

G. A. CEBALLOS RODRÍGUEZ

Ethnic identity and acculturation
among binational Estonian-foreign
families and individuals



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CONTENTS

LIST OF ORIGINAL STUDIES	6
AUTHOR’S CONTRIBUTION	7
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
1. INTRODUCTION	9
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	13
2.1 “Mixed” background populations	13
2.2 Binational families and individuals as a subsegment of “mixed” populations	15
2.3 The cosmopolitan character of binational families and individuals	17
2.4 Social identity(ies), ethnic identity and identity complexity	18
2.5 Exploring binational families and individuals through parents	22
2.6 Acculturation in contemporary western societies	23
3. METHODOLOGY	25
3.1 Research design and strategy	25
3.2 Quantitative studies: identification of populations	27
3.3 Quantitative data analyses	28
3.4 Qualitative Studies: sample characteristics and interview framework.....	31
3.5 Interview process and analyses	33
3.6 Self-reflection and ethical considerations and limitations	36
4. OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS	39
4.1 Binational Estonian-foreign clusters and their associations with ethnic identity and acculturation	39
4.2 Ethnic identity’s relevance and functions among parents of binational children	41
4.3 Identity complexity and binational children parents’ perceptions and positions towards ethnic identity and acculturation	44
5. DISCUSSION	46
5.1 Contextual and global nature of findings in this research	46
5.2 Challenges and way forward	49
CONCLUSIONS	51
REFERENCES	55
APPENDIX 1	63
APPENDIX 2	65
SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN	67
PUBLICATIONS	71
CURRICULUM VITAE	153
ELULOOKIRJELDUS	154

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

- Study I:** I contributed to the organisation, analyses and interpretation of data, as well as the drafting of the article.
- Study II:** I am the sole author of the study.
- Study III:** I took the lead in formulating the research questions, producing the theoretical framework, recruiting interviewees, conducting and analysing the interviews, interpreting the results and writing up the article.
- Study IV:** I am the sole author of the study.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The number of binational couples, families, and individuals has increased across different European countries in the last few decades (Daniel & Kina, 2014). This phenomenon is recognised by statistical data and also by empirical research conducted both in countries with a longer history of immigration, such as the Netherlands (Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2006; Statistiek, 2020; Van Mol & de Valk, 2018), Sweden (Adolfsson, 2021; Hübinette & Arbouz, 2019; Statistics Sweden, 2021) and France (Odasso, 2017b, 2017a), as well as in countries where immigration is a more recent phenomenon, like Portugal (Gaspar, 2008, 2012), Italy (Cerchiaro, 2017; Odasso, 2015), Spain (Rodríguez-García, 2015; Rodríguez-García et al, 2015) and Poland (Sowa-Behtane, 2017; Statistics Poland, 2021). Nonetheless, most of these studies acknowledge that despite its growth, this group remains understudied.

Throughout this dissertation I use the term binational to refer to families and individuals, whose parents have been born and raised for most of their lives in different countries. More specifically, this study is focused on *binational Estonian – foreign individuals and their families*. The foreign parent in these families arrived in Estonia as an adult. I have a strong motivation for researching this group and writing this dissertation, since I was born and raised in Mexico and my wife was born and raised in Estonia, where we have lived for seven years until this point. We are the parents of two binational children, who by the time I am writing this dissertation are six and four years old, respectively. Yet, beyond my personal incentives to try to understand my own family in the context where we currently live, there are several reasons that underpin the importance of this research.

As a start, this group represents a subsegment of what authors refer to as “mixed” populations (Caballero et al., 2008; Odasso, 2018; Song, 2017; Varro, 2012). The term “mixed” has no unified definition but is commonly used by researchers and scientific literature from different areas to describe families, individuals and populations that have resulted from the union of people who have different perceived backgrounds such as, nationality, ethnicity, race, culture, religion and even socio-economic characteristics (Collet, 2012a). Binationality among families and individuals can include simultaneously many of these “mixed” characteristics. “Mixed” populations are another growing group across European and Western societies in general (Caballero et al., 2008; Morning, 2020; Parker, 2004; Song, 2021). Nevertheless, other aspects such as “mixed” race or religion have attracted more attention in comparison to binationality, as they represent more visible components, where discrimination usually has more evident and measurable impacts, such as academic achievement and economic outcomes (Bisin et al., 2011; Hughes et al., 2009) or physical and mental health (Haslam et al., 2009b; Travassos & Williams, 2004) among others.

Estonia is an interesting case for studying binational individuals and their families not only because this group, as in other contexts, has been eclipsed by

other minority groups, but also because the focus of studies on “mixedness” in the country has mostly explored partnership and individuals who have an Estonian-Russian-speaking background (Puur et al., 2018; van Ham & Tammaru, 2011). Before moving forward, I want to give readers some background information about the country. According to the latest Estonian Population Census (2021), Estonia has a population of above 1,3 million people. It is a multiethnic country with representatives of nearly two hundred ethnicities (Leppik, 2020). However, it is dominated by two main groups: the ethnic Estonian group, which at the time of the latest census represented nearly 69% of the country’s population and the large Russian-speaking minority, who came into the country from other parts of the Soviet Union before the country regained its independence in 1991. This group is ethnically diverse and at the time of the latest census constituted more than 24% of the population (Statistikaamet, 2021). Although studies show that these two dominant groups in the Estonian society are not monolithic and that they experience their Estonian identity in a variety of ways (Drozdova, 2010; Valk et al., 2011), two main consequences result from the complex dynamics between both groups. The first one is that ethnicity is still mostly considered as a fixed category in the Estonian society (Strömpl et al., 2012), which in turn is highly intertwined with categories such as citizenship and particularly, mother tongue (Valk, 2007). The second consequence is that the Estonian society presents important levels of residential, educational and work segregation (Bormann et al., 2019; Mägi, 2018; Puur et al., 2018; Rahnu et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, since the country regained its independence, it has rapidly transformed into a modern economy underpinned by high-technology and digitalisation. As a result of this, Estonia is considered as a success story among transition countries, which is reflected by the country’s high-performance across education and human development indicators both at European level and globally (Keller & Vihalemm, 2003; Raun, 2009). This transformation has increased the interaction of Estonians with people from other parts of the world for trading, working or studying. At the same time, it has attracted a more geographically diverse array of people to the country for the same purposes. This enhanced interaction suggests the formation of couples and families with new “mixed” backgrounds, in comparison to pre-independence times. This phenomenon is not exclusive of the Estonian society. However, “mixedness” among couples and individuals across post-Soviet and other transition countries, like Estonia, is a relatively new area of study (Sowa-Behtane, 2017).

Based on the above, this research explores two aspects of binational Estonian foreign individuals and their families: ethnic identity and acculturation. There are contextual as well as more global-looking considerations behind this selection. Starting with the latter, ethnic identity can be assumed to be no longer relevant among binational families and individuals. Literature indicate several reasons for this, such as having a middle-class character (Rodríguez-García, 2015) and that the process of migration of the foreign parent is in many cases caused by factors such as love and job opportunities (Gaspar, 2012), rather than by more extreme circumstances, as in the case of other more vulnerable immigrant background

groups like war refugees. In addition, binational families and individuals in Europe are usually cosmopolitan, which among other things, means that their foreign character is not a stigma (Wagner, 1998) and are able to better circumvent increasing legal barriers imposed to the formation and reunification of binational families in different Western countries (D'Aoust, 2017; de Hart, 2022; Wray, 2011; Zambelli & de Hart, 2025). Instead, they are considered *global / world citizens* that frequently live and work in international environments and carry their culture through transnational networks (Hannerz, 1996; Weenink, 2008). The same happens with the notion of integration, as an acculturation outcome from Berry's theory (1990), of which immigrant families with higher levels of income and education have in many cases the privilege of being dispensed. This appears to be the case particularly, if their binational character is intra-European (Klarenbeek, 2022). All this has contributed to the invisibility of binational individuals and their families. However, there is scarce information that confirms or refutes whether ethnic identity and acculturation are no longer relevant notions among this group (Gaspar, 2009; Rodríguez-García et al., 2015).

With regards to considerations related to the Estonian context, I would like to start saying that research on "mixed" populations is *per se* highly contextual. This means that what is considered "mixed" in one place at a certain time might not be considered as such elsewhere or at a different moment (Collet, 2012; Varro, 2012). In this respect, the importance of ethnicity in the Estonian society as a perceived fixed category combined with its high levels of segregation makes pertinent to study ethnic identity and acculturation also among groups that might be emerging in the country. Additionally, studies on "mixedness" in Estonia have focused mostly (and perhaps naturally) to study unions between members of the ethnic-Estonian dominant group with people from the Russian-speaking minority (Puur et al., 2018; van Ham & Tammaru, 2011). However, I could not find studies that would research "mixed" individuals or families resulted from the union of members of these two dominant groups with newly arrived foreigners. Perhaps, this is due to the perception that the size of this population is small, which was a spontaneous comment that I frequently came across throughout the course of my research from different people (including some participants). Nevertheless, I also found scarce information about the size and growing or decreasing trends of this specific group, and no information that would indicate what associations they present towards notions such as ethnic identity and integration (as an acculturation outcome). These are some gaps this research aims to fill.

Another original aspect of this research is that it explores parents as a relevant antecedent of ethnic identity and acculturation outcomes among the researched group. This is because literature has traditionally focused on identity and acculturation outcomes among "mixed" background individuals (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Bradford, 2006; Song & Liebler, 2022; Stephan, 1991). However, it has left aside exploring what might be the way in which this process is influenced by important elements in their environment, such as parents. (Gonzales-Backen, 2013). Going further, this research explores ethnic identity and acculturation among local parents of binational children too. This contributes

to literature that aims to bring dominant-group members, such as local parents, more to the front of research on “mixed” and binational families, as foreign and minority background individuals have traditionally captured the focus of this type of studies (Collet, 2015; Irastorza & Elwert, 2021; Odasso, 2017a). Finally, studying binational individuals and their families in Estonia expands the geographical horizons of research on binational and “mixed” populations in general, which is a frequent call in literature (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Gaspar, 2010; Song, 2021).

Given the above, this dissertation aims to *explore the associations, perceptions and positions of binational Estonian-foreign individuals and their families in relation to the notions of ethnic identity and acculturation*. It comprises a complementary mixed methods research strategy where **Studies I and II** are quantitative studies that set the scene by providing information on the population of binational Estonian-foreign individuals based on statistical data. They identify clusters, i.e., groups that share similar characteristics among these populations and then continue to explore them through identified ethnic identity variables, such as mother tongue, home language, ethnicity, etc. And through acculturation variables such as discrimination, occupation, level of education, etc. Subsequently, **Studies III and IV** are qualitative studies that explore ethnic identity and acculturation in more depth. In this respect, **Study III** investigates the relevance and functions of ethnic identity and integration (as an acculturation outcome) through semi-structured interviews conducted among a group of parents of binational children. Finally, **Study IV** looks behind the curtains of findings from the earlier study by investigating and offering analytical insights on elements that might influence interviewed parents’ perceptions and positions in relation to the notions of ethnic identity and acculturation.

My research questions are:

- What clusters of binational Estonian-foreign individuals can be identified through statistical data and how do they reveal different associations related to ethnic identity and acculturation? – **Studies I and II**.
- How relevant is ethnic identity as a social identity among parents of binational Estonian-foreign children and do certain mechanisms influence shifts in their ethnic identity awareness? **Study III** and,
- What elements characterise the perceptions and positions of parents of binational Estonian-foreign children in relation to the notions of ethnic identity and acculturation? – **Study IV**.

In the following sections, I will present the theoretical framework of this research and then continue to present its methodological aspects. This will be followed by the results section, which contains an overview of the main findings resulting from the studies that are part of this research. Subsequently, the discussion section will present the significance of these findings in relation to the research questions, as well as final remarks and recommendations for future studies. Finally, it will end with the conclusions section and a short summary in Estonian.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, I will explain how this dissertation contributes to further scientific knowledge on binational families and individuals as a segment of “mixed” populations and, as a segment of cosmopolitan populations. I will also introduce the main theoretical concepts that this dissertation contains. These include elements of Tajfel and Turner’s (2004) Social identity theory, Berry’s (1990) Acculturation theory and Roccas & Brewer’s (2002) Social identity complexity theory among others.

2.1 “Mixed” background populations

Although there has been debate on the use of the term “mixed” (Caballero et al., 2008; Collet, 2015; Odasso, 2018; Payet, 2008; Santelli & Collet, 2003; Simms et al., 2007; Varro, 2012) authors from different research fields continue to use it without the intention to suggest that there are “pure” populations, which is the reason why it is written between quotes. Instead, the term “mixed” tries to indicate that there are populations, families and individuals, that combine either racial, cultural, religious, and even socioeconomic elements that are perceived as being different.

Some of the first studies explored the psychological impacts of having a “mixed” racial or ethnic background on individuals (Erikson, 1968). However, studies interested in investigating “mixedness” from an anthropological and sociological perspective became more frequent since the nineties. In this respect, the studies by French author Gabrielle Varro and Beate Collete have been particularly influential, as they contributed to establish two of the main characteristics that underpin “mixedness” as a concept that has a contextual and temporal character, i.e., what is perceived as alien in one place at a certain time, might not be as such elsewhere or at a different time (Collet, 2012a; Varro, 2012). Bensimon and Lautman (1974) also mention that “mixed” couples / families / individuals are the ones that provoke reactions from the social environment, which indicates the mutual influence of these individuals with what exists in the place where they reside.

The geographical and fluid character of “mixedness” is also one of the reasons behind finding studies from such a wide range of disciplines that investigate how the interplay between “mixed” background people with the society where they live can influence different aspects of their lives. This can include aspects such as physical and mental well-being (Caltabiano, 1984; Haslam et al., 2009; Koczan, 2014), personal and intimate relationships (Fresnoza-Flot & Ricordeau, 2017; Rodríguez García, 2006), institutional and legal barriers (D’Aoust, 2017; Odasso, 2015; Wray, 2011; Zambelli & de Hart, 2025), reunion and separation (Charsley & Wray, 2023; D’Aoust, 2014; de Hart & Woesthoff, 2023; Wray, 2015), cultural and social integration (Penninx, 2019; Rodríguez-García, 2015) academic and economic outcomes (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; Rumbaut, 1995),

etc. Research in these categories is usually composed by empirical cross-sectional studies that are frequently conducted among adolescents and young adults (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh et al., 2011; Stephan, 1991). This has left a research gap to study people from other age groups, such as adults. Although this might seem natural, other influential antecedents to their development, such as their parents, are still understudied (Gonzales-Backen, 2013). In this respect, the qualitative studies in this dissertation try to fill those research gaps by studying adults, who are parents of “mixed” background children.

Another important set of studies on “mixed” background populations is related to furthering the knowledge on how to measure them and understand the way in which population censuses around the world collect and present data on “mixed” populations and reveal differences in comparison with the dominant population group(s) (Morning, 2020; Song, 2021; Song & Liebler, 2022). As a start, “mixed” populations do not constitute a community with relatively homogeneous characteristics, such as other immigrant groups. Conversely, they are a very diverse group which is not necessarily bound together by any particular ethnic or cultural characteristics (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005).

Another reason is that many “mixed” individuals might not consider themselves members of a “mixed” or minority group (Caballero et al., 2008; Morning, 2020). This means that, depending on different variables and under different circumstances, they might ascribe themselves exclusively to the dominant group to which one of their parents belong, or to the minority group of the other parent and in some cases, to both.

