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**ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS
IDENTIFICATION,
ACCULTURATION ATTITUDES
AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC
ADAPTATION OF IMMIGRANTS**

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ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION, ACCULTURATION ATTITUDES AND THE SOCIO- ECONOMIC ADAPTATION OF IMMIGRANTS²

This article describes the construction and testing of a theoretical model of the socio-economic adaptation (SEA) of immigrants, considering psychological factors as basic. In the analysis of previous studies, acculturation attitudes of immigrants were identified as key psychological factors of SEA for the construction of a theoretical model; the length of stay in the host country and language skills were used as control variables; ethnic and religious identification were used as predictors of acculturation attitudes. A survey of Russian-speaking immigrants in Belgium was carried out and path analysis was used to test the model. We found that (1) acculturation attitudes of immigrants is associated with their level of SEA independently, i.e. regardless of length of stay in the host country or language skills; (2) a high level of SEA is positively associated with orientation toward the host society (integration and assimilation), and negatively associated with orientation toward their own ethnic group (separation); (3) strong ethnic and religious identification may facilitate the orientation of immigrants to their ethnic group, and strong ethnic identification prevents assimilation.

Keywords: socio-economic adaptation, acculturation attitudes, ethnic identification, religious identification, acculturation of immigrants, immigration.

JEL Classification: Z

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Introduction

Recent studies have shown that the majority of immigrants move to another country for economic reasons, but in spite of the sustainable desire of immigrants to gain financial security, they generally face serious obstacles, and achieving economic success is much more difficult for them than for natives (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). Moving to a new country is an extremely difficult and stressful process because it brings on changes in all areas of life — social, cultural and psychological (Benish-Weisman & Shye, 2011). Therefore, despite the fact that immigrants moving to a new country are seeking to improve their quality of life, they face different problems, discrimination and economic challenges (Wong, Chou & Chow, 2012).

Immigrants are more likely to be unemployed or work part-time, often facing difficulties in getting recognition of their educational qualifications and professional experience (Swan et al., 1991). Particular difficulties are related to unacceptable housing conditions, unemployment, low income, discrimination, social exclusion, lower socioeconomic status (SES), and a low quality of life (Wong, Chou & Chow, 2012). Even when immigrants manage to find a job, they are usually in an unequal position compared to natives (Winter-Ebmer, 1994). The first employment, even for highly educated immigrants, often belongs to non-prestigious employment in the so-called “secondary labour market” (e.g. cleaning services, construction work, etc.). Such employment is characterized by low language proficiency requirements and thus low incomes, fixed-term contracts and limited opportunities for career growth (Haberfeld, Semyonov & Cohen, 2000; Forsander, Salmenhaara, Melegh & Kondrateva, 2007).

Ethnic niche employment reflects the tendency of members of an ethnic group to focus on particular occupations and industry sectors (Waldinger, 1996). Wages of workers in ethnic enclaves and ethnic niches of employment, as a rule, are lower than wages in the open labour market (Sanders & Nee, 1987; Logan, Richard, Alba & Stults, 2003). In addition, such an ethnic niche labour market does not always give immigrants adequate opportunities for the development of socio-cultural skills (e.g. the study of language of the host country) necessary for constant social and economic upward mobility, as social interaction at work may be limited to their own ethnic group (Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2008).

Therefore, the socio-economic adaptation (SEA) of immigrants to a new environment is an acute problem. This situation is attracting a lot of attention and an increasing number of studies aim to help facilitate the adaptation of immigrants and to improve their quality of life (Wong, Chou & Chow, 2012). Nevertheless, the subject of SEA in general has been little studied (Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2008).

Definition and indicators of the socio-economic adaptation

Based on Berry's approach (Aycan & Berry, 1996; Berry, 1997; Berry, 2006) **socio-economic adaptation** (SEA) can be defined as the result of advances in acculturation toward such socio-economic positions that allow immigrants to completely participate in the social and economic life of the host society (Grigoryev, 2015a). Some indicators of SEA assess to what extent immigrants are involved in this social and economic life.

Researchers identify various indicators of SEA, such as achieving a certain level of income and the correspondence between planned and achieved financial goals (Aycan & Berry, 1996); occupational status, having a steady job, monthly savings, economic benefits, professional development, improved financial status, improved occupational status (Besevegis & Pavlopoulos, 2008); employment status, the use of social support and income (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003); the presence or absence of employment, satisfaction with it, the level of professional achievement and well-being in the new culture (Lebedeva, 2009); the probability of being employed, income, ownership of housing (Constant & Zimmermann, 2008).

