas Russian is the predominant language, yet all official signs, documents etc. are in Estonian.

The 'Russian question' in the Baltics is a widely discussed topic and many scholars highlight different aspects of it. The real or perceived discrimination of Russophones (Aasland and Fløtten, 2001;

Lindemann 2009), the question of a change in national identity of the ethnic groups (Polese et al., 2020; Kolstø, 1996), the language usage (Kulu and Tammaru 2004) to name just a few.

The switch from a majority group to a minority group in 1991 was a big change for the Russian community in Estonia, especially as the public discourse and the policy emphasised the new majority position of the Estonians (Lindemann 2009). There were and still are two integration processes happening at the same time in Estonia, first it is the integration of the Russian speakers into the Estonian society and second the joint integration into an English-speaking Europe. Thus, both ethnic groups are adapting cultural practices and finding a new place in the wider society (Laitin 2003).

Belonging, social identity and group bias

The minority status of an individual influences most parts of life, especially the question of identity and belonging as the individual's identity is not restricted to the self, but rather encompasses group identities as well (Verkuyten, 2006). A common attempt is that minorities consist of both, objective as well as subjective characteristics, which on the one hand are religious, ethnic, linguistic, etc., on the other hand, the feeling of belonging of the members (Jackson-Preece, 2014; United Nations, 2010). The group is part of the individual's identity (Abrams et al. in Wheelan 2005-06). According to Bourdieu (1991) identity is fundamentally being perceived by others and being recognized. Human beings define themselves in accordance with one or several categories (Weldon 2006) as gender, race, ethnicity, which forms the individual's self-definition (Deaux 1993; Simon et al. 1997). Thus, the knowledge of being an ethnic minority is omnipresent in the cultural identity as it refers to the beliefs, behaviours and attitudes of a given cultural group as well as the feeling of belonging to this group (Jensen, 2003; Schwartz, 2006). Members of ethnic minorities show a greater need to explore their ethnic identity than their peers from majority groups (Phinney and Alipuria, 1990).

The social identity of an individual defines how they identify themselves in terms of group membership (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Social groups give their members an identification through comparison with in-group and out-group subjects, the social identity accrues from the characteristics an individual deprives of the social categories he sees himself a member of. Individuals strive for a positive social identity, thus a positively perceived in-group in comparison to some significant out-groups. Yet, minority group members feel less positive about their group membership, as it is usually connected to a low status (Sachdev and Bourhis 1991).

The comparison of in- and outgroup members is also connected to stereotypes ascribed to the outgroup or meta-stereotypes assumably described from the outgroup. Gordijn et al. (2008) found that prejudice, cultural stereotypes and meta-stereotype influence the feelings about an interaction with the other social group.-Prejudice is mostly depending on the group as well as on the context

(Cuddy 2008). Groups have ambivalent stereotypes, partly a positive evaluation about a certain factor, and a negative evaluation on the other (Cuddy 2008). The discrimination of Russophones in Estonia in connection to stereotypes is a prevalent topic and many researches were focussing on it (see Poleshchuk 2016 etc.). Furthermore, there is a widespread perception of lack of respect from the respectively other ethnic group in Estonia (Korts 2009). This can be seen in connection to meta-stereotypes too. The term meta-stereotype is used to refer to a person's beliefs regarding the stereotype that out-group members hold about his or her own group, and on trend those meta-stereotypes are mostly negative. If people believe holds preconceptions about them which do not go along with their self-concepts or which are negative, this influences the interaction with that person (Vorauer et al. 1998). Another aspect is the tendency of lower status group members (minority group members) to experience self-directed negative affects after interacting with a high-status group member, connected to prejudice (Vorauer and Kumhyr 2001), which again is connected to the meta-stereotypes.

