New Identity of Russian Speaking Children in Estonian Society

Mare Leino, Marika Veisson, Viive-Riina Ruus, Ene-Silvia Sarv, Loone Ots and Anneli Veisson*, Tallinn University*

According to Estonian Statistical Office whether we take the number of grade repeaters, the number of graduates or the number of students graduating with a distinction as a basis for the analysis, the academic achievement incline has remained the same for several years – girls whose language of instruction is Russian come at the top, followed by girls who study in Estonian. Boys come last, and boys studying in Russian reveal much better results than boys whose language of instruction is Estonian (Heinlo 2001, 23). Current paper is going to show that native Estonians have problems as well and starting from school already; Russian speaking youth is doing even better (with hard work).

So the question is: who is the better citizen - a native but quite easy-going, or an (former) immigrant who is eager? In European social thought the concept of citizenship is constructed as universal, but it contains tensions between sameness and difference, us and others, centres and margins (Gordon et al 2000, 9). For us citizenship means belonging, which means safety. Here we will ask: is it (for better future) enough just to be a native Estonian, or should one work for ones success as much as many immigrants do.

New identity of Russian speaking children in Estonian society

Beginning in the 1950th almost half a million Russian-speaking immigrants was settled in Estonia (Lauristin and Heidmets 2002, 21). Before the year 1940, 92% of the Estonian population was native Estonians, but at the end of the 1980s the percentage of Estonians was only 62% (Kera 1998, 30). Comparing the number of new immigrants with the one million Estonians, this demographic change has obviously been one of the most drastic examples in the world. The post-war immigrants in Estonia represented Soviet-type collectivism, including obedience to the party elite, denial of market relations and paternalism, also collectivism in work-place relations. If the majority of Estonians welcomed the idea of ´retuning to the West´, for many Russians the new social and political order, established in the early 1990s, was shocking and strange, creating a high level of uncertainty for most of them. Due to the legal reforms of the early 1990s, which restored pre-war Estonian citizenship to the historical inhabitants of the country, the majority of the non-Estonians found themselves in the position of being aliens who had to apply for permits for residence and start naturalization procedures to legally remain in the country. This was not only a change in personal legal status but also a social and psychological drama for thousands of people (Lauristin and Heidmets 2002, 21). Non-Estonians consider their opportunities to be less favorable in comparison with Estonians and the competition with Estonians requires a greater effort (and competence) from them. The process cannot be equated to a direct discrimination of non-Estonians; nevertheless, high unemployment and low salaries do testify to their exclusion into such a market segment, where there is a need for less-qualified (cheap) labor. The unemployment rates in 2000 among 15-24 year-olds were: 19.7% of Estonians and 30.7% of

non-Estonians. (Tammeste 2001, 18).The demand for skilled workers is beneficial to non-Estonians, while at the same time the opening labor market is decreasing the former class-immobility, thus stimulating a growing interest towards good education. Consequently, it is only via education (quality) that we can change the existing segregation-based division of jobs and occupations and increase the competitiveness of non-Estonians. Expansion of the labor sub-market of professionals due to new jobs and the increase of the share of knowledge-ability in work are its facilitating factors. These factors presume state interference into the development of the economic environment, including an extension of study opportunities, a reform of vocational education and an active labor market policy (Pavelson and Luuk 2002, 116).

Identity of citizens – a problem or resource in society

According to Gordon, Holland and Lahelma a citizen is a member of a nation state and has particular duties and rights. Schooling is a national project and a practice of the state, preparing young people for adulthood. The context of this preparation involves negotiations between difference and diversity amongst young people, and the neutral sameness of citizens (Gordon et al 2000, 9). So childhood and education are important steps in ´making citizens` with strong (and hopefully positive) identity.