Of particular interest as an indicator of SEA is employment status. Being involved in various aspects of life in the host country is closely related to the situation of immigrants in the labour market (Thomas, 1990). Researchers found that more adapted immigrants were those who had satisfactory working conditions (Starr & Roberts, 1982).

Due to difficulties with integration, immigrants may experience a significant decrease in their status in the new country compared to their status in their country of origin (Berry & Kim, 1988). It is difficult for immigrants to return to their original position and secure any upward mobility (Thomas, 1992).

Alienation from the social environment is another negative state that immigrants experience. Some authors have described a similar estrangement as the inability to achieve satisfaction in their social or personal activities, as well as other forms of mismatch between their situation and the expectations of the majority of other citizens (Guthrie & Tanco, 1980). Estrangement is likely to occur when this mismatch between the desired state (e.g. availability of a decent job) and the real situation (e.g. unemployment or part-time work), which is characterized as a failure to comply with social norms and expectations (Kanungo, 1979). In this regard, it is expected that the difficulty in getting access to a normal working life postpones the adaptation of immigrants (Thomas, 1990). Aycan and Berry (1996) considered the acculturation of immigrants from Turkey in Canada with a particular emphasis on the changing structure of employment and its impact on psychological well-being and adaptation. Most highly educated

and qualified immigrants have difficulty in integrating into the labour force. The authors also note that employment provides a certain purpose in life, determines status and identity, and allows immigrants to establish relationships with other people. This last function is especially crucial for immigrants, since the more immigrants interact with groups in society in general, the faster they learn the skills of everyday life in the host country. Unemployed immigrants will suffer not only a decrease in psychological well-being but also a delay in the sociocultural adaptation (Aycan & Berry, 1996). Overall, the findings of this study suggest that employment for immigrants performs other important functions in addition to generating income.

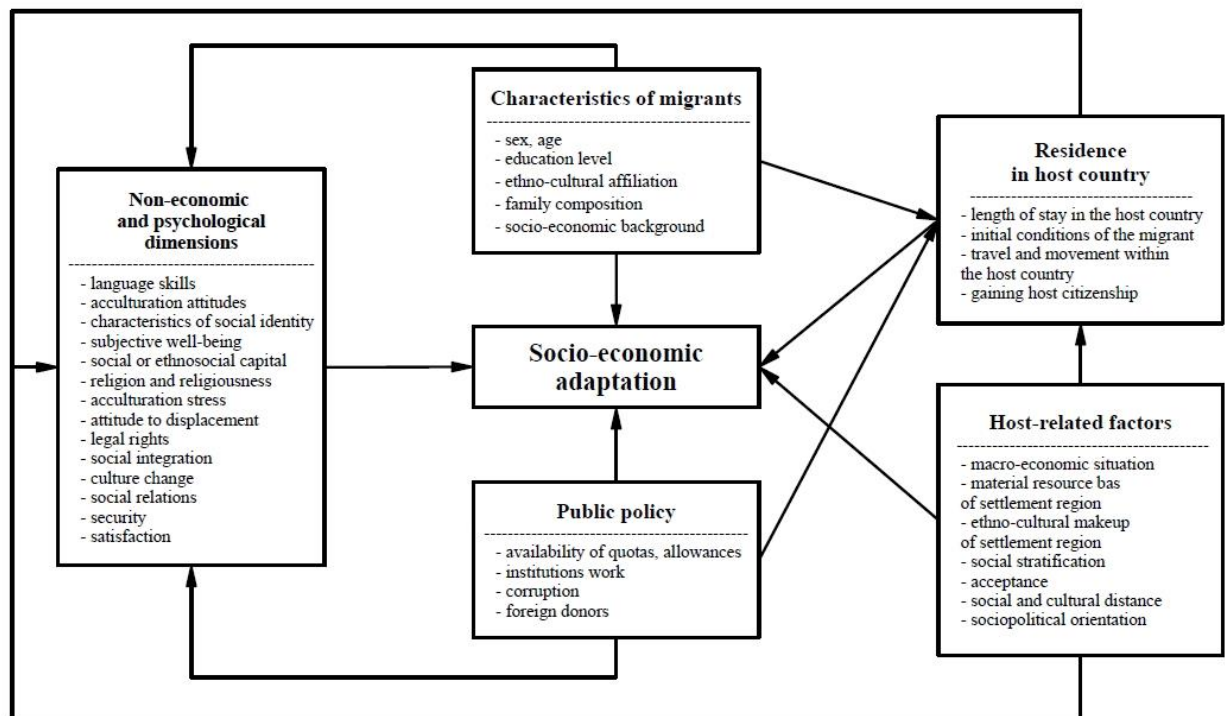
Factors of the socio-economic adaptation of immigrants

