

Sarah Smyth and Conny Opitz (editors)

**Negotiating Linguistic,  
Cultural and Social Identities  
in the Post-Soviet World**

Peter Lang

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MARTIN EHALA AND ANASTASSIA ZABRODSKAJA

## Ethnolinguistic vitality of ethnic groups in the Baltic countries

### Introduction

Ethnolinguistic vitality 'is that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations' (Giles et al. 1977: 308). It has been suggested that groups that have low vitality are likely to cease to exist as distinctive collectives, while those that have high vitality are likely to survive.

Ethnolinguistic vitality is a complex social psychological phenomenon, a collective mindset to behave distinctively as a group. It is formed by several factors that will be outlined in Section 1. Vitality is also related to the group's strength, sometimes called 'objective vitality', which is determined by three structural variables: demography, institutional support and status (Giles et al. 1977). For our analysis, we also present short accounts of the strength of the groups whose vitalities are analysed (Section 2). Objective vitality serves as an important reference point for assessing how vitality, which is socially constructed, reflects objective reality. In Section 3, the methodology of the study and sample design are addressed. Finally, the chapter presents the results of three quantitative surveys of the ethnolinguistic vitality of the main ethnic groups in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The results are discussed comparatively, in an effort to further our understanding of ethnolinguistic vitalities of the Baltic titular groups and minorities.

## I. Theoretical background

Although the concept of vitality is intuitively clear and has remained attractive for researchers, it has been criticized for being a rough and unreliable tool for measuring a group's ability to behave collectively as a distinctive entity (Husband and Saifullah Khan 1982). As a response to this criticism, Ehala (2005, 2008, 2010a, 2010b) developed an extended theory of ethnolinguistic vitality (EEV) that draws on previous models of ethnolinguistic vitality (Giles et al. 1977; Sachdev and Bourhis 1993; Allard and Landry 1994; Landry et al. 1996; Bourhis 2001) and several other works on the social psychology of language maintenance (Conklin and Lourie 1983; Edwards 1985, 1994; Fishman 1986; Smolicz 1981; Sanders 2002). EEV specifies the structural relationships between its four key variables that affect the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups:

1. perceived strength differential (PSD) between the in-group ('us') and the most prominent out-group ('them');
2. the level of intergroup discordance (D);
3. perceived intergroup distance (R);<sup>1</sup> and
4. the level of utilitarianism (U) in the value system of the group studied.

All these factors are sociopsychological, and they reflect group members' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about their own group and interethnic relations in the setting in which they live. EEV is operationalized in a way that makes it possible to assess these factors on a scale, so that each respondent is characterized by a vitality score. By calculating the average score for the sample and/or finding subgroups with different vitality scores, it becomes possible to assess the vitality of a given group, i.e. its readiness to act as a collective entity in intergroup relations. Below we characterize each of the subcomponents of EEV in more detail.

<sup>1</sup> R comes from the notion of radius, from the metaphor of ethnic groups having a certain gravity that attracts their members. The attraction decreases as the value of R grows.

### 1.1. Perceived strength differential (PSD)

The driving force behind language shift is the power difference between dominant and minority groups. Language and identity maintenance depends on the opportunities and rewards, real or symbolic (including positive social identity), that the competing groups can provide for their members. The sum of these factors can be called the perceived strength of the group. In EEV, perceived strength is the same variable that is understood as 'subjective vitality' in the standard ethnolinguistic vitality theory (see Bourhis et al. 1981).

For group vitality, the crucial factor is not perceived strength itself, but the perceived strength differential between the in-group and the most prominent out-group. The reason is that groups exist in their sociohistorical settings and the perception of the strength of the 'us' group depends on the relative strength of any 'them' groups (see Figure 1).

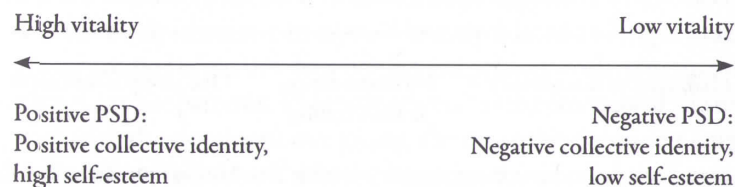


Figure 1 Interdependence between group vitality V and the perceived strength of the groups' PSD

In general, if PSD is small, the benefits of shifting one's group membership do not outweigh the emotional and social costs needed for a radical identity shift. The more PSD is in favour of the out-group, the more beneficial it seems to shift identity. Thus, provided that the influence of all other factors is zero, the group V is equal to the differential of the perceived strengths ( $S_{we}$  and  $S_{they}$ ) of the minority (in our case, Russian-speaking) and majority (Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian) groups. Mathematically, this can be formulated as follows:  $V = PSD = S_{we} - S_{they}$ . If  $V < 0$ , then the group has low vitality; in other words, it has low potential to act as a group, a condition that may lead to identity and language shift. If  $V \geq 0$ , then the group is vital, i.e. it is able to function as a group and to maintain its identity over time.

### 1.2. Intergroup discordance (D)

Intergroup discordance (D) expresses the perceived illegitimacy of the intergroup power relations, as well as distrust towards the out-group. For example, if a minority group perceives its low status to be legitimate, its members may exhibit out-group favouritism (Sachdev and Bourhis 1991; Batalha et al. 2007), which encourages identity and language shift. On the other hand, if the situation is perceived to be illegitimate, the members are likely to feel distrust towards the majority. In such conditions, there is less motivation and possibility for individual minority group members to shift their identities. Instead, the minority will be more prone to act collectively for justice. Thus, the lower the sense of legitimacy (i.e. the stronger the feeling of injustice) and the higher the perception of distrust towards the powerful out-group, the higher the vitality of the minority group.

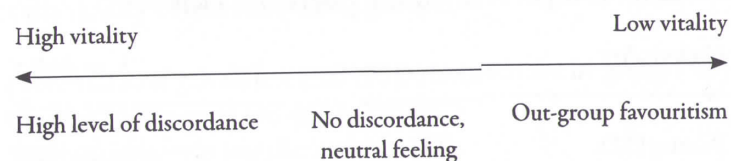


Figure 2 Interdependence between group vitality V and intergroup discordance D

The relationship between D and the other components of V needs to be specified, too. It would be reasonable to assume that the larger the negative PSD and the lower the value of D (i.e. the more legitimate the situation is considered to be, and the more trusting the attitudes are towards the out-group), the lower the V value of the respective group (see Figure 2). In this case, the low-status group is unlikely to challenge the existing power relations, as it feels too weak and perceives its own status as legitimate. The smaller the negative PSD and/or the higher P, the higher the V value, as the low-status group has both the motivation (establishing justice) and the perceived strength to change the power relations. When D is incorporated, the V formula takes the following form:  $V = S_{we} - S_{they} + D$ .

It is reasonable to assume that in a case where there is neither perceived discordance with the out-group nor perceived out-group favouritism, the

value of D would be equal to zero, i.e. it would not affect the value of V. The higher the positive value of D, the more it will reduce the negative value of PSD, leading to higher values of V. If D has a negative value (indicating out-group favouritism), it will increase the negative value of PSD, leading to lower values of V.

### 1.3. Intergroup distance (R)

Intergroup distance (R) relates to the extent of intergroup contact and the distinctiveness of features characterizing the group. The avoidance of intergroup contact expresses a group's disposition to maintain its in-group networks, while the environment offers opportunities for the development of a different network that unavoidably weakens the heritage network (Landry et al. 1996). Therefore, a disposition to maintain segregative minority networks would enhance V, despite a large negative PSD.

The network structure, in turn, is heavily related to language use: as intergroup contact often involves two languages, network structure determines language use patterns. The more numerous the contacts of the minority group with the dominant out-group, the more the dominant language tends to be used. This means that the language use pattern is often a good indicator of the extent of intergroup contact. Besides language, intergroup distance can also be marked by other features, such as religion and other cultural practices (Myhill 2003), as well as racial features. Ultimately, intergroup distance is dependent on the symbolic and discursive factors that establish the norms concerning the acceptability, extent and nature of intergroup contacts; this is also related to ethnic distinctiveness (see Figure 3).