In Estonia about 1/3 inhabitants don't have Estonian citizenship (see note 1), and many of them, who have Estonian citizenship, are not native Estonians. During the Soviet period identity was a relatively hazardous term, since in the Estonian Encyclopaedia published in 1988 this concept was not defined. According to the British sociologist Stuart Hall (1999, 11) identities form exactly at such unsteady points, where unwritten stories concerning the person's subjectivity meet historical and cultural narratives. During the Soviet era Estonian real history was wholly silent, unwritten, a story passing around between Estonians themselves. At the same time we had a strong, but somehow a little secret identity. The Song Festivals, traditional clothes, Estonian language school and political anecdotes all supported the idea of a small but good and strong Estonian nation, who had unfortunately done badly in the historical twists. The national identity then was that of a victim as well as of patience – partly due to the restrained nature we have persevered, although the politics of conquest in Estonia has lasted for centuries. After 800 years of foreign governance by Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Russia, Estonia proclaimed its independence in 1918. The Soviet occupation of 1940 and the subsequent war disrupted the development of civil society for 50 years. During the post-war years the Soviets started their massive colonizing program, aimed at sustaining their political presence in the country. In August 1991, after a failed coup in the Kremlin, Estonia regained its independence. (Kikas 1999, 51)

Hardly ever citizens contemplate about their identity every day. Moreover, the concept of 'identity' has come into use as a term, which describes the relationship between the self (me) and the society only after the Second World War. Thus, identifying means placing oneself within a hierarchy of social order, where language holds a centrally important role in identity development. Antikainen (2000, 258) stresses that since modernism identity search has become a multi-level and a lifelong continuing process. 'The search' seems to be a relatively optimistic term, because the majority of citizens are not looking for their identities intentionally, but are rather hoping to gain a better life – whatever this may mean. Talking about non-Estonians, they do not cope (financially) as well as native Estonians do (see note 2): Estonians tend to fall more into higher income quintiles and non-Estonians into lower quintiles (Maanso 2005, 37). Consequently in context of financial borders between citizens in Estonia the ethnic nationality has still some tendency.

Western culture presumes building borders between people (Virtanen 1998, 85; Isin and Wood 1999, 16): the more things are perceived as similar the more distinctiveness is stressed. When the difference is relatively small (thus not threatening us), it might be left unnoticed; however, when the other is perceived as dangerously similar, there is a necessity to build as clear border as possible between 'them' and 'us'. This kind of phenomenon is present also in the relations between Estonians and Russians in Estonian society. As Talts (2004) expresses it, "Fortunately there is Russia, with whom none of us, the eastern-Europeans wants to resemble. Therefore ´negative´ identification works up to the present day better all over Eastern Europe. We have always known better what we don't want to be" (Talts 2004, 15). Estonian collective identity was strong during the Soviet times, because the black and white world is always easier to understand. Waris et al stress that whenever a nation starts to dominate in a person's self view, it can easily evolve into nationalism. This presumes connectedness to certain nationalist concepts, which means unconditionally accepting national symbols and slogans (Waris et al 1972, 87). In practice, identity develops on the basis of several parameters, which concern me, us, you and them. Categorization takes place according to who correspond to what criteria. Thus, on the basis of certain elements takes place confrontation, hierarchization, and distinction: decisive become gender, profession, education, nationality (Huotsonen 2000, 267). During the Soviet era neither gender, profession nor education were specific arguments, since everyone had a job and people with higher education had generally a much lower income compared to the wages of those who did physical work. Partly due to this reason nationality became a more important factor – thus it was possible to emphasize the borders between 'black and white'. No wonder, that the Estonian nation, that was forced to be silent, sang during the night song festivals of the awakening period (end of the 1980-ies), that "it is good and proud to be an Estonian". We were and are happy about our freedom, Estonian citizenship and independency. Being Estonian became a positive argument in itself – as if it guarantees a happy future for ever. Current article tries to point out the threats of such way of thinking: Estonian citizenship is not the final jackpot; it can be a good start in society only if you work hard. Based on empirical studies and official statistic of Estonia, we will show here that non-Estonians without illusions (at least contemporary youth or the new generation) put emphasis to their work (acquiring education) sometimes even more than the local Estonian majority.