Therefore, negative stereotypes or meta-stereotypes can lead to intergroup threat. The intergroup threat theory (Stephan 2016) distinguishes between realistic and symbolic threats; thus, a group perceives another group in the position to harm them. Those threats, realistic or symbolic, have an effect on intergroup relations as the response to a perceived threat is likely to be negative. An important factor of this theory is, that it concerns the perceived threat, regardless of it being an actual threat or not. Especially in the time of identity formation, thus in adolescence, these factors are crucial as the attribution of meanings and importance to the place of origin is a significant factor in migration decisions (Barwick, 2017). Young adults belonging to a minority feel like they do not belong to their country of residence, because they don't fulfil the expected features of a person from that country and because they perceive a threat from the majority group and experience stereotypes and meta-stereotypes. Especially adolescence who are members of a minority group face the challenge to accept the negative perception of the major group towards them or to reject it in a search for the own identity (Phinney 1989). As those emotions are not only connected to the group but also to the place and surrounding, mobility might play a role in the seek for an independent identity from minority adolescents. People seek for feedback, which confirms self-definitions and verifies the self-categorization (Lemay and Ashmore 2004, see also Deaux 1996; Ellemers et al. 2002).

Imaginariness and resilience

Most research on migration is limited on the post migration period, rather than collecting data in the pre-migration period while the imaginations and dreams are still not influenced by the actual experience. Thus, the imagination of the migration in most studies is reconstructed and therefore it

might be influenced by the occurred events (Salazar 2020). Nevertheless, even though the motivations for mobility are multifaced, the ability to imagine other places and lives is the starting point for any move (Salazar 2011). 'Cultural imaginaries', thus the imagination of feeling better in another country or surrounding, is a migration driver (Viteri 2015), and might be a factor for minority group members to choose mobility plans as an emotional resource. The longing for a better place, a place where to feel at home is, mainly in co-ethnic return literature, seen as an indicator for indisposition in the current country of residence (Bolognani 2016) and therefore the imagination of a migration a projection of the own dreams. The "myth of return" is a central part of co-ethnic return literature and the concept of a constructed utopia as a way of resisting the lived sociocultural realities is discussed among diaspora scholars (see Singh 2001).

Therefore, this research aims to first identify if there is a difference in the migration aspirations and plans of members of minority and majority groups in adolescence and in connection if the belonging to an ethnic minority is a driver for adolescent's migration aspirations.

And second it wants to investigate the emotional drivers for a decision for mobility or immobility for higher education and if there is a connection to the belonging to a minority group and eventually the identification with more than one culture. Furthermore, if there is a connection of the social identity and the stereotypes attributed to it, with a potential move.

In order to investigate those question, a questionnaire was distributed among last year students in Estonian Upper Secondary schools.

Methods

The data was gathered with a mixed research strategy. The quantitative part of the data gathering consists of 34 closed ended questions, within a questionnaire which included nominal and ordinal questions. The questions were single choice and multiple-choice questions, as well as ordinal questions measured on a Likert scale. Thus, the qualitative component of the study employed 10 open ended questions in the same questionnaire as the quantitative questions.

The settings of the study consisted of eight Upper Secondary Schools in Estonia. The participants of the study were students from the graduating classes. Due to the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic the Estonian schools were closed, and the tuition was rearranged to online home schooling. The data collection started on April 14th 2020 and the survey was closed on May 18th 2020. The survey was distributed through a gate keeper in Tallinn, who contacted the headmasters of eight Upper Secondary Schools. Namely those schools were the Kiviõli Gymnasium, the Jõhvi Gymnasium, the Narva Eesti Gümnaasium, the Tallinn Tõnismäe Science Gymnasium, the Tallinn Nõmme Gymnasium, the Tallinn French Lycee, Tallinn Linnamäe Russian Lycee and the Narva Language Lycee. The survey

was generated in Google Forms and made available in Russian and Estonian. A total of 73 Russian speakers and 78 Estonian speakers answered the questionnaire. A total of 155 answers were collected from which 151 could be used for analysis.