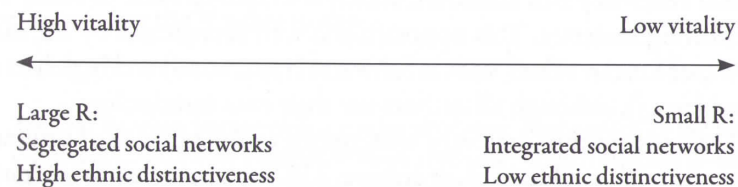


Figure 3 Interdependence between group vitality V and intergroup distance R

Thus, all other factors being constant, the less intergroup contact takes place and the more distinct the groups appear, i.e. the larger  $R$ , the higher  $V$ . Mathematically, the relationship of intergroup distance to the other factors can be expressed as  $V = ((S_{we} - S_{they}) + D) / R$ .

The minimum value of  $R$ , both in terms of contact and distinctiveness, is 1. This means a very strong interconnectedness of social networks and a high cultural similarity between the groups. Such a situation may be characteristic of dialect or regional language groups in relation to standard language speakers (Ehala and Niglas 2007). In such cases, it is very easy to shift from one group to the other, and  $R$  has no impact on vitality, which is determined only by PSD. When  $R$  is larger than 1, this starts to reduce the effect of negative PSD, because of the costs that are associated with the shift from one group to another. Thus, the larger  $R$  gets, the closer  $V$  gets to zero, i.e. the point where the benefits of identity shift are cancelled out by the costs. At this point, there would be no motivation for an identity shift by the minority group members. This indicates a relatively higher vitality.

#### 1.4. Utilitarianism ( $U$ )

$U$  is a value system that justifies a pragmatic and economically beneficial course of action (Scollon and Scollon 1995). Cultures, however, function as the interplay of pragmatic and emotional motivations, and utilitarian principles are balanced by what can be called the traditionalist value system. The traditionalist value system expresses the group members' commitment to their cultural practices and values. In a balanced culture, utilitarian and traditionalist values are in modest conflict, the two sides of which are rational efficiency and tradition, which is a characteristic of many well-functioning societies. This opposition is well recognized by the major theories of human values, such as Schwartz (1992, 2006) and Inglehart and Welzel (2005), although all authors use their own terminology.

Different groups may vary with regard to the salience of utilitarian and traditionalist values in their culture. Although the levels of utilitarianism and traditionalism can form different combinations (see Ehala 2012), both of them are directly relevant to language and identity maintenance.

Groups which are very low in utilitarianism while holding strongly traditionalist values tend to be highly committed to their social identity (see Figure 4). For example, some religious groups (such as the Amish or the Russian Old Believers in Latvia and Estonia)<sup>2</sup> are so traditionalist that they hardly assimilate at all, despite their large negative PSD with the mainstream society. This value configuration would support language and identity maintenance.

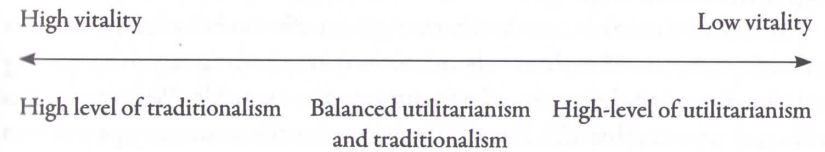


Figure 4 Interdependence between group vitality  $V$  and group value system  $U$

If a group tends towards utilitarian values, group members are more predisposed to abandon heritage traditions, as maintaining them seems costly, meaningless and/or backward. Such a value configuration would reduce  $V$ . If the utilitarian and traditionalist values are balanced,  $U$  does not have an effect on  $V$ .

Therefore, the higher  $U$ , the more it reduces  $V$ . Given this, utilitarianism can be included in the formula in the following way:  $V = U \cdot (S_{we} - S_{they}) / R$ . This means that if the value of  $U$  is 1 (balanced utilitarianism and traditionalism), its impact on overall vitality can be disregarded. If the value of  $U$  falls below 1, it starts to reduce the negative value of PSD. When  $U$  reaches 0, the whole equation becomes equal to 0, meaning that the group is so traditional that it has no inclination for identity shift towards the majority. If the value of  $U$  is greater than 1, the effects of PSD start to increase, causing the  $V$  value to drop.

<sup>2</sup> The Old Believers (*starovery* or *staroobriadtsy*) were anathemized by the Russian Orthodox Church after Patriarch Nikon's 1666–1667 church reforms; in order to avoid religious persecution in Russia, they fled to the periphery of the Empire. Some settled on the western coast of Lake Peipus in Estonia; as discussed by Dum-Tragut (this volume), some settled in Armenia.

It must be noted, however, that language shift is not always connected to high level of utilitarianism. As Zoumpalidis (this volume) shows, the Pontic Greek community is undergoing a shift to Russian, yet the community is quite traditional in other aspects of its culture and has a strong sense of group identity. This is often the case with communities whose heritage language is not one of their core values (see Smolicz 1981). Thus it is more appropriate to say that high traditionalism favours identity maintenance in general and if language is one of the core values it is also maintained.

In some circumstances, utilitarianism can also be beneficial for ethnic minority maintenance, but only in cases where the language is spoken by a majority in another prominent country. For example, Pöyhönen (this volume) reports that the Finnish language has become very popular in north-western Russia, which helps the Ingrians to regain their lost language competency. The same appears to be the case with Russian minorities in the Baltic countries, where Russian can be maintained even on utilitarian grounds as it is a useful language in the region.

In sum, there are four vitality factors: perceived strength differential (PSD); intergroup discordance (D); intergroup distance (R); and traditionalism/utilitarianism (U). By measuring these factors, we can draw a vitality profile of a group. This profile may help to predict the group's interethnic behaviour and acculturation orientations.

## 2. General characteristics of the main ethnic groups in the Baltic States

Vitality is a complex combination of attitudes, which although they reflect the strength of the ethnic group do not always reflect it objectively. This section gives an overview of the demographic and institutional support factor that could be taken as characterizing the strength of each particular ethnic group. This overview serves as a reference point in the analysis and

discussion stages to pinpoint the differences between the objective strength of the groups and the way they have constructed their vitality.

With regard to demographics, absolute values (the actual proportions of each group in the population and its dispersion in the territory) are given. Institutional support factors include the presence of education in the mother tongue at different levels, heritage language mass media and their diversity as well as the diversity of cultural activities in the language and their quality and prestige. The economic context is described through the evaluation of the welfare of group members, and the stability of the group's ethnic economy and political organization. Next, we present an overview of these characteristics as applied to the ethnicities in the Baltic countries to contextualize the results of the vitality study.

Russian is the dominant language of ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and members of a number of other ethnicities in the territory of the Soviet Union who settled in the Baltic countries during the Soviet period. These communities/groups have constructed a common language-based identity in which the Soviet element has a substantial role. In this sense, these communities show similar identity processes, which are characterized in detail by Nikiporets-Takigawa (this volume): Victory Day has become a strong uniting symbol, along with nostalgia for several other Soviet-era phenomena. As this common identity is constructed mainly by means of the Russian language, we call these groups Russian-speaking communities without distinguishing the share of different ethnic backgrounds in them.

### 2.1. Estonia

According to the 2012 census, there are 1.29 million people in Estonia. The participants in our study were Estonians and Russian speakers (see Table 1). As just noted, the latter included, along with Russians, representatives of other ethnicities (share in the country's population: 26 per cent Russians, 2 per cent Ukrainians, and 1 per cent Belarusians).

Table 1 General characteristics of the two major linguistic groups in Estonia

	Estonians	Russian speakers
Population size	889,000	384,000
Percentage of total population	69 per cent	29 per cent
Geographical distribution	17,780 (2 per cent) in Ida-Virumaa 215,000 (24 per cent) in Tallinn 666,750 (75 per cent) in other areas with high ethnic density	130,000 (34 per cent) in Ida-Virumaa (high ethnic density) 185,000 (48 per cent) in Tallinn 76,800 (20 per cent) in other areas
Education in the native language	All levels and in all areas	Basic and incomplete secondary education; higher education only in a few disciplines
Mass media in the native language	A wide range of print, electronic and audiovisual media	Few local print, electronic and audiovisual media; however, many Russian Federation sources are accessible
Cultural life in the native language	Broad and rich cultural life	Limited local cultural life
Material prosperity	Higher incomes than the national average	Lower incomes compared to the national average
Role in Estonian economy	Decisive	Modest, with the exception of Ida-Viru, where substantial
Political activity	Politically well organized	Politically poorly organized

The sizable Russian-speaking population of Estonia lives very compactly: only 20 per cent are scattered in Estonian-speaking areas. Almost half of the Russian-speaking population lives in Tallinn and a third in Ida-Viru County, a region which is economically weaker than the national average. Here, the density of the Russian-speaking population is extremely high.