Empirical data: The role of education in society.

The first political reaction of the newly recognized independent state was to react to the fact that Estonians were previously forced to study Russian and be able to speak the Russian language. There was a desire to change the language of instruction and turn all Russian-medium gymnasiums into Estonian-medium schools and make all local Russians speak Estonian. Our nation-centred political parties made a proposal in 1993 to make the Russian-medium gymnasiums to have their language of instruction to be changed by the year 2000. But in reality it proved to be a difficult task to implement (Kreitzberg 2002a, 35). The number of Russian schools diminished from 117 to 104 between 1994 and 2000. The number of bilingual schools, earlier widespread in small towns, has dropped by almost 50%. As a result, the number of pupils in Russian schools has decreased: at the beginning of the 1990s, 37% of school-age children studied in Russian comprehensive schools; in 2000 this figure was 27%. The share of children entering the first grade in Russian schools has diminished even more sharply: at the beginning of the 1990s, 41% of children (about 9000 children) started their education in Russian schools; in 2000 this number was two-thirds lower (3000 children) (Kalmus and Pavelson 2002, 227). Schools in Estonia face the reality of being situated in a post-Socialist multiethnic society (about statistical background see also the Note 3). Under

conditions of a decreased birth rate and growing competition between educational institutions, the leaders of Estonian schools are becoming more and more interested in the admission of Russian speaking children to Estonian schools. As a result, Estonian schools have the potential to grow into multicultural social environments of fields of socialization. But this is not the aim of this article. The significant educational problem discussed here is, that the Estonian-speaking youth is not as academically oriented as the Russian-speaking minority. According to current study the Russian youth is moving towards a new identity in Estonia: the earlier marginal group will be the leader on educational landscape.

Study No. 1.
In 2003, 2113 pupils from the 6th grade from all over Estonia (34% of them were Russian-speaking children) filled a questionnaire that focused on relations to school, learning interests and academic orientations. The results were unexpected (table 1) – the legend of high value of education among Estonians seems not to be actual any more:

- 55% of Estonians like studying, among non-Estonians this number was 75%.
- 64% of Estonians like school, among non-Estonians this number was 82%.
- 8% of Estonians use reference books every day, among non-Estonians this indicator was 22%.
- 26% of Estonians read comic books every day, among non-Estonians this number was 12%.
- 13% of Estonians read compulsory literature every day, among non-Estonians this number was 38%.

	BOYS		GIRLS	
	Estonian	Russian	Estonian	Russian
Likes being at school	54	76	74	88
Likes studying	45	70	65	79
Average	**50**	**73**	**70**	**84**

(The academic eagerness of Estonians in general is 60% and of non-Estonians 79%).

Table 1: The attitudes of Estonians and Russians to learning and school attendance (%)

Russian-speaking pupils have begun to learn extremely well, they have been highly motivated, because in order to cope with life in post-socialist society they have to take greater efforts than Estonians (Kreitzberg 2002a, 36). According to Estonian Statistical Office whether we take the number of grade repeaters, the number of graduates or the number of students graduating with a distinction as a basis for the analysis, the academic achievement incline has remained the same for several decades – girls whose language of instruction is Russian come at the top, followed by girls who study in Estonian. Boys come last, and boys studying in Russian reveal much better results than boys whose language of instruction is Estonian. There is clearly no reason to question the academic standards at Russian schools.

The results of the national examinations in 2000 revealed that among the top dozen of schools there were four Russian schools (Heinlo 2001, 23).

This questionnaire (in 2003`) also shows that family supports learning rather among non-Estonians: 4% of Estonian parents are every day interested in the unfinished book of the child, while among non-Estonians this number was 21%. There was a question: do you prefer to spend time rather with friends or with your family. It came out that 51% of Estonian and 33% of Russian children prefer friends to parents. And the quite short time at home (after the school & friends) Estonians spend mostly with the computer or with TV (table 2).