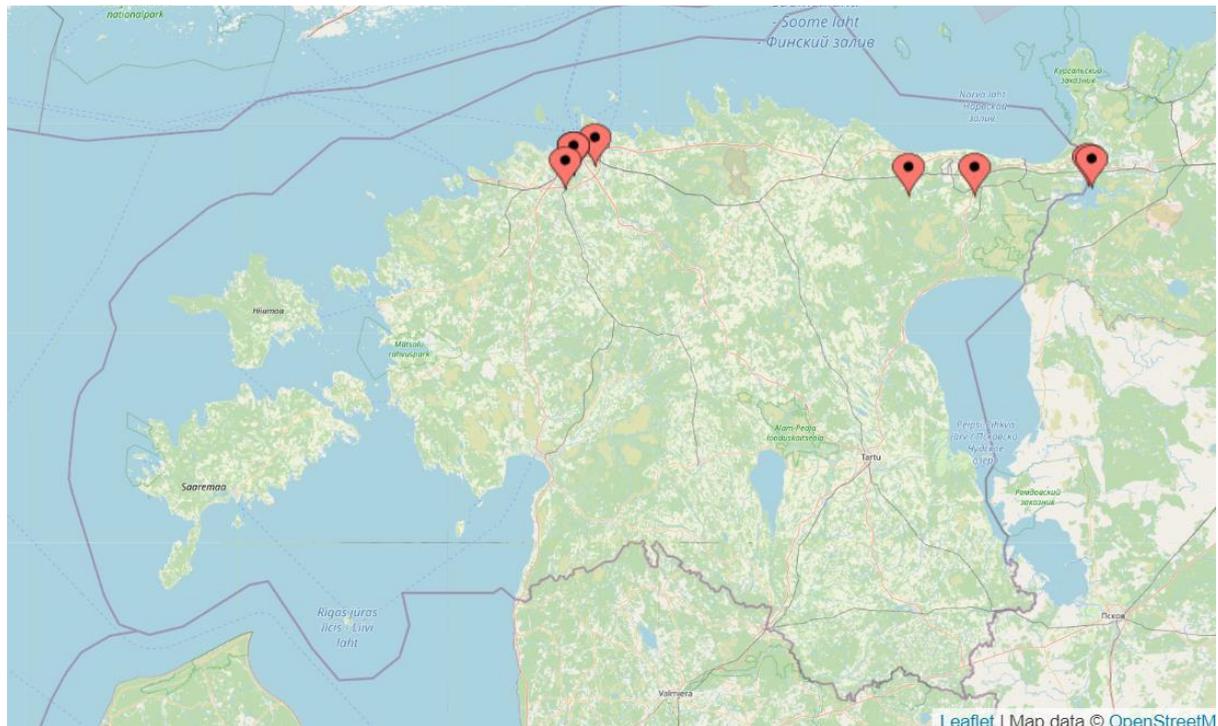


Figure 1 - Location of participating schools

Preliminary data analysis and results

The quantitative part of the data analysis was carried out in IBM SPSS. The data was clustered into two groups, Estonian and Russian speakers, for simplifying the analysis and achieving more distinct results, even though distinction of solely two groups will never fit all individual cases.

The quantitative data shows, that there is a significant difference in the aspirations to move in the members of the minority and the majority group. As seen in the table below a remarkable higher number of Russian speakers decide to move internationally, more than double as of the Estonian speakers. However, a much greater number of Estonian speakers decide to stay in the current place of residency. The internal migration is equal in numbers in both clusters.

**Following the plans you just named, where do you think you will be one year from now?
Please choose one * Cluster Number of Case Crosstabulation**

| | | Cluster Number of Case | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|--------|--------|
| | | Russian Natives | Estonian Natives | Total | |
| Following the plans you just named, where do you think you will be one year from now? Please choose one | No move planned | Count | 12 | 23 | 35 |
| | | | 16.7% | 31.1% | 24.0% |
| | Internal Migration | Count | 44 | 44 | 88 |
| | | | | 61.1% | 59.5% |
| | International Migration | Count | 16 | 7 | 23 |
| | | | | 22.2% | 9.5% |
| Total | Count | 72 | 74 | 146 | |
| | | | 49.3% | 50.7% | 100.0% |
| | | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

While 40.5% of the minority group members somewhat agree or strongly agree to the fact, that they want to leave their current place of residence, only 20.5% of the majority group members do so. The statistical significance is .032, thus it can be seen as a valid result.