The literature on immigration issues contains many approaches to the influences on SEA. Some research focuses on the individual or group resources of migrants (see e.g. Portes & Bach, 1985; Nee & Sanders, 2001; Alba & Nee, 2003); other research has focused on the interaction among the migrants themselves, and with the host society (see e.g. Portes & Zhou, 1993; Model & Lapido, 1996; Waldinger, 1996; Waters, 1999); and some research focuses on the institutional aspect of the problem (see e.g. Reitz, 1998; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; van Tubergen, Maas & Flap, 2004).

Researchers that work in the framework of the human capital theory explain the social and economic situation of immigrants by the limited convertibility of human capital across national borders, e.g. because immigrants have foreign qualifications, lack language skills in the host country, or have incomplete information about the local labour market (Chiswick & Miller, 2002; Esser, 2004). A more detailed analysis of the impact of language skills and the length of stay in the host country can be found in Aycan and Berry (1996) and Grigoryev (2014b).

In general, summarizing existing research on this issue, including that described above based on an empirically tested (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003) theoretical model of the economic adaptation of refugees (see Kuhlman, 1991), it is possible to identify and classify several of the main factors that may influence the immigrant SEA (Grigoryev, 2014a). This classification is shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 Factors of socio-economic adaptation of immigrants



The role of psychological factors in this process is quite substantial. For example, **acculturation attitudes** of immigrants are a combination of: (1) orientation of immigrants to their own group, contacting mainly with the ingroup and aimed at preserving their cultural heritage and identity; and (2) orientation to the outgroup, preference for contact with the broader society and a focus on the adoption of the culture and identity of the host country. The combination of positive and/or negative responses of these options gives four acculturation attitudes: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. **Assimilation** occurs when an immigrant fully accepts the values and norms of the host culture, abandoning the norms and values of their own culture. **Integration** occurs when the immigrant identifies himself with his own culture and the host culture. **Separation** is characterized by the denial of the host culture while maintaining identify with one's own culture. In this case, immigrants prefer a greater or lesser degree of isolation from the culture of the host country. **Marginalization** assumes a loss of migrant identification with their own culture, and on the other hand, the lack of identification with the culture of the host country (Berry, 1997).

Acculturation attitudes of immigrants as a factor of their socio-economic adaptation

Research associating adaptation with acculturation attitudes of immigrants shows that in

most cases the immigrants with an integrative attitude tend to be better adapted than those who choose the marginalization (Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 2002). However, there is a contradiction between existing research on an independent association between acculturation attitudes of immigrants and their level of SEA. Some studies indicate the presence of a significant relationship (Besevegis & Pavlopoulos, 2008; Constant & Zimmermann, 2008), others find no significant relationship, despite the theoretical background for this relationship (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Horenczyk & Kinunen, 2011).

In a study conducted on a sample of immigrants in Greece acculturation attitudes were compared using Berry's approach and SEA. As expected by the authors, SEA is positively associated with orientation toward the host group and negatively associated with orientation toward their own ethnic group. Integration and assimilation attitudes had the most favourable results, whereas separation attitude was associated with low levels of SEA, regardless of the country of origin and length of stay in the host country. In addition, assimilation and integration attitudes, although they differ in the frequency of contacts with their own ethnic group, gave the same positive results (Besevegis & Pavlopoulos, 2008).

Research within the G-SOEP (German Socio-Economic Panel) on the influence of acculturation attitudes on economic behaviour (the probability of being employed, income, ownership of housing), noted that this effect is statistically significant and economically essential: assimilation and integration have a positive effect on economic performance, while separation and marginalization has no positive effect (Constant & Zimmermann, 2008).