Finally, I would like to mention some elements that are behind the growing and more specialised research on “mixed” populations. In this regard, literature signals the following causes:

Changes in the trajectories of migration: Since the fifteenth century, a big part of migration occurred mostly from Western European conquering powers to their acquired territories across other continents. Particularly in the American continent, this process gave birth to societies, and even countries, where being “mixed” is the norm rather than the exception, e.g., Brazil, Mexico and many Latin American countries (Song, 2021). Nevertheless, since the end of World War II, a new migration route was open, this time in reverse, with people from poorer countries moving towards wealthier nations across Western Europe and North America. This new phenomenon caused that Western societies that were previously racially and ethnically homogeneous increasingly became what authors refer to as a *melting pot* – the fusion of different nationalities, cultures and religions into one, or a *salad bowl* – the coexistence of a very diverse array of human groups in one national space separately (Irastorza & Osanari Töngren, 2022).

The quantitative and qualitative growth of “mixed” populations in Western societies: Certain immigrant background populations are crossing social boundaries more often in Western countries. This means that they have citizen rights, become wealthier, and achieved higher levels of education. As a result of this, certain groups that were considered marginal in the past are now increasingly

sharing residential, school, and workspaces with people from dominant mainstream group(s). This has resulted in the more frequent formation of “mixed” couples who are giving birth to a growing number of “mixed” background individuals. Simultaneously, “mixed” individuals and populations have also grown in importance and reached high positions in society. To illustrate this Daniel & Kina (2014), indicate that the incumbency of Barak Obama – a “mixed” race person himself, as President of the USA significantly increased the attention not only media but also by scientific research towards “mixed” populations.

In summary, what has brought the “mixed” populations to the frontline, is that they have grown quantitatively and qualitatively across Western societies, where in some cases, they represent one of the groups with the highest growth percentages over the last few decades. References to this quantitative growth can be found among articles written in a variety of Western countries, such as the USA (Song, 2021), the UK, (Simms et al., 2007), France (Odasso, 2015), Sweden (Hübinette & Arbouz, 2019), the Netherlands (Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2006; Weiner, 2015), and even, new immigration destinations such as, Italy (Cerchiaro), Spain (Rodríguez-García, Solana, et al., 2015), Poland (Sowa-Behtane, 2017), Finland (Sanchez & Eleniak, 2016), etc.

In this respect studies on racial “mixity” and its impact represent a large proportion of the research, perhaps as it is a more visible component, where discrimination usually has more evident and measurable social and psychological impacts (Adolfsson, 2021; Irastorza & Elwert, 2021; Middag, 2015; Odasso, 2017c; Simms et al., 2007; Song, 2020). They are followed by studies on cultural “mixity” with a particular emphasis on religion, e.g., Christian-Muslim couples in Europe or the interplay between majority and minority groups, e.g., individuals with “mixed” Mexican-Asian-American or North-African-European background (Cerchiaro, 2017; Puur et al., 2018; Rodríguez-García et al., 2021; Weiland & Coughlin, 1979). Nevertheless, this natural focus on visible “mixedness” has left other “mixed” background population segments understudied. This includes binational families, which are the focus of this research.

2.2 Binational families and individuals as a subsegment of “mixed” populations

Binational families and individuals result from the union of two individuals, who have been born and mostly raised in two different countries. As a result of this, they bring together under one roof what Hofstede (1993) referred to as two different mental programmes. This means that “the way they act, think and feel in different situations is partly the result of what exists in the country where they live and were brought up” (Gaspar, 2008, p5). In this respect they represent a subsegment of “mixed” populations that can encompass different aspects of “mixedness” – from nationality, race, ethnicity, and culture, (Collet, 2012b), to those related to citizenship and other transversal aspects, such as gender and social class. (Harpaz, 2021).

This means that parents of binational families, like other “mixed” couples, are frequently characterised by power imbalances that can take different forms. For example, it can be institutional, as in the case of unions between a citizen and a foreign non-citizen, where the latter might not have all the same rights as the former in the host society. It can also be in many cases related to intersectional characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, race, and social class (Fresnoza-Flot & Ricordeau, 2017). Countries can also have different hierarchies in which case the maintenance of a certain citizenship can prevail over the other for a variety of purposes. Literature indicates that imbalances between “mixed” couples are sometimes settled by implicit exchanges, where partners can trade elements such as youth or high levels of education for social status and vice-versa (Guetto & Azzolini, 2015). Although, it is recognized that inequality between partners is a common feature among the pianists, studies show that more complex processes occur in the formation and development of these couples rather than simple trade-offs (Irastorza, 2016; Rodríguez-García, 2015).

Nevertheless, binational families and individuals remain an under-researched population because of several reasons. As a start, unions between a local partner with a foreigner, are frequently assumed as a high level of integration of the latter. This assumption is frequent among authors studying majority-minority unions in different contexts (Irastorza & Osanari Töngren, 2022; van Ham & Tammaru, 2011). However, it is increasingly contested by research that shows that more complex processes can occur not only among minority partners, whose sense of ethnic / racial / national / socioeconomic identity can become more salient but also, among local partners and their children who can jointly experience the process of migration and acculturation of their foreign partner (Fresnoza-Flot & Ricordeau, 2017; Odasso, 2017a). This phenomenon seems to be increasingly growing as authors claim that there are increasing legal barriers that prevent the formation and reunion of binational families across different European countries (D’Aoust, 2014; De Hart, 2022; Odasso, 2017c; Wray, 2011). Nevertheless, binational families are usually a middle-class phenomenon (Rodríguez-García, 2015), where partners usually have higher levels of education and income than other immigrant background groups, e.g., families where both parents are immigrants or belong to immigrant background communities. In this respect, most of binational parents interviewed in this study are people with sufficient economic, social and cultural capital and access to international mobility, education and job opportunities that could be classed as cosmopolitans (Weenink, 2008) or *Euro-stars*, as per Favell’s (2008) definition of middle-class intra-European Union migrants. This privileged condition has left a research gap among binationals under the false assumption that they represent some kind of postmodern type of population that are beyond concepts such as race, ethnicity, nationality and among whom multiculturalism is taken for granted and integration is dispensed. This dissertation aims to uncover more complex mechanisms and attitudes among binational family members when explored through the lens of ethnic identity and acculturation.

Finally, I would like to mention that scientific literature on families where parents come from different countries use different terms to refer to this population. In many cases, this has to do with what aspect of their binational “mix” authors want to explore or emphasise. As an example of this, the term *transnational* is frequently used to describe privileged migrants and cosmopolitan families that live and carry their culture across transnational networks (Weenink, 2008), while the term *cross-border* makes more emphasis on the process of migration of family members (Fresnoza-Flot & Ricordeau, 2017). Finally, the term *international* and *multicultural* are more generic terms that can also be applicable to families and individuals even if they do not have a “mix” background (Rodríguez-García, 2015). In this dissertation, the choice of using the term binational is to emphasise on the interplay of those different mental programmes coexisting under one roof that were mentioned previously (Gaspar, 2010; Hofstede, 1993), which combined with intersectional characteristics, such as gender, social class, race, country hierarchy, create power-balance relations within the couple, which in turn influence the ethnic identity and acculturation outcomes of all family members.

2.3 The cosmopolitan character of binational families and individuals

Literature suggests that binational families and individuals in the European context are usually part of cosmopolitan populations for a variety of reasons, which have contributed to their invisibility (Gaspar, 2012; Rodríguez García, 2006). As a start, in many cases their foreign elements are usually not considered a stigma, but a competitive advantage (Wagner, 1998). Because of this, they enjoy in many cases what authors refer to as integration dispensation (Klarenbeek, 2021). Also, the foreign partner’s migration, or the repatriation of the local partner and their children, is often consensual and motivated by causes such as family and love, followed by work opportunities, quality of life and studies (Gaspar, 2010). Finally, many binational couples are formed in transnational environments, particularly while working for international companies and organisations or studying abroad (Gaspar, 2012). Furthermore, in many cases they continue to work and live in transnational enclaves across the European geography, where their cosmopolitan capital is an asset to adapt and try to ensure professional development and socio-economic advantages (Weenink, 2008). This raises calls to understand what some binational families, individuals and cosmopolitan populations are integrating in the 21st century (Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore, 2018). Also, studies on binational and other “mixed” family parents show that in many cases, they are more concerned about other aspects of their family, such as professional or academic performance rather than race and ethnicity (Caballero et al., 2008). This does not mean that these aspects are not relevant for them and that they are not aware of the potential consequences that these notions might have, particularly for their children. In this respect, their social environment – the place

where they live and the people they frequently interact with, seems to play a very important role in ensuring its favourable development.

Taking this into consideration, it is easy to imagine that this population of *global / world citizens* or intra-European Union free-moving *Eurostars* (Favell, 2008) might be beyond notions such as ethnic identity or integration. Nevertheless, there's a lack of studies that confirm or refute this idea. This is particularly relevant considering that binational families and individuals, like any other "mixed" background populations, are characterised by being highly heterogeneous (Huynh et al., 2011; Rodríguez García, 2006). This study proposes that despite their cosmopolitan character, many complex positions might exist across binational families and individuals with respect to ethnicity as a relevant social identity, as well as towards integration, as one of many different acculturation outcomes. The complexity and the mechanisms behind it are explored in this research.

Cosmopolitanism can be generally described as a level of awareness of being connected to the world, while being grounded locally (Beck & Sznaider, 2006). Cosmopolitans, on the other hand, are communities that carry their culture not by a territory, but through a transnational network. This means that they can live, study and/or work in transnational environments where they develop and expand transnational relationships with other people (Hannerz, 1996). To do this, authors suggest that they need to develop and expand their cosmopolitan capital – the ability to be part and operate in these transnational environments and cope with their expanded transnational networks (Weenink, 2008). One effective way to develop this cosmopolitan capital is through education (Farrer & Greenspan, 2015). In this regard, cosmopolitans make efforts to acquire certain skills, such as achieving high levels of proficiency in the English language or sending their children to schools that offer international curricula. In these efforts, Weenink (2008) distinguishes two types of cosmopolitans. The first type is represented by *dedicated cosmopolitans*, who desire to foster an open attitude towards the world as a global place. In other words, *dedicated cosmopolitans* strive to become themselves and, in some cases, raise their children as *global / world citizens*. The second type consists of *pragmatical cosmopolitans*, who cultivate cosmopolitan capital to improve or maintain their social status. As an example of this, in a study made in the Netherlands, Weenink (2007) explores how certain middle class students join the International Baccalaureate (IB) curricula (which in this country is provided by high-schools dominated by upper-class students) with the intention of learning English and acquiring skills that would allow them to bypass and try to catch up socioeconomically with the Dutch elite by working internationally.

2.4 Social identity(ies), ethnic identity and identity complexity

The study of identity(ies) in psychology and social sciences tries to answer the fundamental philosophical question of "who am I" (Koczan, 2014). Authors also mention that individuals think of identity when confronted with other groups or

with uncertain conditions, which causes them to reflect about where they belong (Taylor & Spencer, 2004). This dissertation explores identity through the framework of Social Identity Theory (SIT), which defines identity as “that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of (a) social group(s) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

SIT indicates that individuals are formally or informally part of many different social categories throughout their lifetimes, e.g., gender, nationality, social, class, occupation, etc. These categories have the following characteristics: i) they can occur simultaneously and be experienced and perceived as oppositional / not oppositional; ii) individuals can ascribe themselves to some social categories but, in many cases, they also require to be recognised by others as members of that group and, iii) individuals play a different role and have a different hierarchy across different social categories (Haslam, Jetten, & Waghorn, 2009; Koczan, 2014; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997).

Literature also indicates that identity has certain functions for people, among which the following can be mentioned: i) providing structure and understanding who one is; ii) providing meaning and direction through commitment, values and goals; iii) providing a sense of personal control and free will; iv) striving for consistency, coherence, and harmony between values, beliefs, and commitments; and, v) enabling the recognition of potential through a sense of future, possibilities, and alternative choices (Adams & Marshall, 1996).

Identity development is an ongoing process where different social identities become more important than others at different times, throughout an individual's lifetime. In this respect, authors identify the following general identity stages (Marcia, 1966; Phinney, 1990):

- *Awareness*: when individuals realise the importance of their membership to certain social categories.
- *Exploration*: when individuals desire to experience being part of certain social categories and see if their ascription to them is accepted by others.
- *Crisis*: when there is opposition between an individual's membership of different social categories or when there is a conflict between the desire to belong to a certain social category and the possibility of being accepted by others as part of it.
- *Achievement*: when individuals feel comfortable with their membership of a social category, and this membership is accepted by others.

Although the first three stages are more common among adolescents and the stage of achievement is often associated with adulthood and maturity, research shows that identity development is not a linear process and that different circumstances can lead an individual to move backwards and forwards between stages (Phinney, 1990). As an example, life-changing events such as losing a job, divorcing or moving to a different country usually impact an individual's sense of identity no matter how old they are.

At the same time, identity development is a multidimensional and multifaceted process, where certain social identities might be mature and stable, and others might be at initial stages of development or even crisis (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966). Examples of such social identity crises could be a professionally successful individual who is the director of an important company but might be going through a painful divorce, or perhaps a happily married parent who has been recently made redundant from a long-time held job.

Ethnic identity is one more of those social categories explored by SIT. It represents the selected or assigned ascription to (a) particular ethnic group(s), which in turn can be defined as “a community that cooperates in economic pursuits guided by a set of common beliefs, concerns, history and other markers such as language, religion and race, that differentiates them from others” (Erikson, 1968, p.44). According to Sam & Berry (2010), ethnicity is considered a social construct that is externally assigned to individuals by members of their own group and other groups. However, individuals can also make choices in the development of their ethnic identity.

In this respect, Phinney (1990) identifies the following general components of ethnic identity: i) self-identification (or self-definition or labelling); ii) sense of belonging and affection towards their group; iii) practice of different ethnic elements, e.g., language, religion, cultural traditions and celebrations and, iv) certain ethnic involvement with other members of the same group to perform miscellaneous ethnic and cultural activities. In addition, ethnic groups usually share a geographical space and are ascribed to one or more nationalities and citizenships that influence their identity (Alonso, 1995). Finally, ethnic groups can share physical traits that distinguish them from other ethnic groups, which can become more visible when people wear traditional clothes from their own ethnic group. For example, it is common to make generic deductions about what part of the world a person might come from when we see them for the first time. A person can look Asian, Latin American, Northern European, etc. However, they can be from a different part of the world, e.g., the Japanese background communities in Brazil and other Latin American countries or North African descent individuals in France or the Netherlands.

In other cases, ethnicity can be only revealed by certain external identity markers, e.g., many Ashkenazim Jewish people could be confused at first sight with certain people from a variety of Mediterranean or Eastern European countries if they wouldn't wear religious identity markers or, one could hardly distinguish at first sight some members of a Mennonite community from the North of Mexico from certain Nordic European people if the former wouldn't wear traditional clothes that reveal their ethnicity.

Ethnic identity is frequently a salient type of identity among immigrant groups as it plays a significant role in their process of acculturation to the host society, which can also condition how permissible is for migrants to express various aspects of their ethnicity, such as language or religion. In the case of “mixed” background people, ethnic identity can be a highly oppositional type of social

identity because in many cases, they must constantly explain, justify and negotiate their full ascription to their parents' ethnic groups. In this respect, authors recognise that appearance, i.e., how "mixed" background people look like, can play a vital role in the way in which they self-ascribe and are accepted by others as members of a certain ethnic group (Berry, 2005; Song, 2021). However, there are many cases where appearance is either ambiguous or not quite in line with what is perceived as the common look of a certain population. In consequence, "mixed" individuals are often subjected to pressures to justify their membership by showing that they share the emotional attachment, knowledge, and mentality of the group(s) to which they ascribe.