Although education in Russian currently continues to the end of secondary school, Russian-language schools are now being actively transitioned to partial Estonian-language instruction in the upper secondary level. The local cultural life is fairly poor in comparison with Russia. Thus, our educated guess would be that despite the fact that the demographics of the Russian-speaking community are quite good, economic weakness does not allow the community to be culturally and politically active.

## 2.2. Latvia

According to the 2011 census, the population of Latvia was 2,067,000 (see Table 2 for a comparison of the major ethnic groups). Although Latgalian Latvians themselves consider themselves to be Latvians and are thus included in the population figures vis-a-vis the Russian-speaking population, the share of Latgalian Latvians is additionally expressed as a proportion of the rest of the population. Latgalian Latvian identity is thus a sub-identity of a regional Latvian identity. At the same time, Latgalian Latvians themselves still want to be seen separately from the rest of the Latvians (Latgalian is not understandable to Latvians; the mentality and culture are also different). Therefore, in evaluating the vitality of Latgalian Latvians, we consider the two groups separately.

Table 2 General characteristics of the major linguistic groups in Latvia<sup>3</sup>

	Latvians (incl. Latgalian Latvians)	Russian speakers	Latgalian Latvians
Population size	1.284 million	676,000	140,000
Percentage of total population	61 per cent	32 per cent	7 per cent

<sup>3</sup> Data from the 2011 census; Joma and Meržs 2008; Marten et al. 2009.

Geographical distribution	Dominant in small towns and rural areas. In the minority in Riga (299,171 or 23 per cent), in Daugavpils (1.4 per cent or 18,026) and Rēzekne (1.2 per cent or 15,560)	Dominant in two largest cities: 387,000 (57 per cent) in Riga (55 per cent of city population), 88,000 (13 per cent) in Daugavpils (85 per cent of city population)	Ca. 60,000 in the Latgale region (43 per cent of population). The rest are scattered across other parts of Latvia
Education in the native language	At all levels and in all areas	Basic and partly secondary education, higher education in many disciplines	Practically absent; taught as a subject in seven schools in Latgale
Mass media in the native language	A wide range of print, electronic and audiovisual media	Good selection of printed, electronic and audiovisual information. Media channels from Russia	Just one newspaper and a half-hour radio programme once a week
Cultural life in the native language	Broad and rich cultural life	Significant local cultural life	Activities and religious services
Material prosperity	Average	Above average	Below average
Economic role	Average	Significant	Below average
Political maturity	Politically well-organized	Politically well-organized	Narrow circle of activists

The Latvian Russian-speaking community is large in absolute numbers: it constitutes more than one-third of the Latvian population and dominates in the capital and major cities. In addition, the Russian speakers in Latvia are quite active economically and their standard of living is above average. All of this supports strong cultural and political organization. Given these figures, it can be argued that the Russian-speaking community, by its size and power, is a strong group and only slightly weaker than Latvians. Latvians dominate numerically but most of them live in rural areas and are weaker economically than the urban Russian community. This balance of power has allowed the Russian minority to strengthen its presence in public policy.

Latgalian Latvians form a relatively small community, which is scattered throughout the country and is in the minority even in its historical homeland. The cultural and economic role of Latgalian Latvians is very modest. Objective indicators show that their language is under considerable threat. The cultural identity of Latgalian Latvians is better maintained because it is associated with the Catholic Church.

### 2.3. Lithuania

According to the 2011 census, there are 3.05 million people in Lithuania (Table 3).

Table 3 General characteristics of the major linguistic groups in Lithuania<sup>4</sup>

	Lithuanians	Russian speakers	Poles
Population size	2,583,000	201,000	212,800
Percentage of total population	85 per cent	6.5 per cent	7 per cent
Geographical distribution	Dominant in most parts of the country. 40 per cent live in the south-east and south. In Vilnius constitute 59 per cent of town population.	Ca. 108,000 which is 54 per cent of the Russian-speaking people in Lithuania and 20 per cent of the population of Vilnius. In Visaginas, 23,000 or 11 per cent (75 per cent of population).	Over 50 per cent in rural areas. In the vicinity of Vilnius 54,322 or 25 per cent (61.3 per cent of total region's population), and in Šalčininkų region 31,223 or 15 per cent (79.5 per cent of total region's population). In Vilnius, 100,000 or 55 per cent (19 per cent of its population).

<sup>4</sup> Data from overview publications by Hogan-Brun et al. 2009.



Education in the native language	At all levels and in all areas	Basic education available, but Lithuanian-language schools preferred	Basic education guaranteed. Limited access to higher education.
Mass media in the native language	A wide range of print, electronic and audiovisual media	Print media and radio programmes; TV channels from Russia widely available	Print media and radio stations; Polish TV channels
Cultural life in the native language	Broad and rich cultural life	Limited local cultural life	Limited local cultural life
Material prosperity	Average	Below average	Below average
Economic role	Significant	Below average	Below average
Political maturity	Politically well organized	Politically not organized	Politically organized

In terms of ethnic composition, Lithuania is the most homogeneous of the Baltic countries: the share of the titular nation is the largest, and no minority exceeds 10 per cent of the population. However, south-east and southern Lithuania, including the capital, are fairly multiethnic. Rural areas in the vicinity of Vilnius are populated by Polish speakers, a group which is considerable in size and lives quite compactly, promoting the stability of this group. In contrast, the Russian-speaking community is widely scattered; the biggest part lives in Vilnius, making up one-fifth of the capital's inhabitants. Though Russian-language mass media are easily accessible in Lithuania and schools with Russian as a language of instruction do exist, the majority of the Russian speakers prefer Lithuanian schools and cultural life. The political organization of Russians is very weak, in contrast to the Poles, with their high political and cultural unity.

#### 2.4. Summary

To summarize, on the basis of demographic and institutional support factors, the titular ethnic groups of the Baltic States are sustainable ethnolinguistically, although some difficulties with cultural and political domination are encountered by Latvians. Among the Russian-speaking communities, the largest lives in Latvia and has considerable cultural, economic and linguistic influence in the country. The second largest Russian-speaking community lives in Estonia, but both economically and politically it is much weaker than in Latvia. At the same time, it is quite compactly settled, ensuring its sustainability. The number of Russian speakers in Lithuania is lower, they are more dispersed across the country and they are considerably weaker than the Estonian Russian speakers. Considering the historical roots and compact residence of Poles in Vilnius and its vicinity, it is possible to consider the Polish community of Lithuania stronger than the local Russian one, though it is smaller. The small size is compensated for by the high level of political and cultural self-organization. Among the Baltic minorities under consideration, the weakest are, undoubtedly, the Latgalian Latvians, because the community is small, scattered around the country and completely bilingual.

### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1. Measuring vitality

To date, no widely accepted measures of vitality exist, for various reasons. First, social phenomena are extremely varied and difficult to measure, since the vitality of groups is influenced by various economic, demographic, historico-cultural and political factors. There is also no reliable method for measuring the economic, cultural, political and demographic power of these groups, which hampers comparative research, particularly in relation to different language environments.

Secondly, these factors influence the vitality of a group and its assimilation only indirectly, and this influence does not always lend itself to unequivocal interpretation. The reason is that, strictly speaking, the phenomena of language and identity shift occur not at the group level, but at the level of the individual. What language is used in speaking with children, and what language is used in their education, depends primarily on individual beliefs and the decisions made on the basis on those beliefs, instead of being based on the economic, cultural and other forces working on the group as a whole. Given that language shift is a result of the language behaviour of individuals, the actual strength of a group is not as important as the individual opinions of the group members regarding the group's strength, which are formed and expressed in communication.