However, in another study in Finland, it was assumed that the influence of acculturation attitudes on SEA were to some extent dependent on the length of stay in the host country. In this regard, this study examined the role of length of stay in the host country in acculturation attitudes and adaptation. In particular, it was expected that the separation attitude was adaptive, especially at the start of the process of acculturation, since according to the authors, separation may be a prerequisite for employment in the secondary (ethnic) labour market and for social support from members of their ethnic group in order to deal with acculturation stress. Later, in the process of acculturation, the role of separation attitude in adaptation will be reduced, and the psychological well-being of immigrants and SEA will better facilitate integration and assimilation attitudes. However the authors report that none of the three acculturation attitudes themselves had any significant relationship with immigrants' level of SEA, the only predictor directly related to this variable was length of stay in the host country — the longer immigrants remain in their new country, the higher their level of SEA. There was no relationships between the length of stay in the host country and acculturation attitudes, except for a weak negative correlation with the integration (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Horenczyk & Kinunen, 2011). One can assume that significant

relationships between acculturation attitudes and SEA have not been identified because of the specific composition of the sample and limitations of the measurements used.

However, it is important to consider in more detail the fact that acculturation attitudes (like cultural identity), tend to change through the different stages of cultural transition at least in adolescents. The original assimilation attitude of adolescents can change to an integration attitude after three years of immigration (Tartakovsky, 2009), and integration and assimilation attitudes are more common than a marginalization attitude among adolescents in the host country for more than six years (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006). The separation attitude occurs almost equally often regardless of the length of stay in the host country (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Horenczyk & Kinunen, 2011). However, with a more general approach, for example, using the linear bipolar model of the adaptation of immigrants, ethnic changes are considered as a continuum from strong heritage culture identification at one end, to strong host culture identification at the other. This model is based on the assumption that the strengthening of one identity requires a weakening of the other identity, which is in agreement with assimilation theories. Although economic adaptation in acculturation studies is rarely evaluated alone, economic research in the area of international migration assumes a similar linear structure for the length of stay in the host country with SEA of immigrants (Borjas, 1985; Aycan & Berry, 1996; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Horenczyk & Kinunen, 2011). Thus, it can be assumed that over time immigrants will increasingly focus on the host society and will also increase their level of SEA.

At the same time, the question of the psychological reasons for choosing one or another acculturation attitude has been insufficiently studied (Tartakovsky, 2012). Some researchers stress the influence of individual values (see Ryabichenko, 2013), others the characteristics of social identity (see Georgas & Papastylianou, 1998; Samnani, Boekhorst & Harrison, 2012; Lepshokova, 2012; Grigoryev, 2015a; 2015b).

The characteristics of ethnic and religious identity of immigrants as a predictor of their choice of acculturation attitude

It has been suggested, referring to the theory of cognitive dissonance, that due to cultural differences immigrants in a new culture will experience some discomfort because their original cultural values and norms are usually not appropriate for the cultural context of the host society, for example, conditions in the workplace or norms of social relations in the host society (Grigoryev, 2015b). As a result, migrants attempt to reduce this discomfort (Pugh, Groth & Hennig-Thurau, 2010), and studies show that people who try to minimize this cognitive

dissonance to maintain their self-construction may: (1) avoid certain behaviours (Pugh, Groth & Hennig-Thurau, 2010); (2) or adapt their own values and behavioural norms to the cultural context of the host society (Maertz, Hassan & Magnusson, 2009).

Based on this assumption, immigrants can deal with this cognitive dissonance in four ways by selecting the appropriate acculturation attitude: (1) by trying to completely accept the different values and norms through the assimilation attitude; (2) by taking some of the new values and norms, while retaining some of their original own values and norms through the integration attitude; (3) by trying to distance themselves from the new values and norms, rejecting them, and at the same time adhering strictly to their original culture by the separation attitude; (4) by rejecting the values and norms of the new culture, and at the same time, giving up their own, achieving marginalization attitude (Samnani, Boekhorst & Harrison, 2012).

The greater the gap between the perceived identity and cultural values and norms of immigrants and the situational factors typical for the host country, the harder it will be for immigrants to integrate into these new circumstances (Wong, Yik & Kwong, 2006). For immigrants for whom their culture is less important, it will be easier and more effective to reduce dissonance through the assimilation attitude or integration attitude than for those whose original culture is central to their self-identity.