In this process, "mixed" individuals frequently use a mechanism that authors refer to as *cultural frame switching* that makes adapt and display different aspects of their "mixed" ethnicities according to different situations and when they interact with members of their parent's ethnic group(s) or others (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002). Researchers have found that proficiency in *cultural frame switching* is a skill that "mixed" background people can develop with different levels of competence depending on a complex variety of individual dispositional factors, such as openness, extraversion, agreeableness, etc., combined with perceived contextual pressures, e.g., feelings of acceptance vs discrimination, cultural integration vs isolation, language proficiency vs barriers (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005).

Most of studies exploring how individuals deal with elements of their "mixed" background, that are perceived by themselves or other people as distant or oppositional, have been conducted among "mixed" background individuals themselves and particularly, among groups of adolescents (Cheon et al., 2020; Crocetti, 2017; Huynh et al., 2011). However, there's scarce research on how their parents influence this process as well as their own ethnic identity development, despite literature recognising the fact that they represent very important antecedents for their ethnic identity outcomes (Gonzales-Backen, 2013). This dissertation contributes to filling that gap by exploring what are the functions or mechanisms that ethnic identity plays among parents of binational children, which will be explained in further detail in the following section. In addition, it examines what might lie behind these mechanisms by exploring parents' social identity complexity.

Social identity complexity (IC) is a theory that explores people's dispositions to perceive and understand overlaps between different social identities (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). People with low IC struggle to understand overlaps between social categories that they perceive as highly oppositional, e.g., female engineers, Muslim Germans, etc. Conversely, people with high IC usually accept this type of overlaps, which they consider as part of a more complex interplay of people's social identities. High IC has also been associated with outcomes such as out-group tolerance and inclusiveness and even cognitive strategies such as *need for cognition* (M. Brewer, 2010; M. Brewer & Pierce, 2005). Nevertheless, IC has been presented in scientific literature as a fixed dichotomy, which is why this dissertation investigates if there is a more fluid and intricate character to this

notion. In this respect IC of parents of binational children is explored in study II of this dissertation as an element that contributes to the ethnic identity development of binational family members. This is done by analysing the way in which parents elucidate on their own ethnic identity(ies), the ethnic identity(ies) of their children and, their acculturation outcomes in the Estonian society.

2.5 Exploring binational families and individuals through parents

Studies on “mixed” populations and binational families have mostly focused on the study of “mixed” and/or binational individuals (Benet-Martínez & John, 1998; Phinney, 1992; Song, 2021). As an example of this, Hong et al. (2000) studied how binational individuals develop various levels of skills to move across their two cultures and engage in what they refer to as *cultural frame switching*. Following on this and similar studies, Bennet and Haritatos (2005) developed a Bicultural Identity Integration scale, that was able to measure to some extent the ways in which binational individuals perceived their identities as *compatible* vs *oppositional*. As a result of this, they found associations between these perceptions and their capacity to move across cultural frameworks. Studying “mixed” and binational individuals directly has been a natural step for a relatively new research field. However, it has left a gap to explore in more depth the ecosystem surrounding these populations and its influence.

In her study of biethnic adolescents, Gonzales-Backen (2013) proposes that parents, peers, media, and the community environment are some of the most essential elements of this ecosystem and represent predictors of ethnic identity outcomes. Parents (particularly mothers) not only transmit and cultivate ethnic identity elements such as language, cultural practices, religion, etc., but also play a significant role in their children’s socialisation with the dominant and the minority group(s) to which they belong. In other studies, Caballero et al. (2008) name different approaches by parents to cultivate their children’s “mixed” identity. As a result of this, three different approaches were found. The first is the *individual approach*, where parents encourage their children to think beyond racial or ethnic categories, and consider themselves as *global / world citizens* that are equipped with unique characteristics and competitive advantages to gain cosmopolitan capital. The second is the *“mixed” approach*, where parents raise awareness among their children and encourage them to engage with the multi-racial, multi-ethnic or multi-religious character of their individual identity. Finally, the third is the *single approach*, where parents emphasize one aspect of the children’s identity over the other.

Other studies have explored binational parents’ conscious name choices for their children (Cerchiaro, 2017), as well as what authors call *identity projects*, i.e., parents’ transmission of selected identity and cultural aspects for pragmatic purposes (Le Gall & Meintel, 2015). Although these studies offer valuable insights of the variety of approaches parents have towards the development of their

children's identity, they provide little information about what might underpin parents' propensity towards a certain approach rather than others. To illustrate this, two foreign mothers from the same country, and with similar levels of education and socio-economic status who live in the same host society might have completely divergent attitudes towards transmitting ethnic identity elements to their children. In this respect, earlier research provides valuable information about the variety of outcomes resulting from parents' orientations towards their children's binational identity. However, this research has the intention to see what happens behind the curtains of this process. Put differently, it explores what caused parents to consider ethnic identity as a relevant social identity for themselves and their children and how this is associated with their identity development and acculturation outcomes.

2.6 Acculturation in contemporary western societies

I also study acculturation among binational families and individuals in Estonia in this dissertation. To do this, I used Berry's *acculturation theory* (Berry, 1990), which indicates that when people with distinct cultural backgrounds enter in contact, they adopt each other's behaviours, beliefs, values, social institutions, and technologies. The way and the extent to which this process takes place is known as *acculturation* (Sam & Berry, 2010). When people talk about immigrants in their host societies, terms such as adaptation, integration and assimilation are often used sometimes, interchangeably. Acculturation theory is a useful tool, as it helps to clarify those terms and use them more precisely.

As an example of this, acculturation differs from adaptation in the sense, in which adaptation is only one of the consequences of acculturation (Castles, 1993). Adaptation varies across individuals and is usually relative to the context where they live. As a result of this Berry (1990, 2007) proposes four acculturation outcomes among immigrants: i) *assimilation* – when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures; ii) *separation* – when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others; iii) *marginalisation* – when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination and finally, iv) *integration* – the process of mutual accommodation between immigrants and the majority of the population. Therefore, when talking about the process of immigrants becoming members of the host society, some authors suggest that it would be better to talk about their incorporation or acculturation, of which integration is one of its many outcomes (Castles, 1993). However, policy and academic documents focus on the topic of integration, as they consider it a positive and desirable outcome of the acculturation process of immigrants in the receiving society.

This theory also considers that acculturation is a process that involves not only immigrants but also, the host society. In that sense, in addition to the outcomes

or strategies described by his acculturation framework, Berry identifies four society orientations towards the acculturation of immigrants: i) *melting pot* – when assimilation is sought by the dominant group, ii) *segregation* – when separation is forced by the dominant group; iii) *exclusion* – when marginalisation is imposed by the dominant group and, iv) *multiculturalism* – when diversity is widely accepted and valued by society as a whole, including by all the various ethnocultural groups (Berry, 2011). Multiculturalism is usually considered as an ideal orientation of host societies in the process of immigrants' acculturation. However, not all host societies are homogeneous, and neither are immigrant groups. This means that their interactions are complex and beyond ethnicity considerations, they are marked by differentiation on lines of class, gender, age, education, etc., (Castles, 1993). At the same time, the study of immigrants' acculturation varies across different social and political contexts in which institutions play a key role (Schneider & Crul, 2010) and is also fluid, as it can evolve throughout different historical moments (Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore, 2018). This bidirectional character of acculturation theory makes it a suitable framework for this dissertation to study binational Estonian-foreign family members. This is because they often are simultaneous members of immigrant background minority group(s) and of the dominant mainstream population. This means that they can be subject to acculturation while at the same time, they can contribute to the acculturation orientation of the place where they live.

Another contribution of this dissertation is that it explores acculturation among groups and individuals that have been under-researched by literature. As a start, qualitative studies I and II consider acculturation outcomes not only among foreign parents but also among their local partners, who might also experience changes because of being part of a binational family. Secondly, it considers that as a cosmopolitan or privileged group, binational families and individuals might be integrating to places and environments that might be different to the traditional mainstream host society, e.g., urban spaces designed for international companies, organisations and individuals (Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore, 2018). This has not been fully explored yet either on Western superdiverse societies or in places where this is a more recent phenomenon, as in the Estonian case.

Finally, this dissertation uses identity representations as a tool to explore ethnic identity and acculturation outcomes among parents of binational children. To illustrate this, parents use terms such as, *fifty-fifty*, *local-foreign*, *global citizen* when elucidating about their children's identity(ies) (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Roccas & Brewer, 2002). This study explores the variety of meanings that parents in the studied group give to these terms, which are usually presented as fixed traits in literature. This contributes to better understanding both ethnic identity and acculturation as more fluid notions, whose outcomes can vary throughout an individual's life.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview on the research strategy of this study and of how data in the studies that comprise this dissertation was collected and analysed to provide answers to the research questions. Finally, a self-reflection section, including ethical considerations and limitations of each one of the studies in this dissertation will also be presented at the end of this chapter.

3.1 Research design and strategy

This study was designed to use a mixed method strategy to explore the research group for two main reasons. Firstly, it was necessary to obtain information on the population of binational individuals that would be replicable (Bryman, 2012) and useful to explain causal associations using selected variables (Leavy, 2023). In other words, quantitative studies in this research had the intention of setting the scene and explain the nature of the studied population, identifying clusters within it and later, exploring the existing associations these clusters reveal when analysed through ethnic identity and integration related variables. **Study I** goes one step behind by analysing clusters of multilingual households across participant countries in the European Social Survey (ESS), while **Study II** investigates specifically the population of binational individuals by using raw data extracted from the latest Estonian Population Census (EPC) 2021 (Statistikaamet, 2021). Both studies provide information to answer the research sub-question, *what clusters of binational Estonian-foreign individuals can be identified through statistical data and how do they reveal different associations related to ethnic identity and acculturation?*

At the same time, qualitative **Studies III and IV** used thematic analyses with the intention of interpreting the experiences and thoughts of samples of participants (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). These experiences and thoughts were captured through semi-structured interviews conducted mostly online among a sample of participants that was credible (Henrietta & Madge, 2017). Differently put, **Studies III and IV** investigate more in depth the associations identified on the first two studies in this dissertation, by interviewing parents of binational Estonian-foreign children and explore the variety of positions they have with regards to ethnic identity and integration (as an acculturation outcome). **Study III** answers the research subquestion, *how relevant is ethnic identity as a social identity among parents of binational Estonian-foreign children and do certain mechanisms influence shifts in their ethnic identity awareness*, while **Study IV** answers the research question, *what elements characterise the perceptions and positions of parents of binational Estonian-foreign children in relation to the notions of ethnic identity and acculturation?*

Table 1 provides an overview of the research design and strategy followed by this dissertation:

Table 1. Data collection and analyses of studies in this dissertation

Type of research	Research Question	Data collection	Data Analyses
Study I	<p>Quantitative</p> <p>What clusters of binational Estonian-foreign individuals can be identified through statistical data and how do they reveal different associations related to ethnic identity and acculturation?</p>	<p>ESS data on multilingual households (rounds 2008–2018)</p>	<p>Cluster analyses</p>
Study II	<p>How relevant is ethnic identity as a</p>	<p>Estonian population census raw data (2021)</p>	<p>Population identification, clustering and analyses through census variables</p>
Study III	<p>Qualitative</p> <p>social identity among parents of binational Estonian-foreign children and do certain mechanisms influence shifts in their ethnic identity awareness?</p> <p>How relevant is ethnic identity as a social identity among parents of binational Estonian-foreign children and do certain mechanisms influence shifts in their ethnic identity awareness?</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews among parents of binational children</p>	<p>Thematic analyses</p>
Study IV			

3.2 Quantitative studies: identification of populations

Study I was the first research where I took part during my PhD studies. Although this study is not completely related to my research topic, multilingualism is a common characteristic among “mixed” populations and binational families, and this study represented a good first step for me into scientific research and writing, as well as into data analysis. However, I did not extract or compile the data for this study, which was carried out by the co-author of this article (who is also my PhD supervisor) and my participation was mostly limited to organise and interpret data, which I will describe in the following section. Conversely, I extracted, processed and analysed all data for **Study II**.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework section, one of the greatest challenges when collecting and analysing data on “mixed” populations is their accurate identification (Morning, 2020; Song, 2021). This means that decisions must be made to determine the nature of the “mix” that someone wants to measure and study. In this respect, researchers must work with the data that is already available in the corresponding databases from where information will be extracted. In the case of **Study I**, multilingual respondents from eighteen participant countries in the European Social Survey were identified if they marked more than one language when responding to the question “*what language(s) do you speak more often at home?*”. Nevertheless, the data did not allow to know if respondents speak different languages at home, because for example, they talk to family members or relatives in another language or because, they might speak a *lingua franca*, e.g., English and they are living in a household with people who speak different languages.

The same thing happened when I had to identify my study population in **Study II** using data from the Estonian Population Census (EPC) 2021. In this case, raw data did not allow to easily connect family members with each other, it was not possible to obtain data about parents that would have been helpful to see associations with binational individuals’ ethnic identity and acculturation outcomes, e.g., foreign parent’s time of arrival in Estonia, ethnicity, mother tongue, level of education, occupation, etc. Due to this limitation, the focus of this research was the population of binational Estonian-foreign individuals, who were identified using the following SPSS function:

If mother / father Country of Birth (CB) = Estonia AND mother / father CB = other than Estonia

It is also useful to consider that although the EPC 2021 contained for the first time questions related to second ethnicities and mother tongues, it was not designed with specific the intention of measuring binational individuals and their families in Estonia. In this respect, **Study II** represents a first approach to exploring this group through census data with the intention of highlighting its relevance, revealing some of its main characteristics, such as its size and

evolution while identifying existing clusters and their associations with ethnic identity and integration related variables.

3.3 Quantitative data analyses

In **Study I** home languages were organised in the following categories: i) official national languages (including regional languages); ii) English as a foreign language and, iv) other EU / non-EU European languages. The same happened in the case of ancestries, which were grouped in categories such as: i) local ancestry(ies) of the respondent's country of residence and ii) other EU / non-EU ancestry(ies).

In addition, two types of variables were used to analyse the background of multilingualism: demographic variables and variables reflecting the integration of multilingual families into their host society. The first group of variables describes the demographic background of people living in multilingual households: (1) immigration background (whether the respondent was born in the country or whether the parents of the respondents were born in the country) and languages spoken at home, (2) whether respondents living in multilingual households also have multi-ancestry background, and (3) whether the respondent has children in the household.

The second type of variables relates to respondents' feelings of integration and included: (4) citizenship of the country of residence – the difference between respondents from multilingual families and the rest of the population; (5) happiness difference between multilingual and monolingual groups; (6) feelings of discrimination – the difference between multilingual and monolingual groups; (7) self-evaluated economic coping – the difference from the rest of the population.