Measurement of subjective assessment and attitudes makes it possible to create a tool by means of which it is possible to collect easily comparable data in very different social environments. The main assumption is that, while the strength of the group undeniably influences group behaviour, its influence is mediated by its symbolic representations in public and private discourse. These socially shared representations can be formalized on universal scales of human cognition such as weak-strong, similar-dissimilar, high-low. These scales can be transformed to quantitatively measurable mathematical scales that enable quantitative comparison across different interethnic situations.

One of the best research methods that meet these conditions is the Likert scale questionnaire, which offers a range of responses (Garrett et al. 2003). This approach has also been used in classic studies on subjective vitality (Bourhis et al. 1981; Abrams et al. 2009). To reduce possible errors caused by formulations of single questions, it was decided to measure each model component by using thematic groups of questions, comprising ten questions each. The reliability of such a thematic group can be checked by means of statistical methods that strengthen the reliability of the theoretical propositions underlying the formulation of the questions. Basically, if the questions whose content reflects the concept they are based on show high correlation among themselves, it is possible to argue with confidence that

all these questions express the attitudes of the respondents to more general phenomena underlying the questions themselves. For a more detailed overview of the choice of questions see Ehala (2008).

### 3.2. *Sampling*

To conduct an anonymous written survey, the sample was assembled according to where the possible informants lived. The samples of the surveys were composed so as to reflect the sociolinguistic diversity of the relevant regions (five in each case), and were compiled by a professional survey company.

In Estonia, the sample consisted of 460 Russian speakers and 538 Estonians (Table 4). In Latvia, the sample consisted of 406 Russian speakers, 419 Latvians and 200 Latgalian Latvians (Table 5). In Lithuania, the sample consisted of 230 Russian speakers, 270 Poles and 400 Lithuanians (Table 6). The data were analysed using SPSS, Version 14.0.

Table 4 The sample in Estonia

Regional concentration of sociolinguistic communities	Proportion of Russian speakers	No. of Russian-speaking respondents	No. of Estonian respondents
Rural settlements	1–10 per cent	50	147
Towns and settlements	10–20 per cent	70	132
Western Tallinn	30–50 per cent	70	126
Eastern Tallinn	50–80 per cent	120	82
Towns in eastern Estonia	80–100 per cent	150	51
Total		460	538

Table 5 The sample in Latvia

Regional concentration of sociolinguistic communities	Proportion of ethnic groups in the area	No. of Russian-speaking respondents	No. of Latvian respondents	No. of Latgalian Latvian respondents
Daugavpils	Russian speakers: 85 per cent	98	53	
Riga	Russian speakers: 50 per cent	152	150	
Rēzekne	Latvians + Latgalian Latvians: 45 per cent Russian speakers: 55 per cent	50	50	100
Balvi	Latvians + Latgalian Latvians: 78 per cent	3	48	100
Cesis and rural regions (Valmieras rajons, Madonas rajons, Cēsu rajons)	Latvians: 90 per cent	51 52	50 68	
Total		406	419	200

Table 6 The sample in Lithuania

Regional concentration of sociolinguistic communities	Proportion of ethnic groups in the area	No. of Russian-speaking respondents	No. of Lithuanian respondents	No. of Polish respondents
Vilnius	Poles: 19 per cent Russian speakers: 14 per cent	60	110	130
Vilnius region	Poles: 61 per cent Russian speakers: 8 per cent		50	140
Visaginas	Russian speakers: 56 per cent Poles: 9 per cent	50	50	

Klaipėda	Russian speakers: 28 per cent Poles: 5 per cent	60	80	
Kaunas	Russian speakers: 4 per cent Poles: 0.4 per cent	60	110	
Total		230	400	270

The sociodemographic backgrounds of the informants (e.g. gender, age, education, family income) are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Sociodemographic descriptors of the samples (percentages)

		Estonia		Latvia			Lithuania		
		Estonians	Russians	Latvians	Russians	Latgalian Latvians	Lithuanians	Russians	Polish
Gender	Male	45	41	34	40	40	49	46	50
	Female	55	59	66	60	60	51	54	50
Age	<25	19	17	23	21	20	25	20	17
	25-34	18	18	24	21	21	23	9	15
	35-49	27	29	23	29	26	26	23	23
	50-64	26	27	21	22	19	20	33	27
	>65	10	9	8	7	14	16	15	18
Education	< Basic	3	4	2	1	1	1	2	2
	Basic	13	11	8	8	12	13	8	15
	Secondary	25	23	19	23	23	32	33	39
	Vocational Secondary	30	41	28	21	44	25	33	29
	Vocational Higher	8	6	16	15	17	N/A	N/A	N/A
	University	21	15	28	32	3	30	24	14
Income	much below average	10	14	16	24	9	11	19	18

slightly below average	20	23	21	21	16	24	22	29
average	54	55	53	41	59	53	51	45
slightly above average	13	8	10	12	15	10	8	6
much above average	2	0	0	2	1	2	0	2

The questionnaires were presented in the state language (Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian) and Russian for the participants to choose the preferred one. There were no Polish or Latgalian Latvian versions.

#### 4. Results of the study

First, results are presented separately for each factor (PSD, D, U and R) of the theoretical vitality model, followed by the results for the combined factors for measuring vitality (V). A short description of questions measuring each factor and indicators of reliability statistics are given (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , the factor of internal constancy or internal uniformity indicating the strength of the correlation between variables forming a scale).

##### 4.1. Perceived strength differential

The PSD section comprised twenty questions, ten of which measured how strong the minority group perceived itself ( $S_{we}$ ) as being, and ten more measuring how they compared themselves to the majority ( $S_{they}$ ). Questions about in- and out-groups were formulated in parallel and were asked alternately. For example, a Russian-speaking informant was asked: 'How much are Russian culture and traditions appreciated in Estonian society?', and 'How much are Estonian culture and traditions appreciated in Estonian society?' The same questions were addressed to Estonians, only in reverse order.

In our study, the reliability level of almost all groups of questions (twenty-two) was high (Cronbach's  $\alpha > .7$ ) with the exception of Lithuanian

Russian speakers evaluating the potential of Lithuanian ( $\alpha = .571$ ), Latgalian Latvians evaluating the capacity of the Russian-speaking group ( $\alpha = .641$ ), Latvians evaluating Latvian Russians ( $\alpha = .679$ ), and Latgalian Latvians ( $\alpha = .683$ ). As the deviations were insignificant, the average values on all blocks of questions were calculated. The numerical indicators were then transformed from the initial scale (1 – very strong ... 7 – very weak) to a standard scale (0 – very weak ... 1 – very strong). Therefore, it is possible to consider each result as a percentage of absolute power, which was equal to 1. Perceived strength differential was calculated as  $S_{we} - S_{they}$ , and fell within the interval from -1 (very weak) to +1 (very strong). If the result of a calculation equals 0, it means that groups are perceived as equal among themselves. The results of the perceived strength of in- and out-groups are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 Perceived strength differential D  
(1 – maximum superiority ... -1 – maximum inferiority)

we → they	PSD	we → they	PSD	we → they	PSD
Estonians → Russians	0.23	Latvians → Latgalian Latvians	0.30	Lithuanians → Poles	0.30
		Russians → Latgalian Latvians	0.15	Lithuanians → Russians	0.19
		Latvians → Russians	0.10	Russians → Poles	0.07
		Latgalian Latvians → Russians	-0.10	Poles → Russians	0.00
Russians → Estonians	-0.29	Russians → Latvians	-0.20	Russians → Lithuanians	-0.29
		Latgalian Latvians → Latvians	-0.29	Poles → Lithuanians	-0.29

The results show that all titular nations perceived their group as stronger than the other groups. In Latvia and Lithuania, Russian speakers were seen as stronger than the other minority group, but Latvians perceive themselves

to be closer to their Russian speakers in strength than Lithuanians. This is mirrored in the perception of all minority groups. Thus, Latvian Russian speakers felt relatively stronger compared to the other groups of Russian speakers, which is not surprising, considering the fact that they are the biggest Russian-speaking community in the Baltic States. Lithuanian Russian speakers and Poles felt that they were almost equal to one another, while Latvian Russians and Latgalian Latvians saw Latvian Russians as the stronger group.