Social identity theory may assist in further explaining the role of characteristics of social identity of immigrants. It is assumed that people categorize themselves as members of social groups and some social roles have priority over others (Samnani, Boekhorst & Harrison, 2012). A strong ethnic identification, in this context, refers to the extent to which the role of the immigrant as a representative of their original culture (and as a representative of their ethnic, civic and religious groups) appears as an essential part of their self-construction (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). An immigrant with strong ethnic identification considers the role of a representative of the original culture as an essential part of their self-concept, and vice versa for the immigrant with weak ethnic identification. Accordingly, the immigrant with weak ethnic identification will tend to experience less discomfort from an assimilation attitude, as he will not feel that it has affected any important part of their self-construction, and can therefore also focus on other aspects of their social identity (e.g., professional, gender, parent, etc.) (Samnani, Boekhorst & Harrison, 2012). It was found that weak ethnic identification is negatively associated with the assimilation attitude (Naumann, Benet-Martínez & Espinoza, 2013). In contrast, the immigrant with strong ethnic identification is characterized by the choice of the separation attitude, which is partly the same as shown in empirical studies (Lepshokova, 2012; Naumann, Benet-Martínez & Espinoza, 2013). The prerequisites for the integration attitude are both a strong and weak expression of ethnic identification, with certain specific aspects in each case, which depend on

the influence of additional factors, and with the marginalization attitude (Samnani, Boekhorst & Harrison, 2012). For example, weak ethnic identification can be characterized by the desire to maintain contacts with compatriots, communication in their mother tongue and the like, or in spite of the strong ethnic identification, the immigrant is forced to contact with the host group for economic reasons (Grigoryev, 2015b). Religion is a form of social and cultural identity (Cohen, 2009; Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman, 2010). Nevertheless, the study of acculturation often ignored the religious factor (Phalet & Kosic, 2006). Although in terms of immigration and life in new society, religion could have a significant influence on adaptation (Navara & James, 2005; Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Rubin, 1994; Abu-Rayya & Abu-Rayya, 2009).

Research shows that the religiosity of an ethnic minority reduces the tension caused by pressure from the host society and ethnic and cultural differences, and therefore, the level of religiosity in the context of immigration may increase (Feher, 1998; Yang, 1999). Religiosity also helps overcome social isolation (Kwon, 2000). According to another point of view on religious identity in the context of immigration, religion can support personal and social "distinctiveness" in a multicultural context (Rayaprol, 1997), that is, it can preserve identity, maintain group cohesion, ethnic and national heritage.

Secularization characterizes the general downward trend in the importance and influence of religion among the majority of the European population (Gorski & Altinordu, 2008). From the point of view of the host society, for example, the religion of Muslim immigrants looks like a clear boundary that separates them from the host society and makes their adaptation difficult (Allen & Nielsen, 2002). The religious issue is often seen as a sign of cultural distance and as an obstacle to the integration of immigrants (Ward, 2013).

On the other hand, from the point of view of immigrants, religious traditions and ties are an important source of self-esteem, social support and cultural continuity (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000).

In studies of religion as a factor influencing the adaptation of immigrants (see e.g. Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Abu-Rayya & Abu-Rayya, 2009) the religious affiliation of immigrants must be considered, along with the religious structure of the host society (Zolberg & Woon, 1999).

Religion "fills" the ethnic and gender identity of immigrants, influences civic and political life, and the lives of the second generation of immigrants (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007). Whether religion is an obstacle to integration is largely determined by the attitudes of the host society (Güngör, Fleischmann, Phalet & Maliepaard, 2013).

Theoretical model of socio-economic adaptation of immigrants

The level of immigrant SEA is primarily dependent on the acculturation attitudes, the

level of language skills and the length of stay in the host country. In turn, the acculturation attitude depends on the ethnic and religious identification of immigrants and the initial level of their language skills. Acculturation attitudes are usually characterized by a change in orientation towards the host society, depending on the length of stay in the host country.

Acculturation attitudes involving contact with the host group — the integration attitude and the assimilation attitude — are positively associated with high levels of SEA, and separation attitude, suggesting preferential contact with their ethnic group, is negatively associated.

Immigrants with higher levels of language skills, and a longer time spent in the host country, have higher levels of SEA.

Strong ethnic and religious identification prevents the assimilation of immigrants and promotes the choice of the separation attitude. Better language skills contributes to a more integrational profiles, and vice versa.

The longer immigrants reside in the host country, the more they are inclined to focus on integration into the host society and to a lesser extent on their ethnic group.

The described theoretical model is shown in Fig. 2.