Subsequently, a statistical hierarchical cluster analyses was conducted through the following input variables to identify countries that share multilinguals with similar characteristics and class them in clusters that were presented in the form of a dendrogram:

- ESS respondents who speak two or more languages at home
- Multilinguals among the population not born in the country
- Multilinguals among the population born in the country
- Second-generation immigrants among multilinguals born in the country
- Multilingual households with children (difference from the country average of households with children)
- Multi-ancestry persons among multilinguals,
- Citizenship among multilinguals (difference from the rest of the population)
- Happiness feelings (difference of multilinguals from the rest of population)
- Multilinguals who belong to a minority group that is discriminated in the country (difference from the rest of the population)
- Discrimination because of language
- Difficulty with economic coping (difference from the rest of the population)

Data analyses in **Study II** also required organising data and selecting the best way to categorise them. In this respect, I got access to census raw data upon sending an application to the Estonian Statistics Agency (Statistikaamet) for using confidential information for scientific purposes. Once access was granted, I could only work with the census data using the safe-centre computers at the Statistikaamet office in Tartu. Raw data was provided in CVS format, and I had to learn how to use SPSS in order to work with it.

Working with raw data required me to make constant decisions on what census variables should be selected and how to use them in the most efficient way throughout the course of my research. As a result of this, the analyses of my research consisted of three stages:

- Stage 1: *to understand the size and evolution of the population of binational individuals living in Estonia at the census moment and to compare it with other immigrant background populations, e.g., individuals with at least one foreign-born parent and full-foreign background individuals.*

As previously mentioned, I identified this population through their parent's countries of birth. Subsequently, they were analysed according to their birth year and then through the variables "*mother tongue = Russian*" and "*mother tongue = not Russian*", which revealed not only the evolution of these populations but that significant changes in their composition happened since year 1991. As a result of this, the analyses of the population of binational individuals focused mostly on people aged zero- to- thirty years of age in the following stages of the research. Older groups were only considered for exploring aspects that do not apply to children or adolescents like *higher education* and *occupation*.

- Stage 2: *to identify the most suitable variable to classify the population of binational individuals in clusters.*

EPC 2021 raw data consisted of more than fifty variables, from which I had to select the most suitable ones for the second and third stages of my research. A summary of the number of selected variables is shown in *table 2*, and a more detailed list is provided in the methodology section of **Study II**.

Table 2. Variables used in census data analyses of the binational population in Estonia.

Variables for cluster identification:	<i>Mother tongue</i>
	<i>Ethnic nationality</i>
	<i>Origin</i>
Variables applied to identified clusters for analyses:	
Ethnic identity-related variables*	8
Acculturation-related variables	
<i>Institutional integration</i>	2
<i>Social integration</i>	5
<i>Cultural integration</i>	3

**Includes the intersectional variable gender.*

Stage 2 had the purpose of identifying the most suitable variable to classify the population of binational individuals in well-defined and concise clusters for subsequent analysis. In that respect, avoiding granulation was a main criterion.

Mother tongue (emakeel in Estonian language), ethnicity (rahvus) and origin (põlisus) were the variables that I first selected in this stage, with mother tongue resulting the variable that rendered the clearest-cut clusters: i) the Estonian speaking cluster (ESC), ii) the Russian speaking cluster (RSC) and, iii) the Other-language speaking cluster (OLC).

The selection of *mother tongue* to identify binational population clusters was at the same time in line with literature that indicates strong associations between mother tongue and ethnicity, as well as integration / segregation related outcomes in the Estonian society (Mägi, 2018; Valk et al., 2011; van Ham & Tammaru, 2011). Therefore, it was valuable to investigate whether these associations are also applicable to the binational population during phase three.

- Stage 3: *to identify ethnic identity and acculturation-related census variables and to explore clusters of binational individuals through them.*

The purpose of this stage was to examine the different positions that exist across clusters of binational individuals towards ethnic identity and integration, when analyzed through census variables.

I classified variables related to ethnic identity based on the literature mentioned in the theoretical framework section of this dissertation. In this respect, ethnic identity related variables, included variables that inform on the ascription

of census respondent to (a) certain human group(s) (Horowitz, 1975), e.g., (second) ethnic nationality, (second) mother tongue, (mother / father) country of birth.

Also, as previously mentioned, this dissertation explores integration as one of the four outcomes of Berry's acculturation theory (Berry, 1990). Nevertheless, census variables were selected based on their capacity to inform on three specific acculturation dimensions among clusters of binational individuals. These are: i) institutional integration, e.g. citizenship, first / second / third generation status; ii) social integration, e.g., place of residence, occupation, level of education, iii) cultural integration, e.g., proficiency in Estonian language, religion (Penninx, 2019; Rodríguez-García, 2015).

3.4 Qualitative Studies: sample characteristics and interview framework

Studies III and **IV** consisted of semi-structured interviews conducted among parents of binational children living in Estonia. Some of the reasons behind interviewing parents for the purpose of these studies were the following: i) when approaching communities of foreign people for the purpose of recruiting participants for this research, the number of parents of binational Estonian foreign children, was significantly larger than the number of binational foreign individuals. However, this represented an opportunity because there are not many cross-sectional studies conducted among parents of "mixed" background individuals, despite they represent one of their most important ethnic identity development antecedents (Gonzales-Backen, 2013; Irastorza & Elwert, 2021; Weenink, 2008) and, ii) many studies on ethnic identity and acculturation outcomes have focused on adolescents, as this is a stage in people's lives where identity awareness and exploration are frequently more salient (Cheon et al., 2020; Crocetti, 2017; Phinney, 1989). Nonetheless, not many studies have been conducted among adults, where identity achievement and commitment are considered more common (Schwartz et al., 2014). Parental influence is considered an important element on ethnic identity and child development that has not been sufficiently explored (Campbell et al., 2019). Therefore, **Studies III** and **IV** aimed to explore ethnic identity and acculturation among adults who have experienced the parenthood of a binational child.

The sample for each study was composed of forty parents. The size of the sample was determined to ensure its credibility (Bryman, 2012), as well as to recruit the most diverse group of participants possible in terms of views, personalities and foreign parents' nationalities and genders. On the other hand, forty was a reasonable number considering that conducting separate interviews and their subsequent analysis is a time-consuming task that I carried out individually. Participants were mostly recruited through social media groups of foreigners living in Estonia combined with snowball recruitment through participants' referrals. People who expressed interest in taking part in the study received further information by email or videoconference about the research. They

received an information and consent sheet (see *appendix 1*), which explained the confidential nature of the study and the possibility to withdraw before publication. After the interviews, participants completed a control questionnaire, which collected data on gender, age-group, country of birth, nationality, mother tongue, home language, number of children and occupation.

In general, the recruited sample was mostly composed of mature young people between the bracket of twenty-five and forty years of age. Most of them had no more than two children who by the time of the interviews were no older than ten years. Most interviewees had higher education and a white-collar job (a few of them were also on parental leave at the time of the interviews). In this respect, the start-up tech sector and education stood out as fields where many participants worked. Another characteristic of the sample was their good proficiency in English plus the fact that most of them had international experience, because they had either studied or worked abroad. In some cases, these experiences led them to meet their children's mother / father. A few participants decided to withdraw their participation while I was drafting **Study IV** and after **Study III** had been published for personal reasons. However, they were happy for their partners to continue taking part. As a result of this, a few new participants had to be recruited to replace the ones that decided to opt out of the research. Only in a few cases, I asked participants if I could ask them additional questions pertinent to completing **Study IV**.

Table 3 presents the general composition of the interviewed group, including a breakdown by age group and nationality (Estonian / other EU / non -EU).

Table 3. Participants' breakdown by age group and nationality.

	Participants		
	Male	Female	Total
<i>Age group:</i>			
25–35 years	5	5	10
36–45 years	10	10	20
46–55 years	5	5	10
<i>Nationality breakdown:</i>			
Estonian informants	5	14	19
Other EU informants	3	4	7
Non-EU informants	12	2	14

Based on this control information, the recruited sample was mostly composed of people who had relatively high levels of education and income. This was not the original plan when I started recruiting people for my research and in fact, I tried to address this issue by trying to recruit a different profile of participants, e.g., Estonian-foreign couples with children who have blue-collar jobs.

However, recruiting a different type of participants would require a different strategy, which would be explained in more detail in the limitations section. Nevertheless, throughout the course of my interviews I found that interviewing people with a cosmopolitan profile did not necessarily lead to saturation. Conversely, interviews revealed that more complex processes happen within this group. I decided to further explore this throughout the conduction and subsequent analyses of interviews, which I will describe in the following section.

3.5 Interview process and analyses

Figure 1 illustrates how some of the main theories in this dissertation, e.g. social identity theory, acculturation theory and identity complexity theory were combined through the thematic analyses of interviews of parents of binational children. The interviews were focused on two main topics (also illustrated): ethnic identity and integration. I used the term *integration* as a proxy for exploring the acculturation outcomes of interviewees, since this concept was more understandable for them.

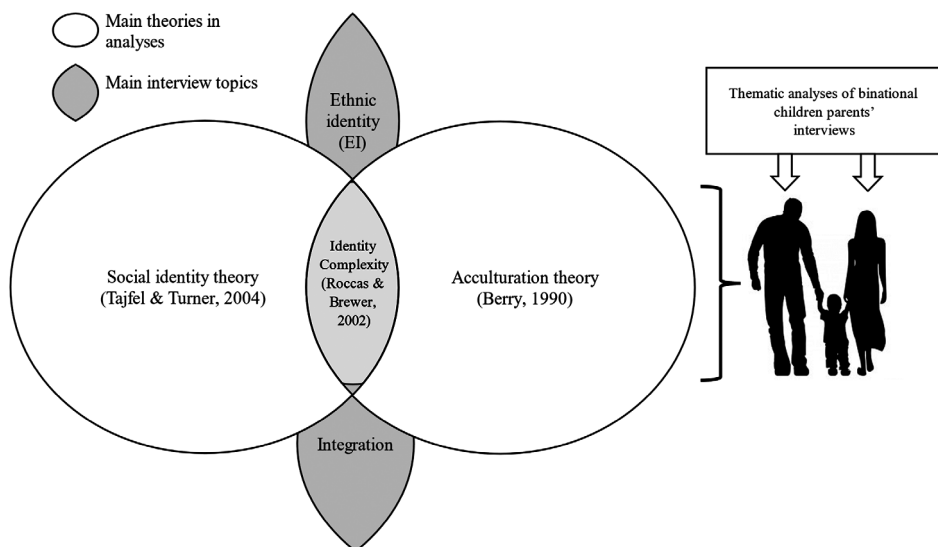


Figure 1. Theoretical framework interplay with interview topics for thematic analyses.

All interviews were conducted separately by me to allow participants to express themselves with as much freedom as possible. Videoconferencing software, (mostly Zoom and Teams) was used for the interviews, as this made it easier for informants to arrange a time to participate in the study, either during breaks at work, later in the evenings or during the weekends when they were home. In addition, this software made interview recording possible.

Participants were informed and agreed in advance through an information sheet (*see appendix 1*), as well as at the beginning of every interview, that the interviews would be recorded for the purpose of transcription and analyses. A guide questionnaire was prepared for the interviews to ensure that all subjects were covered (*see appendix 2*). Participants were also given the opportunity to request the questionnaire in advance to familiarise with the topic. However, the majority decided not to request it, which made their answers more spontaneous. In spite of having a guide questionnaire, the interviews were semi-structured, and, in every case, they had to be adapted according to each informant's personality, the information they were providing about different influential events in their lives and their level of awareness on topics such as ethnic identity an integration. As an example of this, questions had to be rephrased several times for informants who fell into the category of *low identity complexity*. I transcribed the interviews using MS Word transcription functionality. Nobody, apart from me, had access to the transcripts and the analyses were conducted also by myself. Finally, all names and markers that could lead to the identification of participants were removed from the chosen quotes that I used to illustrate my findings in the published articles.

Thematic analysis was the technique that I chose for analysing the interviews because I wanted to identify patterns that I could class into themes and sub-themes using codes, which were not pre-determined but emerged as I was analysing the interviews (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). It is worth to mention that despite having attended online seminars to use qualitative analysis software, I decided to analyse the interviews manually, as I felt that this allowed me to be closer to my data and better learn and understand qualitative analysis (Saldaña, 2013). I feel that my progress at analysing interviews is shown by the fact that the analysis in **Study III** is more complex in comparison with **Study IV**. This does not mean that there is a difference in quality between these studies, as they have different purposes. However, **Study III** presents a more linear association between how identified themes inform on identity mechanisms that they have experienced after parenthood, such as raised awareness, communication-enhancement and multi-ethnic identity development as illustrated by *figure 2*.

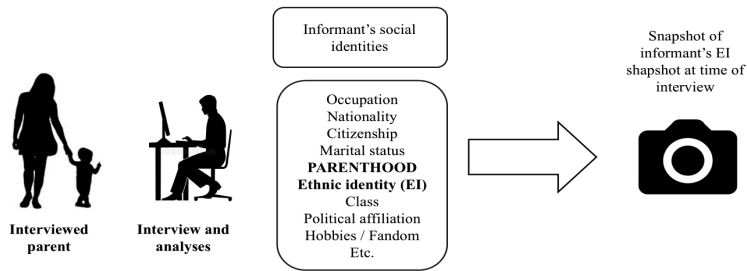


Figure 2. Snapshot of EI among interviewed parents in Study III.

On the other hand, **Study IV** involved more complex multidimensional analyses (see *figure 3*), where informants would speak about different life events that have shaped their ethnic identity and the way in which they represent their children's ethnic identity, e.g., *mostly Estonian / foreign, fifty-fifty, world citizens*. Analyses would also allow to find associations between positions towards these topics and their identity complexity.

In a nutshell, **Study III** captures a snapshot of informants' identity mechanisms at a specific point in time – after parenthood and at the time of the interview, whereas in **Study IV** analyses present wider timeline, where participants talk about their own development and, in some cases, show how ethnic identity and their feelings of integration were not relevant for them in the past but now, they are and vice-versa. In both cases, this development process has been not linear and for many informants, it was characterized by a fluid backward and forward transition between ethnic identity stages and identity complexity outcomes.

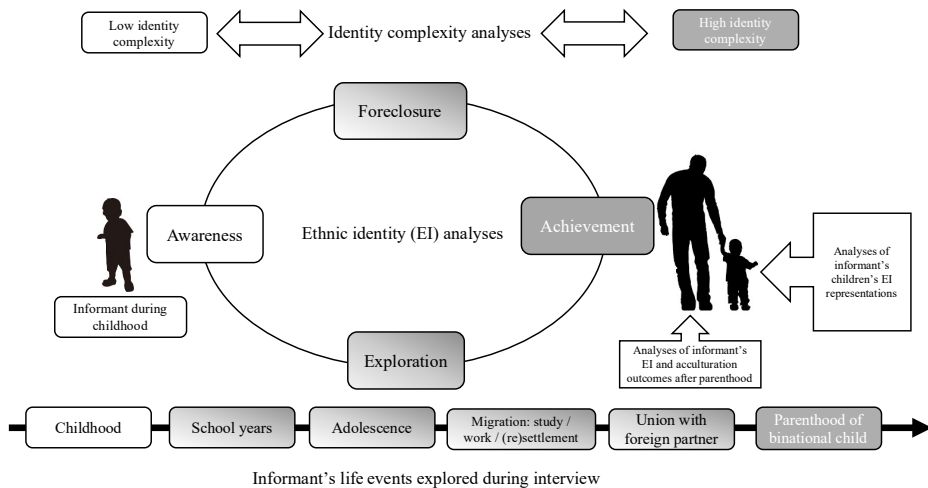


Figure 3. Multidimensional analyses of EI outcomes / children's representations and identity complexity in Study IV.