	BOYS		GIRLS	
	Estonian	Russian	Estonian	Russian
At home rather reads than watches TV	16	34	28	39
At home rather reads than is with computer	20	30	43	46
The average	**18**	**32**	**36**	**43**

Table 2: The priorities of children (%)

Teachers, working in both schools (Estonian and Russian language schools), consider the discipline of non-Estonians better. For Russian speaking youth the teacher is still an authority, and obviously in their home as well, because the attitudes of parents are usually carried to school. Margarita Kuusmaa in her M.A. dissertation (Kuusmaa 2004) compared the work-style of teachers in Estonian and Russian schools. She confirms the evidence that the academic eagerness of Russians is bigger than that of the Estonian youth. She marks that Russian speaking children have bigger respect towards the teacher: they never criticize teachers' work or principles of evaluation. In one Estonian/Russian mixed school all pupils from 7.-12. class got the task to describe one favourite teacher. Russian speaking children named only academic characteristics; they did not evaluate teachers look or other qualities of a human being. But Estonians expect much more from the teacher: they estimate for example their good looks, especially the style, contemporaneity, youthfulness, versatility, and even travelling experiences. Estonians like a teacher who ´takes the job freely´, but for Russians a good teacher should always keep the academic program in mind. Estonians expect that the teacher is rather like a friend than a teacher. Thus, it is easier to teach in a Russian school, mostly because of the respect and trust which Russian children feel against the teacher. And this is one reason for better studying results. High demands of Estonian students of the teacher have nothing to do with curriculum and the teacher might get confused. If it is difficult to control the situation in ordinary way, they start to misuse the power in class. For example Russian speaking children (differently from Estonians) never described situations called ´teachers spite´ or ´violence against the pupil´. But Estonians complain because of teachers who taunt, are unjust, tempt, lower. A closed circle will form: the prestige of the teacher decreases permanently, while new stress still appears in the class. The sufferer is mostly the one without the power (= the pupil) and one of the additional result might be the reduced self-esteem of the pupil (Kuusmaa 2004).

The reason of this phenomenon might spring from our Soviet background, which (suited more to Russians and) might have to our everyday life still some influence. Socialism was characterized by common obligatory values: society was hierarchical and this was not disputed openly. The division of power was vertical, and the most important people were the party leaders. Individualism was an abusive word and every citizen had to have several collectives: professional, party and family-connected (Leino 2002). The Soviet mentality was framed by ideas of communist 'equality in poverty', guarded by the state-centered bureaucratic order and total ideological control. Social mobility above the level of rank-and-file workers was, as a rule, directly related to official recognition of one's political virtues (Lauristin 1997, 38). Authoritarianism at school was also tolerated on the grounds that the teacher was always right because s/he represented the institution. At school, a uniform was to be worn and the teacher was not to be argued with. At breaks students walked in circles in the school corridors – one teacher was on guard in order to guarantee that all this went on correctly. In the school context, socialistic rules meant firstly, strict borders and prescriptions – traditions, routines, etiquette. Hierarchical relations were important (adult – child; teacher-pupil). People were selected by means of a black-white scheme (normal – problematic; good – bad); perceptions of gender were traditional. Moreover, socialism at school became evident through the importance of hard work: it was believed that real studying had to be done with great effort, only with difficulty – joy and pleasure were excluded. The central concept of a socialist school was that of the standard – the average was a strict norm. And very often still is. Society in Estonia has changed now in many ways, but not yet as regards the school norms. Students still address the teacher in the plural (You) as before and from the 10th form on, the teacher is also expected to talk to the students in the plural (even if they have worked together and spoken to each other in a familiar way for 9 years). The lesson starts and ends with the pupils standing up. When the teacher speaks to a student, the latter has to stand up in order to answer, and it is important to look the teacher in the eye. The child who wants to answer in the class, gives a sign for this by raising his/her hand. Students cannot go outside the school building during the break – someone keeps an eye on the outside door. The school uniform has not been required since the 90s, but it is beginning to come back in several schools. One of the reasons for this is the unequal possibilities of students to obtain fashionable clothes, but also the appearance of some girls, which is regarded as provocative. In some sense, the teacher in Estonia seems to have some more freedom now – there are parallel textbooks already, the teacher can choose the teaching methods, pace and so on. But still the teacher's entry on the right side of the class register is her account of the work done during the lesson. (Leino 2002) Society has changed, but school norms in Estonia have not, which causes tension. It is obvious, that some rules from soviet school do not disappear so fast, they are still there - at school and in class. It seems like Russian students can cope with them better, because Soviet time was their time.