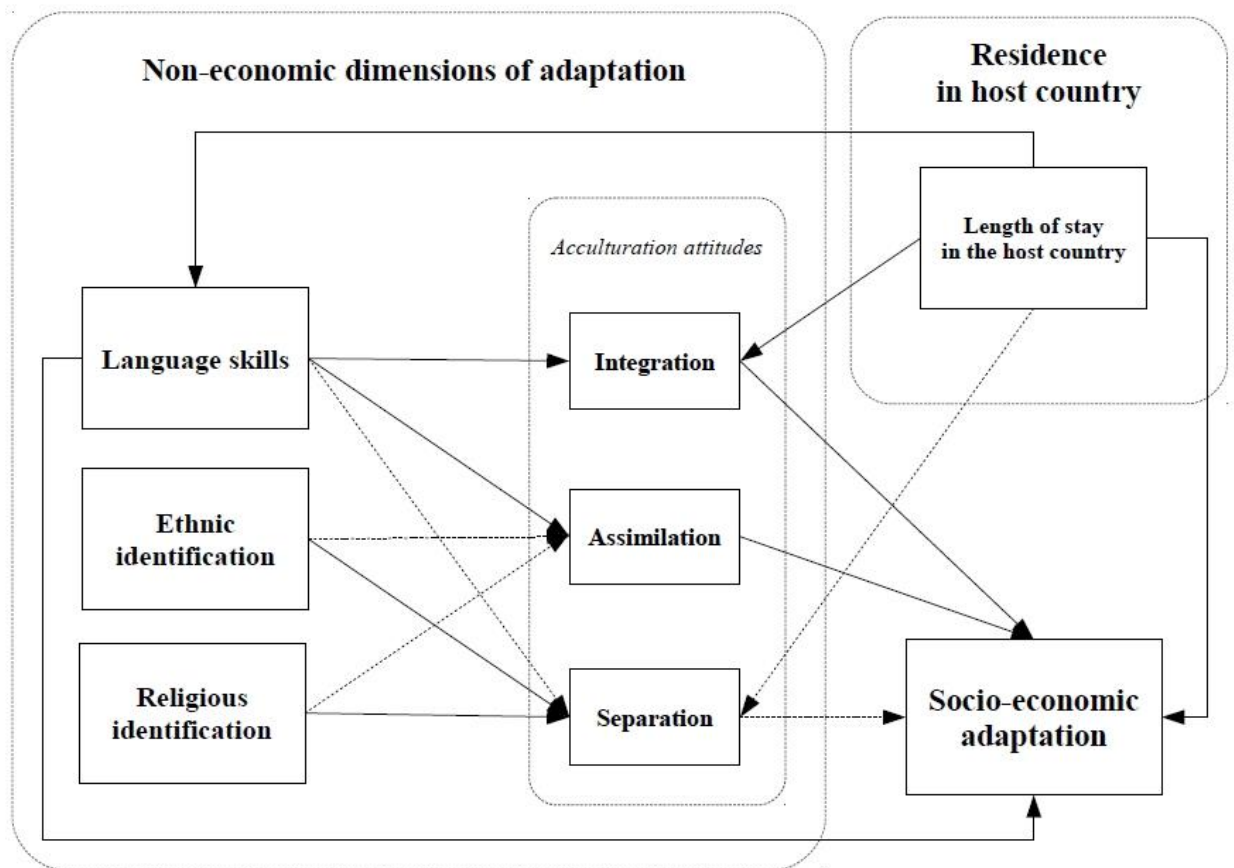


Fig. 2 Theoretical model of socio-economic adaptation of immigrants

Note: The solid lines indicate the positive links, the dotted lines, negative links.

To test this theoretical model a socio-psychological survey was carried out.

Method

Participants

In total, during the study in 2014, 132 Russian-speaking immigrants to Belgium were surveyed (64% are residents of Brussels; 86% have higher education; 47% women; 72% Russian Orthodox Christians), aged 19 to 65 years ($M = 35.9$; $SD = 9.3$), with the length of stay in Belgium from 2 months to 18 years ($M = 7.1$; $SD = 5.0$).