3.6 Self-reflection and ethical considerations and limitations

I am a binational family member and being an insider in my research group has provided me with certain advantages, as well as limitations that I had to consider. This means that despite my personal interest in my research topic, I always had to keep professional distance to remain objective and bear in mind that my own experiences do not represent the full spectrum of understandings on how other binational family members experience notions such as ethnic identity and integration. On the other hand, being an insider helped me to reach out and engage with other binational family parents to take part in this study and allowed me to better understand many of the theories, concepts and issues explored by the articles that form the literature used in my research. It has also involved the risk of approaching my research through the lens of my own personal thoughts and experiences. For example, through the course of my interviews, I had to keep in mind that my informants, despite being parents of binational children, might not necessarily share my enthusiasm for my research topic or even have basic understanding about notions, such as social / ethnic identity or integration. In this regard, I had to brief them and structure the interviews using the most accessible language possible. Also, it was difficult, in some cases, to extract information from certain informants whose answers were mostly monosyllabic and who struggled to express their opinions more clearly. In general, interviews as well as informant answers were usually not linear or totally coherent, which made interview analyses complex. However, the main intention was to capture the various positions of informants on research topics, rather than fixed positions.

Another two elements were useful to me for mitigating risks related to my position as an insider to my research group. The first one was my genuine desire to explore and understand my topic of research in the most objective way possible, which is through scientific research. In this respect, I have worked hard to ensure that my research is theoretically and methodologically solid. The second one is that throughout my research, I have proactively sought feedback from academics and researchers in the field. In the beginning, I did this by reaching out to many of the authors I have read, many of which agreed to talk to me online and provide me with useful advice. Thanks to this networking, I was also able to become a member of a couple of research networks on “mixed” populations, where I was able to present my research, obtain further feedback from fellow PhD students and senior researchers and even find useful conferences and publication opportunities.

Another limitation from being an insider was the difficulty of recruiting informants for my interviews that wouldn't fall into the category of cosmopolitans. In that respect, some of the obstacles I encountered were the following: i) the language barrier was very difficult for me to overcome, as many of these informants were Russian speakers with not very good command of English language. Although I speak some Russian, it was not enough for me to interview them and ask their opinion about topics that are frequently difficult to elucidate, such as

ethnic identity and integration; ii) it was hard for these participants to find a time to speak to me, as the nature of their jobs (mostly blue-collar jobs) was not as flexible as in the case of my interviewed sample. This caused that many agreed interviews had to be rescheduled and finally, cancelled by those who had initially agreed to participate and, iii) some people in this group found talking about ethnic identity and integration too sensitive and were reluctant to participate. Nevertheless, I believe that the absence of this type of informants did not have a significant impact on my research, as ultimately, it allowed me to focus on exploring the existing diversity among binational families and individuals as a segment of “mixed” background populations. Future studies can explore non-cosmopolitan binational family members and compare their findings.

With regards to the quantitative side of my research, my limitations are in many cases some of the same limitations experienced by authors who have tried to explore “mixed” populations using census data (Morning, 2020; Song, 2021). These include, among others, the self-reporting nature of census information, where people can answer certain questions subjectively or based on their good or limited understanding of certain concepts. In the case of my research, this could have had an impact on how people reported their ascription to a certain ethnic nationality. As previously mentioned, other limitations included the impossibility of linking binational individuals with their parents, to find associations between variables such as the occupation, level of education, citizenship and year of arrival in Estonia of the foreign father and the ethnic identity and acculturation outcomes of their children. However, the purpose of both quantitative studies in this dissertation is to capture the larger picture of the studied groups, as a first approach that could be a basis for further and more specialised studies.

Finally, ethical considerations were also part of all studies in this research. As an example of this, participants in qualitative **Studies III** and **IV** received an information and consent sheet (see appendix 1) and were personally informed about the confidential nature of the research. All interviews were conducted individually and in private places, so that participants could express themselves freely. In addition, any markers that might result in the identification of were changed when using any of their quotes in the articles to protect their anonymity.

I did not have access to raw data or take part in its extraction for **Study I**, which anyway, does not contain any information that could be considered sensitive or confidential. However, ESS personal data is collected, used and shared by the European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC). Further details on data protection rules are available on the following data: <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/privacy-and-data-protection/website-and-data-users>.

Conversely, in the case of **Study II**, I had to follow the guidelines for using confidential data for scientific purposes by the Estonian Statistics Agency (Statistikaamet). This included the submission of an application for accessing the Estonian Population Census for the purpose of my doctoral research at the University of Tartu. Once access was granted, I worked with the data using exclusively the safe-centre computers at the Statistikaamet office in Tartu between

March until September 2023. Finally, I had to submit all tables and graphs resulting from the extracted, analysed and processed data to the Statistikaamet, so that they could approve that they meet confidentiality requirements. Further information about the use of data for scientific purposes is available on the Statistikaamet website: <https://www.stat.ee/en/find-statistics/request-statistics/use-confidential-data-scientific-purposes>.

4. OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

4.1 Binational Estonian-foreign clusters and their associations with ethnic identity and acculturation

Results of **Studies I** and **II** do not study the same populations. However, results show that they have some common features. In this respect, both studies identified clusters among their study populations: multilingual households for **Study I** and binational individuals for **Study II**, respectively. Consequently, cluster analyses allowed to identify associations among both populations using a selection of variables. As an example of this, results in **Study I** reveal correlations between multilingualism and recent immigration rates among multilingual households from participant countries in the European Social Survey (ESS). Nevertheless, these correlations are not linear and there are significant outliers, which are represented in this study by Switzerland – a highly multilingual country and, the UK, which sits on the other end of the spectrum. In both cases, those two countries represent a cluster by themselves. Other identified clusters in this study were: i) Belgium, Germany, Ireland and Spain: multilingual cluster, ii) France and Sweden: multilingual with feelings of discrimination and ii) 10 remaining ESS participant countries: relatively low multilingualism. These countries are Lithuania, Portugal, the Netherlands, Finland, Slovenia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Norway, Poland and Estonia. This finding is in line with the associations found between ethnicity and mother tongue identified in other studies (Strömpl et al., 2012; Valk et al., 2011).

In **Study II**, data on binational individuals were extracted from raw data from the latest Estonian population census 2021. This process entailed a meticulous data sifting process until this population was finally delimited. Subsequently, different variables were tested to identify clusters that were as clear-cut as possible. After different tests, the variable *mother tongue* was considered the most suitable and resulted in three clusters: the Estonian speaking cluster (ESC), the Russian speaking cluster (the RSC) and the other-languages speaking cluster (OLC).

At first sight, such clustering of the population of binational individuals in Estonia resembles to the main ethnolinguistic classification of the country's population. Therefore, it might be natural to think that, for example, the ESC and the RSC would present similar associations to the ethnic Estonian population or the Russian speaking population, when analysed through variables such as ethnic identity- or acculturation-related variables. In other words, one could think that binational individuals in the ESC would mostly identify themselves as ethnic-Estonians, being Estonian citizens and live in Estonian-speaking areas. However, analyses reveal that more complex associations exist within binational clusters. This complexity becomes even more evident when exploring the youngest individuals in this population – 0- to 15-year-olds. Ethnic identity-related variables show that *mother tongue* and *ethnicity* are not necessarily aligned across the three clusters. As a result of this, there is a growing number of young binational

individuals who declare a different ethnicity to Estonian or Russian in the ESC and the RSC, respectively. Conversely, there is a growing number of people who declare Estonian as their ethnicity in the OLC. At the same time, the analyses of *second ethnicity* revealed that Estonian did not feature as second ethnicity across all clusters. As opposed to this, ethnicities from other EU countries prevailed in this category. Also, the analysis of second languages indicated the prevalence of English and other EU languages across all clusters.

Finally, the number of mothers of binational individuals is considerably higher than the number of fathers across all clusters: ESC: 61.58 vs 38.41%, RSC: 56.33 vs 43.67% and OLC: 59.70 vs 41.81%. This finding is particularly relevant considering that there is usually a gender dimension in the transmission of ethnic identity components (particularly language and ethnic socialisation), for which mothers usually represent an important antecedent. Nevertheless, the subsequent analyses of cluster through acculturation variables indicates that the reason behind this complex associations within clusters might lie on the fact that the population of binational individuals in Estonia has cosmopolitan characteristics. To illustrate this, binational individuals across all clusters mostly live in urban environments. Particularly, in Tallinn, where people from all clusters seem to be increasingly sharing residential space in areas that are either affluent (e.g., Pirita) or are the seat of transnational enclaves (e.g., Kesklinn, Põhja-Tallinn). Also, in Lasnamäe – Tallinn’s densely populated Russian-speaking area, also features a growing number of binational individuals from the OLC, where there is an increasing number of reported ethnic-Estonians. Binational individuals from all clusters seem to be also converging at universities, as a highly educated population and at work. In this respect, occupations in blue collar works (which are traditionally dominated by Russian speakers) are significantly declining across all clusters, while white collar jobs are growing. Because of the nature of this study, it is not possible to see how this trend compares with the general population of the country, which could be useful for further study in other studies.

Results from cluster analyses of **Study II** did not have the purpose of showing in detail what exact areas they live in or what their level of income is. Therefore, it is not possible to see at what extent binational individuals are increasingly crossing segregation boundaries or becoming part of transnational enclaves. Nevertheless, results suggest that the population of binational individuals in Estonia has complex associations in relation to notions such as ethnic identity and integration, which distinguish them from the rest of the population. These associations become more complex as younger groups of individuals are analysed and seem to have traits that are often characteristic of cosmopolitan populations. In this respect, the quantitative research conducted in **Study II** is in line with qualitative **Studies III** and **IV**, which also show cosmopolitan elements among the variety and complexity of positions that interviewed parents of binational children have in relation to ethnic identity development and acculturation.

4.2 Ethnic identity's relevance and functions among parents of binational children

Studies III and IV are based on semi-structured individual interviews conducted among a group of forty parents of binational children in Estonia. Results from **Study III** show that many interviewed parents recognise that certain social identities are more important for them at this point in their lives. In many of these cases, occupation ranked highly, followed by other social identities such as marital status, parenthood, being a son or a daughter, and having certain hobbies. Ethnicity, nationality, race or citizenship were not top-of-mind social identities for most respondents, irrespective of their condition as local or foreign nationals. In particular, the term ethnicity or ethnic identity seemed to have certain negative connotations for many of them. To illustrate this, for some informants, ethnic identity *did not have any use* in their lives, and it was more important for them to communicate and forge relationships with people who worked in their same profession or shared their same interests or hobbies.

In other cases, informants felt that they and the world (from their perspective) had *evolved* and left ethnic identity behind as an old-fashioned and, for some of them, divisive concept. In this respect, they frequently used adjectives such as *open*, *global* and *international* to describe themselves and in many cases, they used the term *global / world citizen* to represent their perceived identity. Conversely, ethnic identity has always been an important social identity throughout the lives of other informants. In many of these cases, informants mentioned that they had certain characteristics that diverged from the characteristics of the majority population in the place(s) where they grew up, e.g., race, home language, religious and cultural practices. The *global / world citizen* representation did not exclude some of these informants, who also used it to describe themselves. Nevertheless, interviews showed that the importance of ethnic identity among informants was not a dichotomy – *important vs not important*. Instead, intermediate layers were found, when participants talked about different life events that have been meaningful to shape who they currently are. For these informants, ethnic identity has been a salient social identity at certain points in their lives. For example, when going to school (as a minority-population member), when living abroad (mainly during university years and for study purposes) and, after having a foreign partner. In connection to this, many informants mentioned that they met their current partners while studying or working either internationally or in international environments. In summary, interviews revealed that on one end of the spectrum, informants for whom ethnic identity was not an important social identity had a pragmatical approach to it. Put differently, ethnic identity does not matter that much because it doesn't seem to have a positive practical use. Conversely, ethnic identity seems to have a more emotional meaning for informants on the other end of the spectrum, as in many cases it helps them to define and even explain to others who they are and why they might have behaviours and characteristics that are perceived as different.

Finally, ethnic identity was somehow intermittent in the middle of the spectrum and seems to have a mixed pragmatic and emotional character among informants in this category. To illustrate this, certain informants mentioned feeling happy and proud of sharing national food or drinks, singing songs in their language, or refuting misconceptions about their countries or ethnic groups, when interacting with people from other countries in informal environments. This seems to have a practical function for them, as it helps them to explain to others who they are and where they come from. It would also have certain emotionally charged elements that they perceive as rewarding. For example, when people validate them positively for being part of a certain country or ethnic group. This pragmatic and emotional approach to ethnic identity was revealed when informants elucidated on parenthood, as a life event that has shaped their identity. In that respect, comments by many participants revealed shifts in their levels of awareness of ethnic identity after parenthood. This was irrespective of whether previously they had mentioned that ethnic identity was important or not for them. The general feeling among most informants is that they were aware that their children did not automatically share their ethnic identity. Put differently, their children are like them, and they are not at the same time. At the same time, their children have differences and things in common with the people around them. Therefore, the awareness of these differences makes parents feel compelled to do something about these mixed feelings of belonging.

Three mechanisms were identified in this process. The first one was *becoming a teacher or a role model for a particular culture*. Informants in this category feel the need to actively transmit elements of their ethnic group to their children. In this endeavour, they feel the responsibility to pass on language, national, religious and cultural practices, etc. to their children, so that they feel part of their own ethnic group. In some cases, they can work proactively to ensure that their children feel part of their partner's group too. Some interviewed parents illustrated this in very succinct terms, where the transfer of selected ethnic identity elements from both streams is compared to a toolkit or package.

The second mechanism is related to *ensuring effective communication* between parents and their children. In this respect, many respondents mentioned that it is important for them that their children learn not only their language but also the way in which they communicate emotionally. In other words, they want them to understand their world vision, as well as the way in which they behave and react to different circumstances. Otherwise, some of them are afraid of becoming increasingly unfamiliar and growing apart. For many of these informants, ensuring effective communication and being able to switch across culture frameworks can also translate into academic, professional, and economic benefits for their children. This is an additional positive incentive for them.

Finally, the third mechanism revealed by interviews is the ability *to sustainably develop a multi-ethnic identity*. In this process, some informants mentioned that, despite the higher or lower value they give to their ethnic identity, they are aware of how they and their families have gradually incorporated foreign elements. These elements can include habits that are external to their own and their

partner's ethnic group(s) and rather come from other places where they have lived or travelled, and for which they have developed a certain affiliation. In their view, the "mixed" and multicultural character of their family makes them unique, and they want their children to appreciate and cultivate it. Some of these informants feel that this process can have a positive impact on their children's sense of self as they grow older while at the same time, can provide them with competitive advantages in the future. Put shortly, qualitative **Study III** is in line with quantitative **Study II**, as it reveals that binational families and individuals have, in general, a cosmopolitan approach to ethnic identity, where they combine affective and pragmatic elements that underpin the three identified mechanisms (see figure 4). These elements are not mutually exclusive. However, it can be said that a larger part of the views expressed by parents (illustrated by the base of the pyramid in figure 4) falls into the category of *dedicated cosmopolitans*, where parents strive to achieve the identity representation of *global / world citizens* for their families, as a result of their genuine belief of the global character of modern Western societies. At the same time, a smaller part (represented at the top of the pyramid) falls into the category of pragmatic cosmopolitans, where parents work to cultivate cosmopolitan capital to improve the social status of their families (Weenink, 2008). Ensuring that their children speak fluent English, receive international education and have citizenships that give them access to international mobility are some examples of this pragmatic approach.