Undoubtedly, the most interesting result is the level of strength Estonians felt in comparison with the local Russian-speaking community. Lithuanians assessed the strength of Russian speakers as much higher than would be expected from the small size of the group. To understand where such views originate, we next address the analysis of single questions.

The evaluation by Lithuanians of their strength varied in the block of questions from 0.96 ('How much is Lithuanian used in media?') to 0.58 ('How would you estimate the population of the group?'). It became clear that Lithuanians estimated the group as strong on language, cultural and economic indicators, but weak in terms of how much Lithuanian culture in Lithuania was appreciated, how active and strong Lithuanians were in Lithuanian society and how influential, in comparison with the present situation, the Lithuanian language and culture in Lithuania would be in twenty to thirty years' time.

Overall, Lithuanians estimated the strength of Russian speakers in Lithuania, in relation to some questions, to be high. The highest rating was given to Russian-language use in mass media (0.65) and its importance in Lithuanian society (0.60); the lowest was the estimated strength of the Russian community in the demographic plan (0.43) and of the community's prospects in twenty to thirty years (0.40).

By way of comparison, Estonians estimated the prevalence of Russian-language mass media as much lower (0.51), and the importance of Russian in Estonia as especially low (0.42). Latvians rated the prevalence of Russian-language mass media the highest (0.70), but the importance of Russian for them was almost as low as for Estonians (0.44). Thus, Lithuanians felt a weakness in their own ethnic group because of the perceived wide prevalence of Russian-language mass media, and also the high importance of

Russian in Lithuania. This result reflects not so much the power of the Lithuanian Russian-speaking community, but a greater orientation of Lithuania towards Russia in comparison with Latvia and Estonia. Such a 'Russian' orientation was apparently also partially caused by a weak or absent sense of danger in relation to the Russian language and the local Russian-speaking community.

#### 4.2. *Perceived interethnic discordance D*

To a large extent, interethnic relations are based on a shared understanding of reality constructed in public discourse and influenced by personal experiences. Interethnic discordance expresses the perceived illegitimacy of intergroup power relations, as well as distrust towards the out-group.

As legitimacy is a highly abstract notion, the items that were used to measure this variable were designed so that they would be maximally context sensitive, i.e. having direct relevance for this particular intergroup setting. Questions affecting legitimacy focused on the status of the Russian language in the country and the fairness of the treatment of the Russian minority. For example, in Estonia, the statements read as follows:

1. Русскому языку следовало бы быть в Эстонии вторым государственным языком. [Russian should be the second official language in Estonia];
2. Положение русскоговорящей общины в Эстонии отвечает международным нормам. [The situation of the Russian community in Estonia corresponds to international norms];
3. В отношении к русскоязычному населению Эстонское государство следует Европейским демократическим принципам. [In its relations with the Russian community, the Estonian Republic acts in accordance with European democratic principles].

In Latvia and Lithuania, the statements were the same, but the name of the country was changed accordingly. In the questionnaires for Poles and Latgalian Latvians, the questions concerning legitimacy were changed so

that they would express the most relevant questions about legitimacy and power relations from the perspective of the respective minorities. For example, in the Polish questionnaire, the following statements were provided:

4. Польскому языку следовало бы быть вторым государственным языком в Юго-Восточной части Литвы. [Polish should be the second official language in the south-eastern part of Lithuania];
5. Вильнюс и его окрестности должны стать Польской автономной областью. [Vilnius and its region should be a Polish autonomous region].

In the questionnaire for Latgalian Latvians, instead of the question on official language status, the statement was phrased as

6. Latgaliešu valodai Latgales reģionā būtu jābūt par reģionālo valodu. [Latgalian should be the regional language in the Latgalian region]

There were also such questions as

7. Latvijai Latgales reģionā jānodrošina mācības latgaliešu valodā. [Latvia should provide Latgalian as a language of instruction in the Latgalian region];
8. Latgales reģionam Latvijā ir jāiegūst kultūras autonomijas statuss. [The Latgalian region should get the status of cultural autonomy in Latvia].

A ten-item questionnaire was designed to measure legitimacy and trust. All of the items used Likert-type scales, allowing for the following choices: 1 – strongly agree, 2 – agree, 3 – somewhat agree, 4 – somewhat disagree, 5 – disagree, and 6 – strongly disagree. The validity and reliability of the scales were tested in a pilot study (Zabrodskaja 2009).

The same items were used with all three samples to measure the perception of legitimacy and trust among the titular nation, the local Russian community and the second biggest ethnic group (in the case of Latvia and Lithuania). The validity and reliability of the relevant scales were at acceptable levels (Cronbach's  $\alpha > .7$ ). Four statements were of a positive nature:

9. Эстонцы отзывчивы по отношению к единомышльцам. [Estonians are helpful as cultural go-betweens];

10. Эстонцы надёжны. [Estonians are reliable];
11. Эстонцы относятся к русскоговорящим жителям Эстонии хорошо. [Estonian Russian speakers are regarded well by Estonians];
12. Эстонцы хотят сотрудничать с русскоговорящими жителями Эстонии. [Estonians wish to cooperate with Estonian Russian-speakers].

Two statements expressed negative attitudes:

13. Эстонцы действуют под влиянием самых низменных инстинктов. [Estonians behave according to the influence of their lowest instincts];
14. Эстонцы агрессивны. [Estonians are aggressive].

In other versions of the questionnaire, the names of the ethnicities were changed accordingly. The scales of the questions pertaining to trust were reversed so that the results express the level of distrust. This was needed to calculate the D index.

For statements expressing interethnic illegitimacy, three different versions of the questionnaire were used. Thus, the reliability indices differ (Latvia and Estonia: Cronbach's  $\alpha > .7$ , except for one sample of Estonian Russian speakers: Cronbach's  $\alpha = .665$ ; Lithuania: Cronbach's  $\alpha < .7$ , lowest value in a sample of Lithuanian Russians Cronbach's  $\alpha = .578$ , indicating that, in the Lithuanian context, the question about the Russian language as a possible state language is not closely associated with the treatment of the Russian minority).<sup>5</sup>

Comparative data on the perception of legitimacy are presented in Table 9. In Latvia and Lithuania, titular nations show two results: the first row expresses the variables in relation to the Russian minority, and the second towards the second minority (Latgalian Latvians and Poles, respectively). Low values correspond to low legitimacy. The neutral midpoint is 3.5.

5 The questions about the status of the Polish language as a possible second official language and the questions about Polish autonomy are equally unrelated to the concept of legitimacy.

Table 9 Perception of legitimacy (1 – low ... 6 – high)

	Estonia		Latvia			Lithuania		
	Estonians	Russians	Latvians	Russians	Latgalian Latvians	Lithuanians	Russians	Poles
legitimacy	4.78	2.78	4.43	2.31	3.36	4.80	3.77	3.90
legitimacy <sub>2</sub>			3.43			4.83		

In analysing the results for legitimacy and distrust, it was clear that the titular nations of the Baltic countries perceive the situation as quite legitimate: the highest scores for legitimacy are from the Lithuanians, especially in relation to the Polish minority (4.83); the lowest are among Latvians, especially with regard to Latgalian Latvians (3.43). These results are not surprising, since they reflect the national state system, including the attitude towards minority rights in the Baltic States since their formation. The relatively low legitimacy index in relation to Latgalian Latvians clearly indicates the fairly positive attitude of Latvian respondents to a wider acceptance and use of the Latgalian language.

In comparison with the titular nations, the assessment of the legitimacy of power relations by Baltic ethnic minorities was lower. The lowest result was from Latvian Russians (2.31), and the highest results among ethnic minorities were in Lithuania (Russians 3.77 and Poles 3.9). The evaluation given by Latgalian Latvians (3.36) was close to the neutral mid-scale (3.5). We can therefore suggest that 'small' minorities (Poles and Lithuanian Russians) see the ethnic situation in their country as legitimate or almost legitimate (Latgalian Latvians). The larger Russian minorities in Estonia and Latvia, by contrast, see the situation as significantly more illegitimate, mainly because of the attitudes towards the status of Russian as a possible official language.