An important factor for minority group members to move internally is that they want to leave their current place of residency. Prospective international migrants however think that they will be happier in the place they move to, whereas that is not a factor for internal migration.

25,7% of the Russian natives agree or strongly agree that they do not feel like they belong to the place where they live now. This is a high percentage and a statistically significant difference to the Estonian speakers where only 16,7% do not feel like belonging. The central questions about the expectation to be happier in a new place and the lack of belonging are indicators for the hypothesis that minority group members utilize migration plans and imagination in order to improve their emotional situation.

Even more clear is the result about the wish to leave the current residence. With a statistical significance of .032 the results are clearly statistically significant.

Cluster Number of Case * How strongly do you agree or disagree on the following statements about your potential move? [I want to leave the place I live in now] Crosstabulation

| | | | 1 – strongly disagree | 2 – somewhat disagree | 3 – neither agree nor disagree | 4 – agree | 5 - strongly agree | I don't know |
|------------------------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------|
| Cluster Number of Case | Russian Natives | Count | 10 | 10 | 11 | 18 | 12 | 1 |
| | | | 13.5% | 13.5% | 14.9% | 24.3% | 16.2% | 1.4% |
| | Estonian Natives | Count | 14 | 7 | 16 | 13 | 3 | 0 |
| | | | 17.9% | 9.0% | 20.5% | 16.7% | 3.8% | 0.0% |
| Total | | Count | 24 | 17 | 27 | 31 | 15 | 1 |

The quantitative analysis offered first a validation of the hypothesis that minority group members tend to plan or aspire a move and second, it specified different indicators about the migration aspirations and imaginations of the new place. The minority group members want to leave their place of residency, furthermore the minority group members feel that they do not belong to the place they live now and imagine themselves as happier in another place. Additionally, to the quantitative data a small excerpt of the qualitative data will be presented in the following, in order to substantiate the preliminary results of the quantitative data.

The Russian speaking participants incline to answer the open-ended questions more willingly than the Estonian speakers. Especially when asking about further any additional comments not any Estonian speaker added a note. This might be interpreted in the sense that for the Russian speaking community the topic of languages and minority membership is more important than for the Estonian speakers, as it concerns their life to a greater extend. As shown by Phinney and Alipuria (1990) members of ethnic minorities show a greater need to explore their ethnic identity than their peers from majority groups.

Concerning the imagination of the move, the qualitative data gives a good insight in the dreams and imaginations of the participants.

“Maybe at a place where I’d be happier and the rights Russian speakers would be not infringed upon.”

The participant formulates this imagination of a happier place in his own words, which goes along with the quantitative data showing that this is one of the main reasons for minorities to migrate internationally.

Another participant, when imagining his future in a different country, states the following:

“[...] in other countries I will feel even more like a stranger.”

Both quotes show negative emotions about the current place of residence. The second participant describes a deep feeling of “being a stranger”, in the current place and in his imagination also potentially in the future place of residency. Thus, the aspiration for the minority group members is clearly the hope for a change in their current situation, connected to the group membership, and a strategy of imagining a better future in order to overcome the current challenges.

A strong indicator was found in the data concerning the open question about an imaginary choice to move to a “dream destination”. In the answers of this question, 71% of the minority group members chose to move abroad, while only 29% would stay in Estonia, which again shows the willingness and desire to migrate, or at least to imagine a migration. Minority group members hope for a better future and more acceptance after their migration. Among the majority group members 57,7% would move abroad, so still more than half but on the other hand 42,3% would choose Estonia over any other country. According to Findlay et al. (2005) student migration is driven by intentions rooted in the past but also imagined future benefits.