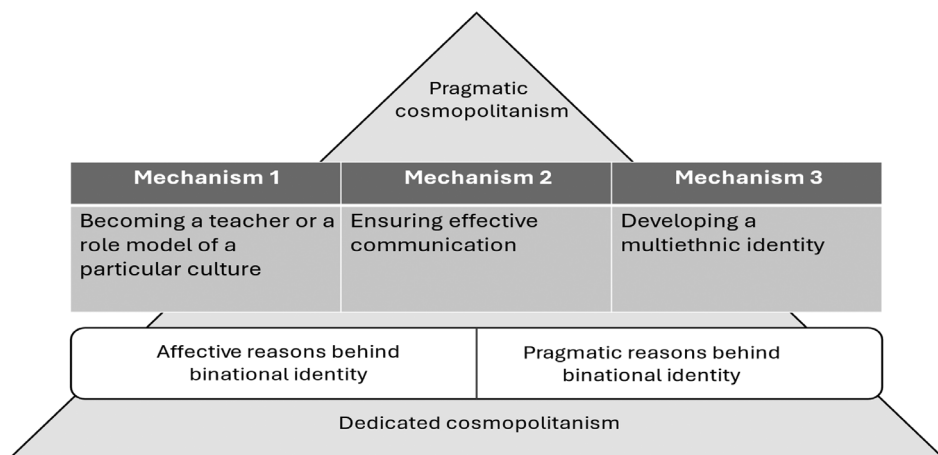


Figure 4. Ethnic identity mechanisms and cosmopolitanism.

Parenthood is a life event that seems to bring more to the surface interviewed parents' wishes of making their children feel part of their corresponding group because they perceive them as different. These differences are seen by some of them at different levels, as a challenge, but also as a competitive advantage for their families.

4.3 Identity complexity and binational children parents' perceptions and positions towards ethnic identity and acculturation

While **Study III** explored the variety of roles and mechanisms of ethnic identity among parents of binational children, **Study IV** intended to go further by investigating their causes. It studied in more depth what leads parents to perceive ethnic identity as a relevant social identity with different degrees, and to adopt certain positions in consequence. Throughout the interviews, parents were also asked questions related to their feelings of integration (as an acculturation outcome) and the integration of their families in the host society, as well as the way in which they perceive their children's ethnic identity. Based on the way in which they answered questions, some parents showed a more natural disposition to engage with and elucidate the topics of the interview. Answers showed that for parents with these characteristics, ethnic identity and integration are intricate and non-linear topics, of which they'd like to understand better given the chance. This attitude represents a cognitive strategy that is known in literature as *need for cognition* (Lins de Holanda Coelho et al., 2018). Conversely, other parents tended more towards the opposite strategy – *need for closure* (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). As a result, their answers were less complex and so to say, more *black and white*.

In line with literature, results showed that parents' disposition and answers were linked to their identity complexity (Miller et al., 2009). Nevertheless, analyses also showed that this was not a dichotomy – *high identity complexity vs low identity complexity*. Instead, two other groups were identified where parents revealed that they had transitioned from one cognitive strategy to the other at some point in their lives. I referred to these two new groups the *closure to cognition* (ClCg) group and the *cognition to closure* group (CgCl).

For parents in the ClCg group, ethnic identity has not been a very relevant social identity in their lives. However, they expressed that they have transitioned from a rather *black and white* attitude to a more open and complex understanding of it. They seem to have adopted this attitude by being exposed to transnational environments for study or working purposes. On the other hand, parents in the CgCl have adopted a closure strategy to deal with ethnic identity. In many of these cases, ethnic identity used to play a significant role throughout their childhood and young adult years. Yet, at this point in their lives they find closure more suitable.

With regards to acculturation, answers by parents in the *High identity complexity* (HIC) tended naturally to outcomes such as integration and multiculturalism. Conversely, answers that expressed assimilation, segregation and/or separation outcomes were more frequent among parents in the *Low identity complexity* (LIC) group. The ClCg expressed views on acculturation that could be classed as cosmopolitan, as they seem to have been shaped by the fact that they live and work in transnational environments. In this respect, they see themselves, their

families and the society where they live as part of a *melting pot*, where they naturally fit in and are automatically welcome. At the same time, they expressed favourable attitudes towards diversity, as long as it is not too divergent or oppositional to what they perceive as *Western or European values*.

In contrast, fitting into cosmopolitan environments has not been automatic for the CgCl group, where in many cases, interviewed parents expressed that they had to change or abandon components of their ethnic identity, e.g., language, religious practices, social connections, to transition to the dominant group. Findings also reveal that in this process parents have transitioned from being the former *subjects of separation* as part of a minority group to being *agents of segregation*, as new members of the dominant group. This might explain in part why they have adopted *the need for closure* as a coping strategy to approach ethnic identity.

Finally, results also revealed that identity complexity influences not only the way in which interviewed parents perceive and represent their children's ethnic identity, e.g., *fifty-fifty, (mostly) Estonian / foreign, global / world citizen*, but also the meaning they give to these representations. In that respect, one of the main differences is that parents in the higher identity complexity groups (HIC and ClCg) seem to have a more active approach to develop their children's ethnic identity. As opposed to this, parents in the lower identity complexity groups (LIC and CgCl) feel that they have little agency in this process. Therefore, their children's ethnic identity will be shaped mostly by the host society. This means that when parents in the HIC and ClCg group mention that their children are either *(mostly) Estonian* (a dominant identity representation) or *world / global citizens*, they actively work so that their children could develop and achieve this identity. Conversely, being *Estonian* was considered as an obvious outcome for parents choosing dominant representations for their children in the LIC and CgCl groups, as this is the place where they are growing. Nevertheless, parents in the CgCl group analyses revealed certain wish among parents for the *assimilation* (and recognition) of their children into the dominant group of the host society. The same feelings of hope for assimilation were expressed by CgCl group parents who represented their children as *global* or *world citizens*. However, in this case the host society seems to be replaced by transnational environments. Finally, being a *global citizen* for parents in the LIC seems to be a natural and somehow unavoidable condition of cosmopolitan people in the 21st Century. They feel part of this population and consequently, their children are and will be *global citizens*. That's pretty much the end of the conversation for this group of informants.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Contextual and global nature of findings in this research

This dissertation has explored *the associations, perceptions and positions of binational Estonian-foreign individuals and their families in relation to the notions of ethnic identity and acculturation* through quantitative and qualitative studies. There are several ways in which this research contributes to the study of “mixed” populations in original ways: Firstly, it **broadens the horizons** of this field by studying binational individuals and their families in a new geographical location, represented by Estonia. This contextual character had an impact in both qualitative and quantitative studies, which revealed the influence that the main ethnolinguistic divisions of the Estonian society have in the complex associations and positions of the studied group towards notions such as ethnic identity and acculturation. To illustrate this, cluster identification in **Study II** was established according to mother tongue, which was the most suitable identified variable. However, subsequent analyses revealed that binational clusters present certain divergent characteristics that distinguish them from the dominant ethnic-Estonian and Russian speaking groups. In addition, the existing **segregation** in the Estonian society has caused certain interviewed parents to migrate **from one community to the other**. At the same time, some of them have also migrated **from one cognition strategy – need for cognition, to the other – need for closure and vice versa**. This finding may be relevant to study binational families and individuals in other geographical contexts where different ethnic communities coexist and contrast their experiences through the lens of identity complexity.

However, the Estonian context does not limit the more global character and applicability of most findings. As opposed to this, results reveal the interaction of local and global elements that help us to understand better this population. To illustrate this, results from this research show that one important trait of the binational families and individuals in Estonia is that it has certain **cosmopolitan characteristics**. In this respect, they seem to be a highly educated population, mostly employed in highly skilled jobs and living in (upper) middle-class residential areas. Similarly to other cosmopolitan populations around the world, they usually consider that their foreign character is not a stigma, but an asset that equips them to belong and successfully operate in transnational communities (Wagner, 1998). However, Estonian cosmopolitan positions in relation to ethnic identity and acculturation are **influenced by local elements**, such as the fact that Estonia does not currently allow the acquisition of second nationalities. This means that most foreign-born interviewed parents have kept until the time of the interview their original nationality, which in turn influences the maintenance of their sense of ascription and affiliation for their ethnic group. Adding on to this, many of them expressed the impossibility of overcoming the language barrier to an extent that they are fluent enough to work, socialise or consume media and

entertainment in Estonia. As a result, they keep (and in some cases continue to develop) a variety of connections back home or across international environments. Conversely, some interviewed Estonian born parents that belong to the Russian-speaking minority seem to present a different process, where they strive for the assimilation of their children to the ethnic Estonian group. In this case, pragmatic advantages seem to prevail over affective components, when it comes to transmission of language(s), e.g., *Estonian and English instead of Russian*, as well as *socialisation outside their original ethnic group*. Another example on how the binational Estonian-foreign population seem to be influenced by the existing dynamics between the two dominant population groups in the country, i.e., the ethnic-Estonian and the Russian-speaking communities, is that census data analyses in **Study II** revealed three main clusters based on the variable mother tongue: the Estonian-speaking cluster (ESC), the Russian-speaking cluster (RSC) and the Other-languages-speaking cluster (OLC). These findings suggests that **cosmopolitan populations** might share one important feature with “mixed” populations, in the sense that they should be studied contextually (Varro, 2012). Future studies could explore further this aspect among (non-)cosmopolitan populations to investigate common and particular trends and characteristics. Especially in contexts like Central and Eastern Europe, where international unions are increasingly diversifying and cosmopolitan enclaves are becoming more common, as they are in the continent’s western part.

Another original element of this research is that it explores **parents** as an important **antecedent of ethnic identity** among binational families and “mixed” background populations in general, which has been understudied (Gonzales-Backen, 2013). In addition, **local parents** (another understudied group) also took part in the interviews, which is an added contribution to the research on binational families, where binational individuals and foreign parents have received more attention. In this respect, interview analyses reveal that for most parents, ethnic identity (particularly, after parenthood) continues to be a relevant type of identity, even if for most of them other social identities are more salient, e.g., occupation, marital status or even having common hobbies with other people. It is worth mentioning that many parents who took part in this study were relatively young and had young children. Interview analyses suggest that because of their recent parenthood, their sense of ethnic identity might be slightly more elevated than usual at this point in their lives. This rise of ethnic identity awareness might be also reflected in quantitative studies, such as **Study II**, where the more complex associations between the ethnic identity related census variables were found among the youngest group of binational individuals (0- to 10-year-olds). In many of these cases, ethnic ascription was likely reported by parents on behalf of their children. This might be an opportunity to further explore ethnic identity among young parents from this group in various parts of the world and to contrast it against their children’s ethnic identity outcomes when they are older and able to self-report on their ethnic identity(ies).

Despite its salience, ethnic identity seems to also have certain elements of **dedicated and pragmatic cosmopolitanism** for the studied group, which is

revealed by the fact that many of them consider themselves and their children as *world citizens* and believe that this condition can provide them with competitive advantages, i.e. cosmopolitan capital (Weenink, 2008). Nevertheless, this research also found that the term *world citizen* seems to have different meanings for interviewed parents. These meanings seem to be associated with their **identity complexity**, which conditions parents' attitudes to proactively work towards the realisation of this identity representation (*higher identity complexity*) or leaving that identity outcome to the environment (*lower levels of complexity*). In this regard, this research contributes to explore identity complexity and its associated cognitive strategies not as mutually exclusive dichotomies – high vs low identity complexity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002) and, *need for cognition vs need for closure* (Lins de Holanda Coelho et al., 2018; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994), but as multi-way processes, where interviewed parents can cross back and forth at different points in their lives.

Acculturation was another aspect explored by this research among binational family members. Findings from empirical research reveal that despite their cosmopolitan character the experience of migration seem to have an influential role among both local and foreign interviewed parents of binational children, even if this migration is in many cases intra-European and/or privileged. This is a characteristic that parents of binational children seem to share with more vulnerable immigrant groups, e.g., refugees and economic migrants, among which ethnic identity can become more salient during adulthood (Berry, 2007a). At least in the Estonian case binational family members seem differentiate from these other immigrant groups by the fact that on the one hand, they did not express feeling any strong legal or social pressures to integrate as other “mixed” or foreign background minorities in other European contexts (D'Aoust, 2017; Odasso, 2015; Wray, 2011; Zambelli & de Hart, 2025). In addition, they do not seem to be integrating to either the larger host society or into immigrant communities who share their own ethnic or national background. Instead, they seem to be integrating into **transnational residential and working enclaves**, which likely affects their socialisation. This was reflected across certain interviews where some foreign participants expressed that they felt no need to learn Estonian, as they don't need to use this language at home, at work or within their social circle. However, this cosmopolitan character, even in the Estonian context, is **not homogeneous**, which in turn suggests further diversity across cosmopolitan populations in different geographical contexts that could be explored and contrasted. At the same time, this finding supports the calls made by other studies to re-think the concept of integration considering the increasingly important role that these spaces are playing across modern societies in the European context and elsewhere (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018).

Living and working in **transnational enclaves**, combined with changes in gender roles, working practices (e.g., working from home) and the increased use of internet for studying, working and maintaining personal relationships also seem to be having an impact on the studied group's ethnic identity and acculturation outcomes, that would be useful to further investigate. To illustrate this, there

is a **gender dimension** in the transmission of ethnic identity elements (including mother tongue and ethnic socialisation) where mothers usually represent a very important antecedent (Irastorza & Elwert, 2021). However, census data analyses in this research suggests that there are increasingly non-linear associations between the significantly large numbers of mothers born in Estonia and their binational children, who do not speak Estonian as a mother tongue or do not identify themselves as being ethnic Estonians. The same can be said from mothers born overseas, whose children increasingly speak Estonian as a mother tongue and/or declare Estonian as their first ethnicity.

Perhaps this does not mean that binational children's mothers in the Estonian context are no longer concerned in actively transmitting cultural elements from their ethnic group to their children. As opposed to this, it might mean that fathers might be also **playing a more active role** and that both parents might be more concerned about transmitting elements that they consider more relevant or capable of increasing their **cosmopolitan capital**. This can include for example, speaking fluent English, which features as an increasingly prominent home language among European multilingual households and binational individuals in Estonia, as per **Studies I and II** respectively or, having the capacity of understanding and switching across cultural frameworks (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), as revealed by **Studies III and IV**.

Finally, although the nature of **Study IV** was qualitative, it was interesting to see some associations between the **identity complexity of informants** and some of their **intersectional characteristics** – particularly **gender** and whether their **country of origin** was classed as from the **Global North or South**. Analyses revealed that the HIC group was mainly formed by Estonian and other EU women followed by men from Global South countries. Global north males dominated the CIG group, while the CgI group featured Estonian women and men who were highly aware of their ethnic minority backgrounds, as well as foreign women and men from countries where religion plays a significant role. Finally, in the LIC group ethnic-Estonian males, as well as Estonian women with ethnic minority backgrounds were more present. These associations do not represent conclusive information in any way. However, it might be useful to explore them in other studies using different methodologies.