In analysing the indices of distrust (Table 10), it is important to highlight the fact that in all cases they were below 3.5, which characterizes a neutral attitude according to the scale. Therefore, in each case, the average result indicates the trust relationship to members of out-groups rather

than distrust. Perhaps we are dealing with a simple desire to express the conventional position, but the result may also be explained by the fact that there is very little grassroots hostility amongst the general population of the Baltic countries, despite the fact that in political discourse strong language is quite common. A similar phenomenon has also been noticed in the multilingual environment of Transylvania (Brubaker et al. 2006).

Table 10 Perception of distrust (1 – low ... 6 – high)

	Estonia		Latvia			Lithuania		
	Estonians	Russians	Latvians	Russians	Latgalian Latvians	Lithuanians	Russians	Poles
distrust	3.06	3.16	3.29	3.37	2.74	2.76	2.60	3.00
distrust <sub>2</sub>			2.21			3.32		

The index of distrust by the Lithuanian respondents towards the Polish was high (3.32), in comparison with indicators of the Poles towards the Lithuanians (3.0). Also, the relatively high indices of the mutual distrust in the pair 'Latvian Russians – Latvians' (3.37 and 3.29) should be noted. The results clearly demonstrate that the interethnic situation in Latvia is the most intense in comparison with its Baltic neighbours. Yet as the low distrust values indicate, the tensions in the Baltic states are on the political level (legitimacy of power relations) rather than interpersonal level (distrust towards the members of the out-group).

In order to compile indicators of legitimacy and trust into one general indicator, the perceived intergroup discordance *D*, both indicators were transformed to fit a scale of measurement from 0 ... 1, so that a neutral attitude (i.e., the absence of negative or positive feelings) merged with zero on the scale (see Ehala and Zabrodskaia 2011). Thus, the discordance scale ranges from -0.25, which expresses the most positive attitude to the out-group, to +0.75, the most negative attitudes towards the out-group. A null result is a neutral attitude. The values are presented in Table 11.

Table 11 Indicators of discordance D (-0.25 – positive ... 0.75 – negative)

we → they	D	we → they	D	we → they	D
Estonians → Russians	0.12	Latvians → Russians	0.10	Lithuanians → Russians	0.07
		Latvians → Latgalian Latvians	-0.09	Lithuanians → Poles	0.14
Russians → Estonians	0.06	Russians → Latvians	0.15	Russians → Lithuanians	-0.09
		Latgalian Latvians → Latvians	-0.04	Poles → Lithuanians	-0.06

Intergroup discordance is thus felt to the highest degree by Russian speakers towards Latvians, followed by Lithuanians in their attitude towards Poles. Given the small size of the Polish community and its negative discordance in relation to the Lithuanians (-0.06), this index is somewhat unexpected and probably reflects the sensitivity of Lithuanians to the problems of Lithuanian territorial integrity (in relation to Poland). A relatively unexpected result is the low average discordance of Russians in Estonia. The positive attitude of Latvians, as a majority group, towards Latgalian Latvians shows, of course, their commitment to greater recognition of the Latgalian language.

#### 4.3. Utilitarianism

To measure the utilitarianism and traditionalism of ethnic groups, a questionnaire of ten statements was created, of which six concerned utilitarianism and four traditionalism. The structure of the questionnaire was inspired by the Portrait Values Questionnaire by Schwartz et al. (2001), who asked participants to mark on a six-point Likert scale to what extent they were similar to the described person (1 – very much similar to me ... 6 – completely distinct from me). Among the statements on utilitarianism were the following: 'He/she is open to all that is new' and 'He/she finds

that traditional ways of living and old-fashioned values have become a hindrance to progress'. The statements about traditionalism included the following: 'He/she considers it important to follow the practices of his/her culture' and 'It is important to him/her that his/her children should value these customs and traditions, too'.

All Cronbach's alphas were on the acceptable level. The comparative average values for the groups of questions of utilitarianism and traditionalism are presented in Table 12. This is based on a six-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates the lowest level of utilitarianism or traditionalism and 6 the highest.

Table 12 Levels of utilitarianism and traditionalism (1 – lowest ... 6 – highest)

	Estonia		Latvia			Lithuania		
	Estonians	Russians	Latvians	Russians	Latgalian Latvians	Lithuanians	Russians	Poles
Utilitarianism	3.55	3.47	3.48	3.59	3.81	3.86	3.63	3.74
Traditionalism	4.58	4.26	4.20	3.99	4.53	4.71	4.35	4.45

Data comparison shows that the titular groups in Estonia and Latvia expressed rather balanced utilitarianism (the average value is close to the neutral point 3.5), while Latgalian Latvians and the ethnic groups of Lithuania showed a tendency to utilitarianism. At the same time, Lithuanians displayed the highest level of traditionalism among the Baltic nations. Let us also note that the level of traditionalism among all groups was essentially above the neutral value of the scale, 3.5. This indicator is the lowest in the case of Latvian Russians (3.99).

The high values on the scale of traditionalism and small distinctions between the indicators of the studied groups mean that the values of the U index, which usually reflect a tendency for assimilation and language shift, are rather small, and the tendency for culture and language preservation dominates. As explained in Section 1.4., U expresses an interval



between utilitarianism and traditionalism and is calculated as follows:  $U = (U_t - Tr) + 1$ . This means that, in the case of maximum traditionalism and absolute lack of utilitarianism,  $U = 0$ . When  $U_t$  and  $Tr$  values are equal,  $U = 1$  and, in the case of maximum utilitarianism and an absolute lack of traditionalism,  $U = 2$ . All of the values of the  $U$  index are given in Table 13 in decreasing order, from most 'utilitarian' to most 'traditional'.

Table 13 Indicators of the  $U$  index (2 – highest ... 0 – lowest)

Estonia	U	Latvia	U	Lithuania	U
Estonians	0.79	Latvians	0.85	Lithuanians	0.83
Russians	0.84	Russians	0.92	Russians	0.86
		Latgalian Latvians	0.86	Poles	0.86

A comparison of the indicators of the  $U$  index makes it clear that all of the peoples of the Baltic countries gravitated towards traditionalism (the  $U$  values are lower than 1.0). Latvian Russians had the highest  $U$  and Estonians the lowest. At the same time, it is surprising that the general variability in the  $U$  index in the case of different ethnic groups was extremely low (only 6 per cent on the scale) and, for most of the groups, the  $U$  values were almost identical. It is also interesting that the standard deviations of the  $U$  index remained in all cases in the interval from 0.23 to 0.29. This means that the internal variability of the  $U$  index within ethnic groups was much higher than the difference between them. In all groups, there were subgroups which were much more utilitarian or more traditional than others. However, the analysis of these features lies outside the scope of the present chapter.

#### 4.4 Interethnic distance

The variable of distance  $R$  is comprised of two components:  $R_1$  expresses the distance in terms of the choice of language, and  $R_2$  shows a respondent's assessment of his or her cultural distance in relation to both groups

For the measurement of the  $R_1$  (language choice), ten questions were taken from a questionnaire about language contact networks (Landry et al. 1996), concerning language use in the family; with friends; with colleagues; with officials and service personnel; and in the sphere of mass media and culture. For example, participants were asked: 'In which language do you communicate with your friends?'. Responses were given on a seven-point Likert scale, with the following range: 1 – only in language  $y$ ; 2 – mainly in language  $y$ ; 3 – more in language  $y$  than in language  $x$ ; 4 – equally in language  $y$  and language  $x$ ; 5 – more in language  $x$  than in language  $y$ ; 6 – mainly in language  $x$ ; 7 – only in language  $x$ . An eighth option was also added: 'in other languages'. Language  $y$  indicates the language in which a representative of an ethnic group normally communicates, and language  $x$  is the language of an out-group (group 'they'). In the Estonian questionnaire, there was only one scale (Estonian-Russian or Russian-Estonian, depending on ethnicity); in the questionnaires in Latvia and Lithuania, each respondent had to note his or her language distance on two scales because there were three groups participating in the study (Latvians, Russians and Latgalian Latvians; Lithuanians, Russians and Poles, respectively). In all cases, the internal uniformity of the scales was very high (Cronbach's  $\alpha \geq .7$ ).