The identification with a single or multiple cultures was investigated with questions inspired by the Eurobarometer survey (Kantar Belgium 2019). The participants were asked how strongly they identify as Russian, Estonian, European or as a combination of them.

A definite tendency in the quantitative data was found for the Russian native speakers do not identify as solely Russian, they rather relate to a multiple-culture option.

The minority group members are more open to an identification as European, Russian and Estonian, or Russian and European. Whatsoever, the preferred self-identification of the Russian native speakers was the combination of European, Russian, and Estonian. This can be interpreted overall that the members of the minority group have a more diverse self-identification. The Estonian native speakers favoured the option of being Estonian only, the second frequent selected option was Estonian and European. This can be interpreted as a struggle of minority group members to define a distinct identity, which through a move and a change of surroundings can be supported.

This can be substantiated through the qualitative data and the self-definition of the minority group members. Majority group members prefer a distinct and single definition of their identity, which is represented in both types of data.

“I am from Estonia, but I am Russian”.

“I would say that I come from Estonia, but I myself am Russian”

Such quotes indicate an identification with the country and their ethnicity, yet a clear contrast of the two cultures.

“If the frame of reference is (the dominant culture in) the state of residence they might describe themselves as simply 'Russian'. However, if the context is (the dominant culture in) the external homeland they might tend to accentuate the traits which set them apart from the Russian core group (Kolstø, 1996: 614)”.

This statement of Kolstø shows how crucial the context is, wherefore the question above was formulated in the respective way. It brings out the threat of combining a geographic location with an ethnic belonging and as stated above is mostly solved through a contrast of the both through the minority group members.

Both types of data indicate the emotional backdrops of migration plans. The minority group members try to change their situation through a move and hope for a change, the general perception of their current situation is more negative than the one from the majority group members. Also, the identification of the two groups differs strongly, which will be connected with the existing literature in the following section.

Preliminary Discussion

The hypothesis of this study was that adolescents from minority groups are facing the challenge of developing their identity and self-define, while they are living in a context in which their ethnic identity is a crucial part of the daily life. Bias and segregation of different ethnic groups are a reality in many places with minorities, and especially during adolescents the need to explore the own identity is crucial.

The interpretation of the data shows a tendency of minority adolescents to choose international mobility over immobility, contrary to the majority adolescents which is consistent to the hypothesis. Both types of data show a difference in the aspiration of the ethnic groups for the move. According to Findlay et al. (2005) student migration is driven by intentions rooted in the past but also imagined future benefits. The minority group members try to change their situation through a move and hope for a change, the general perception of their current situation is more negative than the one from the majority group members. Curiosity and professional development are the main reason for the Estonians to move. This is in accordance with the data on the planned migration, as the minority group members are more likely to move than the majority group members.

This might have different reasons, yet from the data collected, it can be drawn, that different negative emotions are connected to the current place of residency of the participants. As the literature suggests, stereotypes and meta-stereotypes cause negative emotions towards the outgroup (Vorauer and Kumhry 2001) and to the own sense of belonging. As seen in the data, minority group members do not have a feeling of belonging to the place of residency. This in connection with the status as a minority group member might lead to defining a coping strategy to counterwork the negative emotions. Therefore, it can be said that the emotional backdrop for minority group members in the pre-migration period is clearly a feeling of not belonging to the current place and the imagination of being happier after the migration.

Bolognani (2016) is arguing towards the resilience of the `return fantasies`, thus changing the attention from the outcome of mobility to the thoughts and the effect of them on the current life. This can be adapted to the current case as well, even though the adolescents do not have `return fantasies`, but rather `arrival fantasies`, to a place where they fully belong, which offers an emotional way of mastering their daily challenges as minority, which among others is the lack of feeling of belonging in the majority society.