It should be stressed here that Russians are active not only on basic education level but later also. Estonian researchers Kalmus and Pavelson emphasize the grown orientation of Russian youth to higher education, following the same trend evident among Estonians, although there is a time lag of five to six years. Russians prefer higher vocational schooling to the academic education that Estonians usually pursue. Thus, the enlargement of educational opportunities for Russians is tied to the development of vocational colleges. Education can transform the present occupational structure of Russians and lower their unemployment rate, which in the past has been determined by inadequate socialization and low post-educational attitude (including insufficient command of Estonian). Thus, education as an institution produces an effect on the behaviour of the labour market and influences the employment and occupational

status of Russians – one of the most important preconditions of socio economic integration (Kalmus and Pavelson 2002, 230). Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) sees citizenship as a multi-tier concept which can be applied to peoples membership in a variety of collectivities – local, ethnic, national and trans-national (Gordon et al 2000, 21). According to our empirical data non-Estonians are eager to collect different collectivities, even if it means quite hard work.

Study No. 2.

The next research was a questionnaire from the year 2004, when 3838 students from Estonian general education schools (7.th, 9.th and 12.th grade) participated in a survey which was part of the governmental research project ´School as developmental environment and students' coping" (the leader of this project is professor Marika Veisson from Tallinn University). As follows, results of the Estonian and Russian language schools are compared. The following supports what has already been said, namely non-Estonians academic eagerness is higher. It should be mentioned that both Estonians and Russians consider the most important values at school to be politeness, academic success and discipline, but Russian language schools emphasize them much more. This can also be called a socialist rudiment, since in the Soviet school good training was considered an important indicator of human quality. It can be assumed, that many teachers (especially those, who received their education during the Soviet time) value today still such obeying behaviour more than students' curious spirit and sophisticated way of thinking. This, however, cannot be disapproved much in a situation where classes are large and the composition of students heterogeneous. Since politeness, discipline and academic achievement seem to be more important to non-Estonians than Estonians verifies the statement, that Russian speakers in Estonia accept the so-called 'tough hand politics'. Estonians by nature are more individualistic and the fragmentisation of interests in the capitalist conditions inescapable (Talts 2004, 14). Young Estonians probably do not understand very well, why they can behave as independent citizens (= personalities) outside the school, but at school must obey the training. And this in fact is rather difficult to explain in a logical way. As a consequence we get a conflict of interests or in other words misunderstandings between pupils and their teachers. For example, in the post-Soviet period emotions and feelings are considered important, especially young people are willing to show how they feel. But in school this is not recommendable. Estonian researcher Inger Kraav argues on the basis of a Finnish-Estonian comparative study that the young generation of Estonia values independence more than, for example, the youngsters from Finland. Besides history, one reason lies in our educational traditions – the home education in Estonia seems to be, according to Kraav, more authoritarian than in the Nordic countries. Also the experience of having lived in a totalitarian state influences the resistance of Estonian youngsters (Kraav 1998, 86). New freedom foster free self-expression, but teachers don´t like it.