For the measurement of cultural distance  $R_2$ , existing models (Babiker et al. 1980; Fukurawa 1997; Shenkar 2001; Chirkov et al. 2005) were analysed and a block of ten questions concerning the perception of intercultural differences in culinary preferences, clothing styles, religious beliefs, mentality and traditions of communication was selected. The questions in this block included: 'In terms of physical appearance, how different are the  $X$ s and you?', 'In terms of religious beliefs, how different are the  $X$ s and you?', and 'How easy is it to communicate with an  $X$  in relation to studies/work?'. The responses were analysed on a seven-point Likert scale, which represented a choice from maximum difficulty of communication (1) to minimum (7). The internal uniformity of this questionnaire was very high: in most cases the Cronbach's alphas were higher than 0.8; only in four cases were the Cronbach's alphas lower than 0.8, although all were higher than 0.75.

The high internal uniformity of both  $R$  components made it possible to calculate the  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  indices, and the  $R$  index as their arithmetic average.

To make the results easier to understand, all variables were converted to a scale of 0 (minimum distance) to 1 (maximum distance). The results for  $R_1$  are presented in Table 14.

Table 14 Language choice  $R_1$  (0 – out-group language only  
... 1 – in-group language only)

we → they	$R_1$	we → they	$R_1$	we → they	$R_1$
Estonians → Russian	0.86	Latvians → Russian	0.77	Lithuanians → Russian	0.89
Russians → Estonian	0.81	Russians → Latvian	0.75	Russians → Lithuanian	0.61
		Latvians → Latgalian	0.96	Lithuanians → Polish	0.98
		Latgalian Latvians → Latvian	0.33	Poles → Lithuanian	0.41
		Latgalian Latvians → Russian	0.93	Poles → Russian	0.40
		Russians → Latgalian	0.93	Russians → Polish	0.99

In analysing  $R_1$ , or the results of language use in the case of the titular nations, it becomes clear that the greatest distance occurred with Latgalian Latvians and Poles: the majority of representatives of the titular nations (respectively, Latvians and Lithuanians) did not use minority languages in everyday life at all (the  $R_1$  values are equal to 0.96 and 0.98). Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians used much more Russian: Latvians more often than the others ( $R_1 = 0.77$ ), and Lithuanians less ( $R_1 = 0.89$ ). In the case of the Russian communities, interesting distinctions occurred: Lithuanian Russians used Lithuanian rather widely ( $R_1 = 0.66$ ), Latvian Russian speakers lagged behind them a little in the use of Latvian, and most of the Estonian Russian speakers resorted to the state language less often ( $R_1 = 0.81$ ). These indicators illustrate the isolation of the Russian-speaking community in Ida-Viru county, while Latvian Russian speakers seem to be more connected with Latvians in the language domain.

The data also allow us to compare the family language use of Russian-speaking communities in Germany and Norway (Mendzheritskiy and Bagreeva, this volume). Mendzheritskiy and Bagreeva report that 72.9 per cent of Russian-speaking respondents in Germany and 61.4 per cent in Norway use Russian as the single home language. In Latvia, 69 per cent of Russian speakers used only Russian to communicate with their family members; in Estonia and Lithuania this figure was 75 per cent. This indicates that Russian-speaking communities which remained in the Baltic countries after the break-up of the Soviet Union maintain Russian as the home language marginally more than in countries to which they have recently immigrated.

Judging by  $R_1$  values, Latgalian Latvians and Lithuanian Poles are the most assimilated linguistically, as their results show that in certain situations they used the majority language more often than their native language (the value 0.5 indicates an equal use of both languages, while a smaller value indicates language shift). Considering the language practice accepted between minorities, Latgalian Latvians and Russians do not use each other's languages, whereas Poles are assimilated into the Russian language a little more than into Lithuanian.

In comparison with language distance, the cultural distance between the peoples of the Baltic countries was noticeably smaller: 0.5 or less (see Table 15).

Table 15 Cultural distance  $R_2$  (0 – minimal ... 1 – maximal)

we → they	$R_2$	we → they	$R_2$	we → they	$R_2$
Estonians → Russian	0.50	Latvians → Russian	0.51	Lithuanians → Russian	0.42
Russians → Estonian	0.48	Russians → Latvian	0.49	Russians → Lithuanian	0.38
		Latvians → Latgalian	0.40	Lithuanians → Polish	0.44
		Latgalian Latvians → Latvian	0.31	Poles → Lithuanian	0.32
		Latgalian Latvians → Russian	0.47	Poles → Russian	0.37
		Russians → Latgalian	0.49	Russians → Polish	0.42

It is interesting to note that the results in Latvia and Estonia (close to 0.5) were much higher than the indicators for Lithuania (close to 0.4). The more difficult situation of the interethnic relations in Estonia and Latvia, which led respondents to say that they felt distinctions more strongly, is reflected here. It is surprising that Lithuanians felt a sharp difference with Poles (0.44), since due to religious proximity the feeling of a smaller distance with Poles, in comparison with Russians, would be more expected. Again, the results were influenced by the interethnic discordance which Lithuanians feel towards Poles more strongly towards Russians. But the Poles of Lithuania considered themselves very close to Lithuanians in culture (0.32), closer than to Russians (0.37). Latgalian Latvians felt the least distance from Latvians, which is to be expected considering that Latgalian Latvian identity is a regional identity within Latvian national identity. To sum up, it turns out that the identity of the Lithuanian Polish community and its dynamics are quite complicated: this group is rather strongly located in both the Lithuanian and Russian language spaces, and feels very similar to Lithuanians, while Lithuanians apparently wish to separate themselves from Poles.

To account for both language and cultural distance between groups, R values as an average of  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  were calculated and the values used to assess vitality (next section).

#### 4.5. Vitality

The vitality of ethnic groups was calculated with the help of two formulas:

- 1)  $V = U \cdot ((S_{we} - S_{they}) + D) / R$
- 2)  $V = R \cdot ((S_{we} - S_{they}) + D) / U$

Formula (1) was used when PSD ( $S_{we} - S_{they}$ ) was less than 0. Negative PSD is common to minority groups, but not always and not unconditionally. Formula (2) was used when PSD was equal to 0 or exceeded 0. Such a result was characteristic of members of majority groups.

Because of the formulas' mathematical properties, the scale's negative and positive halves are not symmetrical on numerical values, though in terms of rating it is possible to distinguish the same degrees. Degrees of vitality scales along with their description are presented in Table 16.

Table 16 Degrees of vitality scale

	Values of V	Description
High vitality	> 1.5	Extreme ethnocentrism
	0.6 ... 1.5	Strong ethnocentrism
	0.3 ... 0.6	Moderate ethnocentrism
	0.1 ... 0.3	Weak ethnocentrism
	0 ... 0.1	Stable vitality
	0 ... -0.1	
	-0.1 ... -0.2	Weakly shifting
	-0.2 ... -0.3	Moderately shifting
Low vitality	-0.3 ... -0.4	Strongly shifting
	< -0.4	Extremely shifting

It is important to note that the values of V are very closely connected with ethnocentrism: the higher the vitality (V), the more ethnocentric the ethnos. In the case of a very low V, the centre of the collective identity of a group moves from the ethnic group to the majority group, which, in essence, means identity and language shift. In some ways, it is possible to consider the scale of vitality to be a scale for the measurement of ethnocentrism, where negative values indicate negative ethnocentrism. In the case of negative ethnocentrism, members of a group would like to disassociate themselves from their identity and to strive for some other more prestigious identity (usually the majority identity). Undoubtedly, from the point of view of group maintenance, ethnocentrism is important, although extreme ethnocentrism is accompanied, as a rule, by a number of undesirable side effects, such as a sense of superiority (God's chosen people) and contempt for out-groups.

Table 17 presents the average values of vitality (V) of all the ethnic groups of the Baltic countries, and also the values of the variables based on the calculation of vitality. The values of V in Table 17 are interpreted based on the scale presented in Table 16. Since V expresses vitality only on an axis of two measured groups, in interpreting a V value, it is always necessary to consider the out-group in relation to which it was calculated.