Imagined happiness in another place as driver for a migration decision was found in the quantitative and in the qualitative data. This expectation to being happier somewhere else can be seen as a `cultural imaginary` (Viteri 2015), thus imagining places and the wellbeing there which is a motivational factor for migration. In line with Czubinska (2017), the imagination has become a more observed topic in recent discourse about migration. Bolognani (2016) lays the focus on the wish and the fantasy itself, rather than on the actual move, as a part of the process of identity building, eventually helping to overcome traumas or as answer to the given socio-political context of the individual. Yet, this topic is still not sufficiently researched, as most scholars focus their research on the outcome of migration, the integration, the return etc. while neglecting the role of fantasies of migration and the physical life of migrants (Bolognani 2016). This topic needs further investigation, and this article is a first step in this direction.

As Tajfel and Turner (1979) suggest, individuals might try to change their social identity towards a more positively categorized group if they are not satisfied with their current category. The minority group status is connected to the place of residency, mobility might be seen as a good option to change the social identity. The data shows that minority group members imagine themselves to be happier in a new place, which might be strongly connected with a self-verification which they cannot obtain in their status as minority group members. As stereotypes and meta-stereotypes influence the self-perception strongly, minority group members might prefer to change their surroundings. Also, Deaux (1993) claims that the identity changes in accordance to the reference point, thus

Russian speaking Estonians abroad will not be primarily being identified as member of the Russian Minority in Estonia. Factors like attribution of meaning and the importance of the place of origin play into the decision whether or not to migrate, these are enhanced during identity formation in adolescence (Barwick, 2017).

Another factor for the mobility of the minority group members could be the multifaced identification, thus not with a single nation, culture or language, but rather with different aspects of different cultures. As the quantitative data shows, minority group members clearly prefer a broader definition of themselves, including several identities. In this case, the identification as European can favour the decision to migrate. This confirms the results of previous studies, according to the combination of an umbrella identity with the own ethnic identity (Curtis 2014). The feeling of being stereotyped causes an avoidance of out-group contact and if inevitable a hostile reaction towards the outgroup members (Vorauer et al. 1998). The data shows the struggle to find a distinct identity among the minority group members, which too, they imagine to being different after the migration. The majority expects to identify differently after the move than in the current situation.

An interpretation of the results can be that the migration decision of minority adolescents is connected to their social identity. The literature suggests that the minority group status and outgroup stereotypes lead to negative emotions in the minority group members, this was fully supported by the data collected. Furthermore, the data showed a tendency for “cultural imaginaries” connected to a migration decision, thus the imagination of a “better place” after a migration. The willingness for mobility can also be supported by a more diverse identification of the minority group members, thus the identification with several cultures and therefore more openness towards a new place and residence.

Using the collected data, the research question can be answered as follows:

Which emotional backdrop can be found among minority adolescence in the pre-migration period and how does it influence the imagination of migration and the identity development?

Minority group members face multiple negative emotions, concerning their ethnic identity, connected to a lack of feeling of belonging. This is one of the factors which influences the imagination of migration to being a change into a better world, a happier place. Minority group members do not have a distinct identity, they prefer to identify with multiple cultures, as they feel to belong everywhere a bit but nowhere exclusively. Migration is a good tool to explore those multifaced identities, and the change of context facilitates the development of an identity independently from the minority status and possible group bias.

Future research should be focussed on the migration imaginations and go deeper into the value of such imaginations, especially for vulnerable groups like minorities. Furthermore, the mobility of minority is still not sufficiently researched and especially the pre-migration period should be investigated more.

Preliminary Conclusion

The data shows that there is an emotional backdrop for ethnic minorities to deciding to migrate. First, the data shows a clear tendency of Russian native speaker to move internationally for their studies, which is justified by the imagination of being happier there and the lack of feeling of belonging currently. This is connected to negative outgroup emotions which root in stereotypes and meta-stereotypes. This research shows how negative stereotypes can influence migration decisions of adolescence and that belonging to a minority is a push factor for a migration decision. Furthermore, Russian native speakers identify themselves mainly as European, Russian and Estonian. This data shows the evidence that a stronger identification with more than one culture, encourages the participants to move abroad for their studies, to potentially develop and explore their distinct identity independently of their minority status.



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