	Estonian	Russian
I feel bored at school (agree + totally agree)	60	31
I don't want to go to school (agree + totally agree)	60	32
Feels alone at school (agree + totally agree)	80	16
Teacher demands intense work (in most lessons + in every lesson)	40	67
Teacher knows his/her subject well (totally agree)	30	42
I get along with teachers well (agree + totally agree)	88	74
Most teachers treat me justly (agree + totally agree)	78	59
There are no teachers at school whom I can trust or turn to with my problems	37	20

Table 3: The attitude towards school and teachers (%)

	Estonian	**Russian**
Politeness is very important at school	75	67
Academic achievement is very important	31	40
Discipline at lessons is very important	19	39
Erudition is very important at school	16	28
Correct outlook at school is important	12	24
Good relationships at school are important	14	22
Joy of school is very important	12	19
Curios spirit at school is very important	10	18
Tolerance in school is very important	9	18

Table 4: The academic eagerness of Estonians and Russian students (%)

Table 3 shows that boredom, reluctance and loneliness are more felt in Estonian language schools, while work stress is higher in Russians' everyday life. One can conclude that too easy school is not the best possible solution. The authoritarianism of non-Estonians is probably higher in every sense: especially the Russian language school pupils mentioned more often, that they have no teachers at school they could trust or turn to in case of problems. Moreover, the (assumed) injustice in Russian language schools is higher according to the pupils, which however doesn't hinder them from valuing teachers' good knowledge of

their teaching subject. Recently there has been a lot of discussion in Estonia about whether school should be subject- or child-centered. According to Table 4 it is possible to state that in the so-called subject centered school pupils can exert themselves, which makes their school day more interesting, and thus makes them want to go to school. In Estonian schools generally discipline rather than the personality of the child is still valued. Nevertheless, gradual changes are occurring and the situation is thus ambivalent. On the one hand, school routines are similar to the ones of past; on the other, the new age expects entirely different qualities from a schoolteacher. Students should be well behaved, they should acquire the knowledge required from them, and prepare a responsible adulthood for themselves. Even if it can be argued that several norms of (post-Soviet) educational institutions are out-dated and disputable, the citizen who ignores them is still labeled as 'a problem' (Leino 1999a; Leino 1999b, 20). As in educational systems generally, the authoritarian subject-centered pedagogy seems to dominate (Ruus 2000, 129; Leino 2001, 69). The school requires that children work alone, be attentive, be able to wait, to control themselves motorically and verbally, to forget the experiential world, and to subject themselves to the authority of the teacher (Kuusinen 1992, 49-51). In fact, the Estonian school does not differ from the school many other European countries – we are socialized to respect authority, to be obedient, and to avoid trouble when possible (Leino and Männiste 1996, 94). But students' expectations of the school are different, and not all of them adapt to the culture of the school that stresses mostly middle class values (Silvennoinen 1992, 259). The middle class values of Estonia means having or striving for a good workplace and coping with one's own life – also the teacher gives importance to this. 'The bad pupils' are threatened with not getting into secondary school, which in Estonia means the status of an outcast. A concrete example of this is that evening schools in Estonia are situated only in bigger cities. As the unsuccessful will turn out to be a burden to the taxpayer, these poor citizens are scolded from their early years onwards. A study problem predicts further difficulties in the labor market and as the social security system in Estonia is poor, teachers as well as parents take deviations from the norm as a tragedy. From the point of view of school the 'proper citizen' in Estonia seems to mean a Soviet-type obedient factory worker. Giving out information mostly in one direction – from teacher to student – excludes dialogue and individual reflection. The 'previous' education rested on similarities. Contemporary Estonian society, however, needs independent and creative people for faster development.

Cooperation readiness at school:		
	Estonian	Russian
I like studying together with others (totally agree)	21	47
I like helping others in group-work (totally agree)	19	31
It is always worth combining everybody's ideas (totally agree)	47	58
In difficulties classmate helps me always	51	38
There are often quarrels between pupils	12	20
Most of the children get along with each other well	72	68
Many keep alone	14	18

Table 5: Social relations in class (%)