Table 17 Vitality of ethnic groups in the Baltic countries

Ethnic group	V	PSD	D	U	R	Characterization
Lithuanians → Poles	0.91	0.3	0.14	0.83	0.71	Strong ethnocentrism
Estonians → Estonian Russians	0.87	0.23	0.12	0.79	0.68	
Lithuanians → Lithuanian Russians	0.65	0.19	0.07	0.83	0.65	
Latvians → Latvian Russians	0.55	0.10	0.10	0.85	0.64	Moderate ethnocentrism
Latvians → Latgalian Latvians	0.42	0.30	-0.09	0.85	0.69	
Latvian Russians → Latvians	0.06	-0.20	0.15	0.92	0.62	Stable vitality
Estonian Russians → Estonians	-0.08	-0.29	0.06	0.84	0.64	
Latgalian Latvians → Latvians	-0.20	-0.29	-0.04	0.86	0.34	Moderately shifting
Lithuanian Russians → Lithuanians	-0.22	-0.29	-0.09	0.86	0.49	
Poles → Lithuanians	-0.24	-0.29	-0.06	0.86	0.37	

On the basis of these data, the most ethnocentric of the Baltic groups are the Lithuanians in relation to the Poles, and the Estonians in relation to the Russians. The degree of their ethnocentrism can be characterized as strong. Such a position expresses the rather rigid border between the majority group and the corresponding minority, and a clear feeling of superiority on the part of the majority group, with low interest in and sympathy for the minority.

In this context, it is interesting to note that the ethnocentrism of Lithuanians in relation to Russians was much lower, as was the ethnocentrism of Latvians concerning Latvian Russian speakers. Such a position indicates a slightly greater readiness to communicate and co-operate with these minority groups. The ethnocentrism of Latvians in relation to Latgalian Latvians appeared to be even lower. This is, however, quite explainable: Latvians simply perceive Latgalians as a part of the group (i.e. as Latvians). The low ethnocentrism indicates a readiness to recognize the right of Latgalian Latvians to use a variant of the language and to have an autochthonic culture.

Judging by the results of the research, the Russian communities of Latvia and Estonia are in a stable situation. As minorities, they do not aspire to assimilation. However, this is not true of Latgalian Latvians, nor of Poles and Lithuanian Russians. The corresponding values indicate the extent of the relative threat to their vitality, i.e. their clear desire to belong to each country's majority group. Unfortunately, this depends not only on them, but also on the vitality of members of the majority group or, to be more exact, on its ethnocentrism, since these processes occur not only intragroup, but also intergroup. An interpretation of the study results and the conclusions drawn on this basis about possible paths of development of interethnic processes in the three Baltic countries are presented below.

### 5. Influence of vitality on interethnic processes

Though vitality expresses the readiness of an ethnic group for collective action, processes occurring in reality depend not only on representations shared by group members, but also on the attitudes of other groups in society and their relation to the same variables. In other words, real processes depend on the vitality of both minority and majority groups.

A majority group which sees itself as being much stronger than the minority, and sees the situation as being quite legitimate (high PSD and D), tends to have assimilative influence on the minority in cases when the minority perceives itself as similar to the majority (low R) and, in terms of its values, is utilitarian (high U). Conversely, as the value of V depends on the values of R, U and D, a majority group with high V is more segregative than a majority with a lower V value.

If a majority group sees itself as being only a bit stronger than the minority and its discordance in relation to the minority is insignificant (small PSD and D), then such a group does not pressure the minority to assimilate. Depending on the R and U values, such a situation promotes either minority integration (low R and high U), or its separation (high R and low U).

Integration will occur when groups are similar culturally, and when the majority is open to the cultural changes which integration can bring about. If the difference in the strength of the groups is small, closer intergroup contact does not result in assimilation of the strong minority; it retains its cultural features. If the majority group feels a large interethnic distance and, at the same time, is traditional (high R and low U), it is quite probable that it will not wish to assimilate a strong minority and consequently will prefer separation of the minority into an autonomous or even independent territory.

In the case of the minority, the influence of the V value is on the whole comparable: the greater the vitality of the minority, the more probable that it will aspire to preserve its cultural and linguistic identity, or to achieve autonomy. In the case of a low V value, a bit depends on the R and U

indicators: if cultural differences are large and the level of traditionalism is high (as in some Islamic-origin immigrant communities living in Europe), the process of assimilation will be difficult and improbable.

Such properties of vitality and its components make it possible to use the V value to anticipate acculturation and assimilation processes. John Berry's model of acculturation processes (1997) distinguishes five types of acculturation: integration, segregation, separation, marginalization and assimilation. In Table 18 these processes are defined through the functions of the V values of the majority and minority groups.

Table 18 Acculturation processes as a function of majority and minority groups' vitality

		Majority	
		$V > 0$	$V \approx 0$
Minority	$V \approx 0$	segregation	integration or separation
	$V < 0$	marginalization	assimilation

A high V in the majority leads to segregation or marginalization of the minority, depending on whether the V value of the minority is close to zero or considerably below it. A rather low V value for the majority indicates possible separation of the minority, integration of the two groups or minority assimilation, depending on how high or low a V value the minority has.

Interpreting the vitality results of the ethnic groups in the Baltic countries in the framework presented in Table 18, it is possible to draw some conclusions about interethnic processes. Based on the V values of the Estonians and Estonian Russians, it is clear that the tendency prevailing in society is segregation, which most likely will continue if there are no major shifts in the V values. The connection between the Lithuanian and Polish communities indicates a marginalization of the Poles, while the V values in connection with the relationship between Lithuanians and Russians point to the assimilation of Russian speakers.

The V indicators of Latvians and Russians are closest to the combination predicting integration or separation. It is very probable that a change in this situation depends on whether the D value increases or decreases. In the first case, the ethnic borders will become stronger and there will be little possibility of co-operation, which, considering the comparable strength of both groups, may lead to an increase in the rights of the Russian community in Latvia or even to its autonomy. The destiny of Latgalian Latvians is most likely assimilation or, at best, integration if they manage to maintain a high level of traditionalism and their uniqueness from other Latvians.

If these results are accurate and reliable, they can be helpful in understanding the nature of the distinctions between the interethnic situations which have developed during the last decades in the Baltic States, and also in confirming the significance of vitality as an important variable influencing a situation. These data can only be used to assess explicit integration attitudes, not implicit attitudes. It would be very useful to study the interrelationship of implicit acculturation attitudes (see Zak and Cohen in this volume) to see whether the Lithuanian Russians and Poles also show higher levels of implicit attitudes towards identity shift.

Considering that the Russian communities in Estonia and Latvia are sizable, it is possible to assume that, in both states, the relationship between the majority and the minority might be similar. However, contemporary events have shown that the Latvian Russian community is much more active in upholding its rights. It is possible to explain this distinction by the quite low vitality of Estonian Russians. On the basis of the results, we cannot give a definite answer to the question of why the vitality of Russian speakers in Estonia is so small considering their demographic and institutional strength; for this purpose, it would be necessary to carry out a thorough analysis of qualitative data. At the same time, it is quite probable that the Estonian Russian community is not (and most likely will not be in future) ready for collective action.

The quite low vitality of Lithuanians in relation to the local Russian community provides some explanation for their readiness to accept minority members into their ranks. The low vitality of Lithuanians is also the reason that Lithuanian Russians shift to Lithuanian so quickly, whereas the aggravated interethnic borders with Poland make it difficult for Poles

to do the same (leaving aside the topic of the legitimacy of Poles' position in Lithuania, which has been controversial during the whole post-Soviet period).

On the basis of the above-mentioned factors, it is possible to assume that if there are no significant changes in vitality values in the near future, the scenarios of development for interethnic relations in the three Baltic states will be as follows. In Estonia, the segregation of the Russian community will continue; in Latvia, though some readiness of Russians for integration has been shown, a strengthening of intensity may lead the Russian community to achieve autonomy; for the Russian-speaking community of Lithuania, assimilation seems the most likely outcome, which would be satisfactory to both the Russian-speaking community and the representatives of the titular nation. Latgalian Latvians may improve their status if they manage to increase their vitality and demand more rights. Lithuanian Poles will remain marginalized, unless they completely renounce their identity and shift to Lithuanian.

In general, the results of this research reflect the interethnic processes taking place in the societies of the Baltic states as they have been presented in numerous earlier studies. However, we have added to the existing body of facts a great deal of more detailed comparative information. Further qualitative research should help to confirm the accuracy of these details and, if necessary, will lead to modification of the model. The subsequent application of the described model in research on other interethnic situations would help to test the universality of the model.

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