5.2 Challenges and way forward

Similarly to other studies on “mixed” populations based either on census data (Morning, 2020; Song, 2021) or interviews (Caballero et al., 2008; Gaspar, 2012), this research has faced the challenge of fully pinpointing “mixedness” among the studied group to measure its different aspects. This evasive trait of “mixed” populations was also present in **the qualitative side** of the research. In this case, when conducting interviews among parents of binational children, it was clear that they belonged to the studied group, since one interviewed parent was born and mostly raised in Estonian and the other one abroad. However, in some cases,

they would not see themselves or their families as part of the population studied. In other words, some of them had never considered their family as “mixed” or even binational. The way in which parents responded to the questions I asked during the interviews was not straightforward either. As opposed to this, they were characterised by having different degrees of incongruence, no matter what the level of awareness and disposition of participants towards ethnic identity and integration as interview topics were. In this respect, in line with other studies that have come across and dealt with the same issue, this research analysed and classified respondents’ answers based on the general inclinations that they revealed towards one position or another (M. Brewer & Pierce, 2005).

Despite its limitations the complementary character of the quantitative and the qualitative parts of this research does offer relevant insights on the main characteristics of the studied population and their associations in relation to the notions of ethnic identity and acculturation. Future quantitative studies using statistical data to research this population could try to link parents and children's data. This was one limitation from the raw data that could have been useful to better understand associations between parents’ intersectional characteristics and their children’s ethnic identity and acculturation outcomes. Nevertheless, this task is likely to require a research team and greater resources to be accomplished. On the other hand, findings of this research could be compared through longitudinal studies to investigate changes in associations and perceptions among the studied population, particularly among the youngest groups where some of the most unconventional associations were identified. Finally, future studies could further investigate binational Estonian- foreign population segments that might not fall in the category of cosmopolitan and contrast their findings with this research.

In summary, this dissertation aims to bring attention to the fact that the Estonian society is changing and beyond the two main dominant groups, there are other emerging groups, such as binational Estonian-foreign families, that would be useful to study as they might grow in number and relevance in the coming decades. Such a group, like other “mixed” populations, is altering the understanding of notions of ethnic identity and integration (as an acculturation outcome) in new ways across modern societies around the world. Both notions continue to stand for relevant elements. However, they need continuous research and sharing best practices across different contexts to find the most adequate approaches to better exploring, measuring and understanding them in the 21st century.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explores ethnic identity development and acculturation among binational Estonian-foreign family members. This has been done through a mixed methods strategy that combines qualitative and quantitative studies. In this respect, **Study I** provides information on multilingual households across Europe based on the analysis of data from the European Social Survey (ESS). This information was useful for this research as many binational family members are part of these households and help to set the scene for **Study II**, which extracted and analysed data on binational individuals from the latest Estonian Population Census (2021). Finally, qualitative **Studies III** and **IV** used thematic analyses to explore the variety of positions toward ethnic identity and acculturation among a group of parents of binational children.

Estonia is an interesting case for studying this population for several reasons. Firstly, census data reveals significant changes in the composition of not only of the binational population, but also among people, with at least one foreign-born parent since the country regained its independence in 1991. In this respect, the Russian-speaking character that used to predominate among these populations is declining and giving way to more diverse forms of “mixedness” in comparison to earlier times. Even if two main ethnolinguistic groups continue to predominate in the Estonian society, i.e., ethnic-Estonians and the Russian-speaking minority, the emerging population of binational family members seems to associate with notions such as ethnic identity and integration (understood as an acculturation outcome) in new and complex ways. Therefore, this dissertation has explored how these new “mixedness” that now features among the binational Estonian-foreign population in Estonia is reflected by studying their positions towards ethnic identity and acculturation, as well as what might be behind them. In other words, it has *explored the variety of associations that binational Estonian-foreign individuals and their families present towards the notions of ethnic identity and acculturation*.

The conclusions of this research are presented below based on the structure of the research questions:

- I. What clusters of binational Estonian-foreign individuals can be identified through statistical data and how do they reveal different associations related to ethnic identity and acculturation?**

Census data analyses in **Study II** indicate that the population of binational individuals in Estonia is influenced by patterns that are characteristic of the existing dynamics between the main dominant groups in the country: the ethnic-Estonian dominant group and the large Russian-speaking minority. Nevertheless, binational individuals increasingly seem to present more complex and non-linear associations towards ethnic identity and integration that differentiate them from these groups. Three binational clusters were identified through the variable *mother tongue*: the Estonian-speaking cluster (ESC), the Russian-speaking

cluster plus a smaller and emerging Other-languages-speaking cluster (OLC). However, when analysed through the variable *ethnicity* the first two clusters present a growing number of young individuals who do not identify their ethnicity as Estonian or Russian. Conversely, there is a larger number of young people who ascribe themselves as ethnically Estonian in the OLC.

This discrepancy is more enthralling considering that the proportion of Estonian mothers is higher than the proportion of fathers in the same category among the Estonian population and that mothers are usually active agents in the transmission of ethnic identity components, language, ethnicity, cultural practices, etc. (Gonzales-Backen, 2013; Irastorza & Elwert, 2021). Yet, the reasons behind these ethnic identity outcomes seem to be found after analysing acculturation-related census variables, which confirm that the population of binational individuals in Estonia has certain cosmopolitan characteristics across all identified clusters, such high levels of education and being employed in high-skilled jobs. It catches the attention that they seem to converge in certain residential areas of Tallinn, where cosmopolitan enclaves exist. In addition, English is a prominent second and first language among this population, which also features a fair number of citizens from other EU countries. These findings suggest that for some binational individuals, integration into cosmopolitan environments might be replacing integration into the largest host society. However, further quantitative and qualitative research would be required to investigate this in more detail. Comparing the Estonian experience with other international contexts could also be researched to better understand this phenomenon across contemporary European societies.

II. How relevant is ethnic identity as a social identity among parents of binational Estonian-foreign children and do certain mechanisms influence shifts in their ethnic identity awareness?

In **Study III**, analyses from individual interviews conducted among a group of forty parents of binational children identified three mechanisms that result from parents' elevated sense of ethnic identity after parenthood: i) becoming a teacher / role model of a particular culture, ii) ensuring effective communication, and iii) to sustainably develop a multi-ethnic identity.

Even if ethnic identity has never been a relevant social identity for many interviewed parents, parenthood activates these mechanisms, as they consciously or unconsciously realise that their children are to a certain extent different to them and to most of the people around them. Every mechanism is underpinned by affective components towards parents' own ethnic group(s), combined with pragmatic elements where parents see opportunities to obtain competitive advantages from the binational character of their family. Elements of this pragmatic approach are recurrent even among parents for whom ethnic identity has always been important throughout their lives and thus has a more emotional value.

The identity representation of *global / world citizen* was recurrent among parents throughout the interviews to refer to their own, their partner's and their children's ethnic identity. In addition, most of them do not consider the foreign

character of their family as a stigma and believe that transmitting ethnic identity components such as language, and selected national, cultural and religious practices will provide their children with the ability to navigate across cultural frameworks, which could translate in future cosmopolitan capital – the capacity to build and expand transnational networks and to operate across transnational environments. In summary, interview analyses conducted among binational parents suggests that similarly to other immigrant background groups, the process of migration influences the salience of ethnic identity also among adults. This process seems to become more evident among the studied group after parenthood. However, their pragmatic approach to ethnic identity and the competitive advantage they see from promoting this social identity and multicultural mindset also suggest that they are a cosmopolitan population.

III. What elements characterise the perceptions and positions of parents of binational Estonian-foreign children in relation to the notions of ethnic identity and acculturation?

Findings in **Study IV** suggest that identity complexity is an added element that influences the value that interviewed parents give to ethnic identity. In addition, further associations were explored between identity complexity and parent's acculturation attitudes plus the way in which they represent their children's ethnic identity(ies). Analyses revealed that identity complexity is not a fixed dichotomy – *high (HIC) vs low (LIC) identity complexity*, where HIC is associated with the *need for cognition* strategy and LIC is associated with *need for closure*. As opposed to this, identity complexity seems to have a fluid character, and this research identified two new groups, where parents have transitioned from one cognitive strategy to another at some point in their lives. These groups are the *closure to cognition* group (ClCg) and the *cognition to closure* group (CgCl). Parents with higher levels of identity complexity presented higher levels of awareness and were able to provide more complex answers when elucidating about their own and their children's ethnic identity. The opposite occurred among parents with lower levels of identity complexity.

In terms of acculturation, understood under Berry's (1990) framework, the HIC group presented attitudes favourable to *integration* and *multiculturalism*, while the CgCl group expressed accepting views of a *melting pot* society, where people of different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds can "mix" as long as they assimilate (or at least don't deviate much) from what they consider *Western / European* values. On the other side of the spectrum, *assimilation*, *separation* and *segregation* attitudes were more recurrent among people with lower levels of identity complexity. In addition, in the last group (CgCl) some people not only transitioned from one cognition strategy (*need for cognition*) to the other (*need for closure*). They also transitioned from being subjects of segregation as members of an ethnic minority, to being agents of segregation as part of the majority group.

Finally, identity complexity is not only associated with the variety of identity representations that parents in each identified group use to describe their

children's ethnic identities, but also with the meanings they give them. The reason behind this seems to be that parents with higher levels of identity complexity feel that ethnic identity development mostly depends on them and on how efficient they are at exposing and transmitting ethnic identity components to their children. Conversely, parents with lower levels of identity complexity feel their influence is powerless against the influence of the environment where their children will grow up.

Once again, ethnic identity representations used by parents revealed cosmopolitan motivations. For example, some parents in the HIC and CICg group represent their children as *mostly Estonian*. What they mean by using this term is that they wish to foster an Estonian identity in their children to counterbalance the influence of a stronger *Western / European* cosmopolitan identity. Conversely, some parents in the CgCI group express the wish of seeing their children assimilated and recognised as part of the ethnic Estonian / European group(s) (to which they ascribe now), as this could facilitate their access to transnational environments and gain further cosmopolitan capital. The same happened with the *global / world citizen* representation, which parents with lower levels of identity complexity perceived as a natural condition of their families living in a modern society, while parents on the other side of the spectrum feel that they must actively work to achieve and maintain this ethnic identity outcome among their children.

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APPENDIX 1

Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form PhD Research Project

You are invited to participate as informant in the research project “Ethnic identity and integration among binational Estonian-foreign families in Estonia” conducted by PhD student Gabriel Ceballos (the researcher) from the Institute of Social Studies at the University of Tartu.

About the research project:

Understanding the notion of identity is important, as a healthy sense of self and group belonging has consequences across many aspects of people’s lives – from mental and physical wellbeing to academic and professional performance, to mention only a few.

This research project will focus on the study of ethnic identity – a complex concept that in quite simple terms aims to answer the fundamental question of “who are my people”?

The group we will work with is formed parents of family units where one parent is Estonian, and the other one has an immigrant background – from a person who has been living in Estonia for many years to a recently or newly arrived person. Parents’ marital status or children’s age represent no restrictions for taking part in the project.

This type of families is growing around the world, and Estonia is not the exception. However, there is still little information about how ethnic identity forms and develops among these families, whose characteristics and experiences are truly diverse and unique.

Since you are a member of this type of families, understanding your views and experience will be especially useful to further scientific knowledge in this area to the benefit of families like yours and society in general.

How can you participate?

If you agree to take part of this research project, your participation will consist of participating in an online interview with a duration of approximately 45 minutes, where the researcher will ask you questions about your perceptions of your own and your family ethnic identities, as well as about Estonia as a place to raise a family with a multi-ethnic identity.

Interviews will be semi-structured based on a questionnaire that can be provided to you in advance, upon request. If you don’t wish to receive the questionnaire in advance, your spontaneous answers will be very much valued in this research.

The research project is part of a longitudinal study on mixed families that will last for three years from the date of this document. This means that you could be contacted again to take part in subsequent interviews (at least one and no more than two) in one or two years, to see if there are any changes in your answers, that could help the research to identify key elements shaping ethnic identity.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Interviews will be conducted via Skype, Zoom, or Teams, as per your preferences. They will be recorded, and the audio will be transcribed using transcription software for processing and analysis purposes.

The information collected entails very little risk for participants. However, the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants will be ensured, and no names or information that would allow to identify them will be disclosed in the results of the research, which might be published in a relevant scientific publication.

In addition, only the researcher will have access to video and audio files, which will be deleted upon completion of the research.

Parents' interviews will be conducted separately since contrasting answers from the same family is very useful for the purpose of this research. In this case too, anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured.

Participants will be also able to withdraw their participation in this research project by contacting the researcher at any time before the publication of results.

When will the interview be conducted?

If you agree to participate, the researcher will contact you and arrange a time to interview you at your convenience. All interviews will be conducted between June and August 2022 and the results of the first part of the project shown in a scientific publication as early as possible in 2023.

There is no remuneration offered to participants in interviews within this project. However, we hope that the published results (which can be shared with you upon request) will be useful for you to raise your awareness and knowledge about identity formation as an important element for the wellbeing of families like yours.

Further questions and researcher's contact details

If you require any further information, please contact the researcher at this email address. gabriel.alberto.cebillos.rodriguez@ut.ee or phone: +372 53832641 (also available on WhatsApp).

Your consent

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you understand the purpose and main features of this research project and confirm your participation in the interviews.

We thank you in advance for your participation!

Participant's name:

Participant's signature (written / electronic):

APPENDIX 2

Guide questionnaire

Ethnic identity and development among binational Estonian-foreign families in Estonia

Social identity is a complex and multidimensional concept. However, in simple terms it can be described as who people think they are based on their knowledge and emotional attachment towards the groups they consider they belong to.

People can have many different social identities and have different roles within them, such as mother, manager, member of a cultural association, etc.

Nevertheless, this interview will be focused on ethnic identity – another complex notion that, in simple words, responds to the question “who my people are?”.

Through this semi-structured interview, we’ll explore aspects of yours and your family’s ethnic identity(ies) to try to understand your views as a member of a multi-ethnic family living in Estonia.

Once again, thank you for your participation in this interview and if you have any questions, please let me know at any time.

Interview guiding questionnaire¹

Importance of personal ethnic identity(ies):

1. How would you describe yourself ethnically?
2. What things make you feel that you belong to (your selected ethnic group(s))?
3. How important is it for you to be (*your selected ethnic group(s)*)?
4. If you would not be (*your selected ethnic group(s)*), do you think you could be from a different ethnic group?

Life events shaping ethnic identity(ies) and acculturation

5. What life events have shaped the way you feel about belonging to (your selected ethnic group(s))? How has this happened?
6. What has shaped the way you feel about belonging to (your selected ethnic group(s))?
7. How have your feelings about (your selected ethnic group) changed since you moved to Estonia?
8. How have your feelings about (your selected ethnic group) changed since you became a parent?

Perceptions of children’s ethnic identity(ies)

9. How would you describe your children ethnically?
10. How important is it for you that your children identify themselves as belonging to (your ethnic group)?

¹ The questions in this guide are for reference purposes only. Their content and order might be modified as the interview progress and further relevant questions might be included.

11. What aspects of (your selected ethnic group) would you like to see incorporated in their children?
12. What advantages / disadvantages do you think feeling that they belong to (your selected ethnic group) will bring to your children's lives?

Perceptions on family's ethnic identity development and acculturation:

13. How important is for you that your children identify themselves as Estonian?
14. In your view, what elements are part of your partner's ethnic identity?
15. Are any of these elements incompatible with your ethnic identity?
16. What obstacles do you see or have you experienced in the place where you live that would prevent your children from identifying themselves as Estonians and/or multicultural?
17. Do you think it would be any different in other places within the country / abroad?
18. How do you think you and your children will experience ethnic identity in ten years?