Table 5 reveals a certain paradox: at first glance it seems that especially non-Estonians like studying with each other, to combine ideas, to help each other in group work, however at the same time they also quarrel with each other more. Thus, does not communicating mean not fighting? Or are we dealing here rather with the Slavic temperament? Russian schoolteachers have mentioned, that during lessons their pupils sit quietly and obediently, because Russian nation values teacher's profession and thus at homes too the teacher is an authority, whose word counts. The recesses, however, are therefore noisier; pupils probably keep their emotions under control and during the recesses the accumulated tensions are released with special intensity. In Estonian language schools pupils tend to behave in lessons sometimes like in the recesses, which makes teaching difficult and ruins the nerves of teachers. As it was mentioned, Estonians don't respect recognized authority as much as Russians do. According to Statistical Office of Estonia for example the relationship between managers and employees appears to be more trusting in case of non-Estonians (Toomse 2004, 54): Soviet society was hierarchical and this was not disputed openly.

	BOYS		GIRLS	
	Estonian	Russian	Estonian	Russian
You are rather diligent than lazy	63	72	77	80
You are rather joyful than anxious	76	82	80	88
You are rather a good than a bad pupil	58	70	75	78
Average	*66*	*75*	*77*	*82*

Table 6: The self-esteem of children (%)

It becomes also evident, that the local Russian population has more optimism and courage to achieve success than Estonians (table 6). What has happened to the Estonian identity that they doubt in themselves so much? In a situation where one trusts and gets along with the teacher well; in a situation where classmates almost always give help – still, the Estonians have fear in front of future. Is this a phenomenon of individualist maximalism? Or the distant influence of Protestantism? Or the genetic code of our depressive proverbs (´who laughs last, laughs better ´, ´after long joy come tears ´, ' don't celebrate before the evening ´)? In every sense the result is one: young Estonians are pessimistically disposed about their future (see table 7). However, this kind of an attitude may trigger a closed circle: if you do not believe in yourself, you don't make an effort; if you do not make an effort, there are no results and belief in oneself diminishes even more.

Future visions		
	Estonian	Russian
I am afraid, that I won't be able to finish school (agree + totally agree)	20	15
I am afraid that I won't get into the university (agree+totally agree)	42	29
I am sure that I will not be unemployed (agree+totally agree)	39	49
I want to be the best in some area (totally agree)	39	44

Table 7: Expectations for future

Maybe Russians children have more study-eagerness because Russian parents just have more time for their families. According to Statistical Office of Estonia there are significant differences between ethnic nationalities: while most of non-Estonians dissatisfied with their working hours wish to work more, Estonians wish to work less. This can probably be explained by the shorter average working hours of non-Estonians (Toomse 2004, 54). Maybe non-Estonian citizens try to compensate this deficit with family life; and the problem of labour-market might be one of the inspiration for Russian children to learn eagerly and to get the better job in the future. For example according to Inna Järva´s doctoral thesis (2004) the father´s role in Russian families has been constantly growing: on one hand his participation in housework has increased, on the other hand he is more actively involved with the child. The time fathers spend playing with their children has grown fivefold through three recent generations (Järva 2004, 143).

Discussion

According to Gordon et al (2000) becoming a citizen is becoming a subject within a symbolic order. Because of this, subjectivity is experienced as a lack. In national education systems children and young people are addressed as adults-to-be who need to be raised and educated to be ´proper´ citizens able to exercise their rights, duties and responsibilities in acceptable ways. (Gordon et al 2000, 12). In Estonian society, education has traditionally been valued. For Estonians, education has been a target worth striving for and it has had a compensatory and empowering function under foreign powers. The first school in Tallinn was instituted as

early as the 13th century. The University of Tartu in Estonia is one of the oldest universities in the Nordic countries. In the national movement of the 19th century, education became a vital source of national self-assertion and economic progress (Loogma 1998, Leino and Lahelma 2002, 81). But - in late 90-ies Estonian teachers arranged strikes in order to bring into the consciousness of the society the low payments teachers get for their hard work. On November 27th in 1997 there was a strike of 13 000 teachers all over the country, who formed 81% of all teachers in Estonia. On December 4th in 2003 the 2nd (and bigger) strike took place, but mostly in Estonian-language schools (lot of Russian schools let to know very early, that they are not interested in striking). Taking into account our Finno-Ugric calmness, the former Soviet-time obedience and teacher's intelligence was the strike a remarkably extreme step in our region. The initiators of strikes were Estonians. While the salary in Russian schools is the same as in Estonian language schools, one might guess that the bourn-out-syndrome is bigger among Estonian teachers. And one reason for this can be that the prestige of education for Estonian student is not as high anymore as it used to be.