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Rahvuslik identiteet ja kultuuriline kohanemine kaherahvuseliste eesti- ja välispäritolu perede ning inimeste puhul

Viimaste kümnendite jooksul on kaherahvuseliste paaride ja perekondade arv paljudes riikides suurenenud (Daniel & Kina, 2014). Seda kinnitavad näiteks andmed riikidest nagu Holland (Kalmjin & van Tubergen, 2006; Statistiek, 2020; Van Mol & de Valk, 2018), Rootsi (Adolfsson, 2021; Hübinette & Arbouz, 2019; Statistics Sweden, 2021) ja Prantsusmaa (Odasso, 2017b, 2017a), millel on pikem sisserände ajalugu, kuid ka andmed maadest, kus sisseränne on uuema aja nähtus, nagu Portugal (Gaspar, 2008, 2012), Itaalia (Cerchiaro, 2017; Odasso 2015), Hispaania (Rodríguez-García, 2015; Rodríguez-García jt, 2015) ja Poola (Sowa-Behtane, 2017; Statistics Poland, 2021). Kaherahvuselised paarid ja inimesed on osa elanikkonnast, mida kutsutakse ka segarahvastikuks (ingl *mixed population*) (Caballero *et al.* 2008; Odasso, 2018; Song, 2017; Varro, 2012). Inglise- ega eesti keeles ei ole sõnal *mixed* (ehk „sega“) ühtset tähendust, kuid seda kasutavad eri valdkondade teadlased ja teaduskirjandus, et kirjeldada perekondi, üksikisikuid ja rahvastiku rühmi, mis on tekkinud eri taustaga (kodakondsus, rahvus, rass, kultuur, religioon ja isegi sotsiaal-majanduslik taust) inimeste segunemisel (Collet, 2012a).

Kaherahvuseliste perede identiteeti ja selle kujunemist on vähe uuritud, sest see on jäänud teiste mitmerahvuselisust käsitlevate uurimuste varju, mille puhul keskendutakse muudele aspektidele, näiteks rassile. Rass on mitmerahvuselisuse silmajäävaim element, mis lätab oma jälje näiteks inimese akadeemilistele saavutustele, majanduslikule toimetulekule (Bisin *et al.*, 2011; Hughes *et al.*, 2009), füüsilisele ja vaimsele tervisele (Haslam *et al.* 2009b; Travassos & Williams, 2004).

Selles väitekirjas kasutan sõna „kaherahvuseline“, et viidata perekondadele ja inimestele, kelle vanemad on sündinud ning enam kui poole oma elust elanud mõnes muus riigis. Täpsemalt keskendun selles töös Eesti ja välispäritolu peredele ja üksikisikutele.

Eesti on huvitav paik, kus kaherahvuselisi inimesi ja nende perekondi uurida, sest vaatamata immigratsiooni olulisele mõjule, on Eestis seni uuritud peamiselt eesti- ja venekeelseid rühmi (Puur *et al.* 2018; van Ham & Tammaru, 2011).

2021. aasta rahvaloenduse andmetel oli Eesti rahvaarv üle 1,3 miljoni. Eesti on multietniline riik, kus elab inimesi peaaegu kahesajast rahvusest (Leppik, 2020). Riigis on kaks suurt keelerühma: eestlased, kes viimase rahvaloenduse andmetel moodustasid riigi rahvastikust 69%, ja suur venekeelne vähemus. Venekeelne vähemus moodustab viimase rahvaloenduse põhjal rahvastikust 24% ja on etniliselt mitmekesine (Statistikaamet, 2021).

Eesti sotsiaalne, majanduslik ja tehniline areng ning liitumine Euroopa Liiduga on viimase 20 aasta jooksul meelitanud Eestisse rohkelt erineva taustaga

inimesi. See on suurendanud ka võimalusi uut tüüpi mitmerahvuseliste perede tekkeks. Siiski on paaride ja üksikisikute mitmerahvuselisus Ida- ja Kesk Euroopa riikides veel võrdlemisi uus uurimisvaldkond (Sowa-Bethane, 2017).

Selle väitekirja eesmärk on **uurida kaherahvuseliste eesti ja välispäritolu inimeste ning perede sidemeid, arusaamu ja seisukohti rahvusliku identiteedi ja kultuurilise kohanemise kohta.**

Esimene ja **teine** uurimus on kvantitatiivsed ja annavad ülevaade kaherahvuselistest peredest Eestis ja Euroopas. Nende uurimuste põhjal leitakse klastrid, ehk rahvastikurühmad, mille vahel leidub sarnasusi. Klastreid uuritakse seejärel nii rahvusliku identiteedi muutujate (emakeel, kodune keel, rahvus jne) kui ka kultuurilise kohanemise muutujate kaudu (tunded diskrimineerimise suhtes, amet, haridustase jne). **Kolmas** ja **neljas** uurimus on kvalitatiivsed ning nendes uuritakse põhjalikumalt rahvuslikku identiteeti ja kultuurilist kohanemist. **Kolmas uurimus** tugineb kaherahvuseliste perede lastevanematega tehtud poolstruktureeritud intervjuudel ning käsitleb rahvusliku identiteedi ja lõimumise tähtsust ning protsessi. **Neljas uurimus** keskendub teguritele, mis võivad mõjutada intervjuueeritavate arusaamu ja seisukohti rahvusliku identiteedi ja kultuurilise kohanemise kohta. Uurimistöö järeldused on esitatud allpool.

1. uurimisküsimus: Milliseid kaherahvuselisi eesti- ja välispärituolu üksikisikute klastreid on võimalik tuvastada ning kuidas need klastrid näitavad rahvusliku identiteedi ja kultuurilise kohanemise seoseid? **Esimene ja teine uurimus.**

Teises uurimuses analüüsitud rahvaloenduse andmed viitavad, et praeguseks on kaherahvuselistel inimestel rahvusliku identiteedi ja lõimumisega keerulisem ning vähem lineaarne suhe, mis eristub senisest kaherahvuselisuse dünaamikast, kus on olnud etniliste eestlastest enamus ja suur venekeelne vähemus.

Emakeele põhjal tuvastati kolm kaherahvuseliste rühma Eestis: eestikeelne rühm, venekeelne rühm ning, väiksem ja kujunemisjärgus, muukeelne rühm. Kui rühmi analüüsiti *rahvuse* tunnuste abil, tuvastati esimese kahes rühmas üha enam noori, kes ei samasta end rahvuselt eestlaste ega venelastega. Kolmandas, ehk muukeelses, rühmas on aga rohkem end etnilisteks eestlasteks pidavaid noori. See tulemus on tähelepanuväärne, sest selles grupis inimestel on rohkem eestlastest emasid, kes tavapäraselt kannavad rahvuslikku identiteeti, keelt, etnilist kuuluvust, kultuuritavasid rohkem kui isad (Gonzales-Backen, 2013; Irastorza & Elwert, 2021). Eestis on kõigis kaherahvuseliste üksikisikute rühmades teatud kosmopoliitsed tunnused, nagu kõrge haridustase ja kõrgepalgaline töökoht. Eriti tähelepanuväärne on see, et Tallinnas näivad need tunnused koonduvat kindlatesse elurajoonidesse, mis on kujunenud kosmopoliitsemateks piirkondadeks.

Peale selle on inglise keel kasutusel emakeele ja teise keelena kosmopoliitse elanikkonnarühma hulgas, kellest paljud on mõne teise Euroopa Liidu riigi kodanikud. Nende tulemuste põhjal võib öelda, et mõne kaherahvuselise inimese jaoks on kosmopoliitse keskkonnaga lõimumine asendamas lõimumist domineeriva keelegrupi, ehk eestlastega. Täpsemate järelduste tegemiseks on vaja aga

edasisi kvantitatiivseid ja kvalitatiivseid uuringuid. Eesti kogemusi tuleks võrrelda muude riikidega, et mõista tänapäeval Eestis, ja ka teistes Euroopa ühiskondades, seda nähtust paremini.

2. uurimisküsimus: Kui oluline on rahvuslik identiteet kui sotsiaalne identiteet kaerahvuseliste perede lastevanemate seas ning millised mehhanismid mõjutavad muutusi nende rahvusteadvuses? **Kolmas uurimus.**

Kolmandas uurimuses analüüsiti 40 kahest rahvusest lapsevanemaga peret ja tuvastati kolm mehhanismi, mis viisid vanemate rahvusliku identiteedi tugevnemiseni pärast lapsevanemaks saamist. Need mehhanismid on järgmised: i) kindla kultuuri õpetajaks / eeskujuks olemine, ii) tulemusliku suhtluse tagamine ja iii) mitmerahvuselise identiteedi kujundamine.

Isegi kui rahvus ei ole kunagi olnud paljude intervjueeritavate jaoks tähtis sotsiaalne identiteet, võib koos lapsevanemaks saamisega toimuda selle identiteedi tugevnemine. Lapsevanemad mõistavad, teadlikult või alateadlikult, et nende lapsed on nende endi ja neid ümbritsevate inimeste silmis mõnevõrra erinevad. Seda mõjutab see, mida lapsevanemad tunnevad omaenda rahvusrühma suhtes, aga neid mõjutab ka pragmaatiline mõtteviis, kus nähakse oma pere kaerahvuselisuses konkurentsieelist. Pragmaatilise lähenemise tunnused esinevad veelgi enam nende vanemate seas, kelle rahvuslik identiteet on alati mänginud nende elus tähtsat osa, mistõttu on sellel ka suurem emotsionaalne väärtus.

Vanematega tehtud intervjuudest tuli korduvalt välja *maailmakodaniku* identiteet, millega kirjeldatakse iseenda, oma partnerite ja laste rahvuslikku identiteeti. Lisaks ei nähtud oma perekonna välispäritolu alavääristava omadusena, vaid usuti, et rahvusliku identiteedi tunnused, nagu keel ning mõned rahvuslikud, usu- ja kultuuritavad, aitavad lastel eri kultuurides orienteeruda, mis annab neile tulevikus juurde sotsiaalset- ja kultuurilist kapitali. Näiteks suudavad lapsed seetõttu tulevikus paremini tegutseda ja töötada rahvusvahelistes võrgustikes ja keskkondades. Kokkuvõttes viitab analüüs sellele, et ränne mõjutab ka täiskasvanute seas rahvusliku identiteedi tunnetust. Uuritava rühma seas suurenes rahvuse tähtsus pärast lapsevanemaks saamist. Nende pragmaatiline lähenemine rahvuslikule identiteedile ja tunnetatav konkurentsieelis viitavad asjaolule, et tegu on valdavalt kosmopoliitse elanikkonnaga.

3. uurimisküsimus: Mis iseloomustavad kaerahvuseliste perede lapsevanemate hoiakuid ning arusaamu rahvuslikust identiteedist ja kultuurilisest kohanemisest? **Neljas uurimus.**

Neljanda uurimuse tulemuste põhjal võib oletada, et väärtust, mille andsid rahvuslikule identiteedile intervjueeritavad, mõjutab ka identiteedi keerukus. Uuringus käsitleti seda, kuidas on seotud identiteedi keerukus ja vanemate hoiakud kultuurilise kohanemise suhtes, arvestades seda, kuidas vanemad tunnetavad oma laste rahvuslikku identiteeti. Analüüsist selgus, et identiteedi keerukus ei jagune alati kaheks – suure ja vähese identiteedikeerukusega rühmadeks, milles *identiteedi suur keerukus* seostuks *tunnetuse vajadusega*, ja *identiteedi vähene*

keerukus, mis sellele vastandub, *selguse vajadusega*. Selle asemel tundub identiteedi keerukus olevat voolava iseloomuga. Uurimuses tuvastati kaks uut rühma vastavalt sellele, kuidas vanemad vahetasid ühe kognitiivse strateegia välja teise vastu. Esimene neist on rühm „*selgusest tunnetuseni*“ ja teine „*tunnetusest selguseni*“. Varem kasutasid rühma „*selgusest tunnetuseni*“ kuuluvad vanemad selguse vajaduse kognitiivset strateegiat, mis ilmneb vastumeelsuses leida lahknevates sotsiaalsetes identiteetides kattuvusi. Hiljem vahetasid nad strateegiat, keskendudes rohkem tunnetuse vajadusele, mida on seostatud suurema keerulisusega. Rühmas „*tunnetusest selguseni*“ oli toimunud vastupidine protsess. Samal ajal on identiteedi suurema keerukusega vanematel suurem teadlikkus ning nad suudavad enda ja laste rahvuslikku identiteeti kirjeldades anda sisukamaid vastuseid kui vähema identiteedikeerukusega vanemad.

Kultuurilise kohanemise puhul, mida vaadeldi Berry (1990) raamistiku kaudu, suhtus identiteedi suurema keerukusega rühm *lõimumisse* ja *mitmekultuurilisusse* soosivalt. Rühm „*tunnetusest selguseni*“ eelistas *sulatusahju-tüüpi* ühiskonda, kus eri rahvusest, rassist ja kultuurist inimesed võivad seguneda juhul, kui nad sulanduvad väärtustega, mis on nende arvates omased *läänemaailmale* ja *Euroopale*. Identiteedi vähema keerukusega inimeste hoiakud kaldusid pigem *assimilatsiooni* ja *segregatsiooni* poole. Peale selle ei liikunud rühma „*tunnetusest selguseni*“ liikmed mitte üksnes ühe kognitiivse strateegia (*tunnetuse vajadus*) juurest teise (*selguse vajadus*) juurde, vaid neist oli saanud ka rahvuslik enamus.

Identiteedi keerukus seostub identiteedi paljude vormidega, mille abil lapsevanemad kirjeldavad oma laste rahvuslikku identiteeti. Peale selle annavad lapsevanemad identiteedile ka omapoolseid tähendusi. Identiteedi suurema keerukusega intervjuueeritud tundsid, et nende laste rahvusliku identiteedi areng sõltub peamiselt neist endast ja sellest, kui tõhusalt suudavad vanemad lastele oma rahvusrühma tutvustada ning anda edasi rahvusliku identiteedi omadusi. Vanemad, kelle identiteet oli vähem keerukas, väljendasid seevastu, et nende mõjutused on nõrgemad keskkonnast, milles nende lapsed üles kasvavad.

Taas kasutasid lapsevanemad rahvusliku identiteedi vorme viisil, millest ilmesid nende kosmopoliitsed kavatsused. Mõni suurema identiteedikeerukusega rühma vanem ja vanem, kes kuulus rühma „*selgusest tunnetuseni*“, kirjeldas oma lapsi *peamiselt eestlastena*. See tähendab, et nad soovivad sellise määratlusega edendada oma lastes eestlase identiteeti ning tasakaalustada *Lääne ja Euroopa* kosmopoliitse identiteedi tugevat mõju. Mõni lapsevanem rühmast „*tunnetusest selguseni*“ väljendas seevastu soovi näha lapsi Eesti ühiskonda assimileeritud etniliste eestlaste või eurooplaste elanikkonnarühma liikmena (millega nad ise suhestuvad), sest nii jõuaksid nad rahvusvahelisse keskkonda ning omandaksid rohkem kosmopoliitset kapitali. Sama juhtus ka *maailmakodaniku* representatsiooniga: identiteedi vähema keerukusega lapsevanemad nägid seda loomuliku tingimusena, mis võimaldab neil elada tänapäevases ühiskonnas; kõrgema identiteedikeerukusega vanemad tõid aga välja, et lastes rahvusliku identiteedi loomine ja selle säilitamine nõuab pidevat tööd.

PUBLICATIONS

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