The Russians learning interest has a political background too. Namely now our government has decided, that by the year 2007 Russian schools in Estonia must teach 60% of the subjects in the Estonian language. This has made the Russians alert and Russian children are even more eager to study as earlier.

The free market economy has turned education into a crucial mechanism of socialization that produces new symbolic capital. Education as an institution changes social status: it creates the starting position for entering the labour market and for continuing acquisition of social competencies (Kalmus and Pavelson 2002, 229). The role of education in guaranteeing quality of life is now greater than that of any other institution (Kreitzberg 2002b, 64). Kalmus and Pavelson stress also that education is one of the most important institutions in the process of inter-ethnic integration. As a process and structure, education produces an effect on society and on the individual, and contributes to their achievement and development. The rise of the educational level and the modernization of educational content increase the potential of the individual as an active agent and accelerate the processes of innovation. Thus, education itself becomes an engine for further modernization (Kalmus and Pavelson 2002, 229).

The headline of the current article focused on the new identity of non-Estonians; however, the tendencies tackled in the article concern naturally also Estonians. The generation that grew up alongside with the song lyrics 'It is proud and good to be an Estonian' might (in time) fall from the high, when better educated non-Estonians start to get 'warmer' jobs for themselves. This can be a probable continuation if the trends mentioned above continue in the same way. Who is the better citizen: a native and quite easy-going, or an (former) immigrant who is eager – this is still the question?

Notes

Note 1: Population by citizenship in Estonia, data of the 2000 Population and Housing Census

Country of citizenship	Number	per 10,000 population
Estonia	1 095 557	7 996
Russia	86 059	628

Ukraine	2 864	21
Belarus	1 438	10
Latvia	1 412	10
Lithuania	1 105	8
Finland	926	7
Germany	146	1
United States of America	145	1
Sweden	134	1
Other countries	756	6
Citizenship of several countries	209	2
Citizenship unspecified or unknown	179 301	1 305
TOTAL	1 370 052	10 000

(Maanso 2005, 39)

Note 2: Household disposable income and subsistence, 2004. (%)

Nationality	We cope with great or very great difficulties	We cope with difficulties	We usually cope or cope very well
Estonian	11.3	25.5	63.2
Mixed	23.3	32.0	44.7
Non-Estonian	31.7	38.5	29.9

(Maanso 2005, 63)

In 2003, the average equalised income of population in the last decile was 162, 426 Estonian kroons (1 euro = 15,6 Estonian kroons) and in the first decile 7,005 Estonian kroons per year.

Population by quintiles, 2003 (proportion, %)

Ethnic nationality	Proportion	I quintile	III quintile	V quintile
Estonian	68.1	19.1	19.2	22.9
Non-Estonian	31.9	21.9	21.8	13.8

(Maanso 2005, 36, 56-57)

Note 3: Statistical background of schools in Estonia:

- In 2002/03 we had 150 177 pupils in Estonian schools and 50 301 in Russian schools.
- In 2002/03 there were 26% Russian gymnasium, 5% Estonian-Russian mixed schools and 69% Estonian-language schools.
- Basic school: 7% Russian and 3% Estonian-Russian, 90% Estonian schools.
- Elementary school: 3% Russian and 1% Estonian-Russian (Heinlo 2003, 33).

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Author´s Address:
Mare Leino/ Marika Veisson/ Viive-Riina Ruus/ Ene-Silvia Sarv/ Loone Ots/ Anneli Veisson
Tallinn University
Narva Road 25
EE-Tallinn, 10120
Estonia.
Tel: ++372 6 409 491
Fax: ++372 6 409 492
Email: mareleino@hotmail.com