Measures

Ethnic and religious identification. Used for measuring the scale of ethnic and religious identification (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007) in Russian. Sample questions: "I consider myself a Russian", "I consider myself a representative of my religion", (5 = Strongly agree, 1 = Strongly disagree);

Length of stay in the country. Open-ended question used for measuring the time of stay in Belgium;

Language skills. Used for measuring the integral scale containing questions about the level language skills of the host country (understand, speak, write, read: Dutch, French, German, English);

Acculturation attitudes. Used for measuring the scale of the questionnaire MIRIPS in Russian (Tatarko & Lebedeva, 2011). Sample questions: "It is important to me to be fluent in both Russian and the in languages that are represented in Belgium", "I prefer to have only Belgians friends", "I feel that Russians should maintain their own cultural traditions and not adapt to those of Belgian", (5 = Strongly agree, 1 = Strongly disagree);

Index of socio-economic adaptation. Used for measuring the integral scale of the World Bank survey in Russian (indicators: professional status, full-time work at the moment, monthly savings, professional development, improved financial position, improving the professional status) (Besevegis & Pavlopoulos, 2008). Sample questions: "Do you work at this time?", "Do you have a permanent job?", (1 = Yes, 0 = No, positive answers to the questions with negative content (e.g., decreased occupational status, loss of skills) give a negative sign (-1), then the answers are added together).

Results

Descriptive statistics and reliability of scales used are shown in Table 1. The high rates of α -Cronbach for all scales ($\alpha > 0.70$) evidence their reliability.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and reliability of scales

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skew.</i>	<i>Kurt.</i>	<i>α</i>
Ethnic identification	122	1.00	5.00	4.05	.94	-1,14	.95	.81
Religious identification	100	1.00	5.00	3.49	1.08	-.53	-.21	.90
Language skills	131	20.00	70.00	43.04	11.52	.16	-.70	.84
Integration	122	2.00	5.00	4.40	.62	-1.21	.43	.70
Assimilation	122	1.00	4.75	2.01	.89	1.00	.74	.83
Separation	122	1.00	4.75	2.07	.87	.68	.44	.74
Socio-economic adaptation	117	-4.00	7.00	2.34	2.53	-.13	-.89	.74

The results of the correlation analysis (see Table. 2) reveal that high levels of SEA have a positive correlation with the language skills ($r = .52$; $p < .001$), the length of stay in the host country ($r = .38$; $p < .001$), integration attitude ($r = .42$; $p < .001$), assimilation attitude ($r = .43$; $p < .001$), and negative correlation with separation attitude ($r = -.57$; $p < .001$).

The high level of SEA showed a negative correlation with strong ethnic identification ($r = -.40$; $p < .001$), but if acculturation attitudes (assimilation attitude and separation attitude) were used as control variables, this correlation is not significant ($r = -.14$; $p = .151$).

Also, using language skills as control variables revealed that the correlation between integration attitude and the length of stay in the host country is not significant ($r = .16$; $p = .089$); nor is the correlation between religious identification and assimilation attitude ($r = -.01$; $p = .987$) if language skills and their ethnic identification are used as control variables. All other basic links to the theoretical model using different variants of the control variables are significant.

A high level of language skills showed a positive correlation with the length of stay in the host country ($r = .25$; $p = .005$), integration attitude ($r = .36$; $p < .001$), assimilation attitude ($r = .29$; $p = .001$) and negative correlation with separation attitude ($r = -.45$; $p < .001$).

The length of stay in the host country showed a positive correlation with integration attitude ($r = .24$; $p = .008$) and negative correlation with separation attitude ($r = -.33$; $p < .001$). A significant correlation with assimilation attitude was not found.

Strong ethnic identification showed a positive correlation with separation attitude ($r = .39$; $p < .001$) and negative correlation with assimilation attitude ($r = -.68$; $p < .001$).

Strong religious identification showed positive correlation with separation attitude ($r =$

.39; $p < .001$). Significant correlation with assimilation attitude was not found.

Thus, almost all the independent variables of the theoretical model are significantly associated to the dependent variable, allowing us to test the model by applying path analysis without any meaningful adjustments.

Table 2. Pearson's correlations of the variables

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Socio-economic adaptation	-				
2. Language skills	.52***	-			
3. Length of stay	.38***	.25**	-		
4. Ethnic identification	-.40***	-.06	-.16	-	
5. Religious identification	-.13	.00	-.03	.41***	-
6. Integration	.42***	.36***	.24**	-.02	.00
7. Assimilation	.43***	.29**	.06	-.68***	-.26*
8. Separation	-.57***	-.45***	-.33***	.39***	.39***

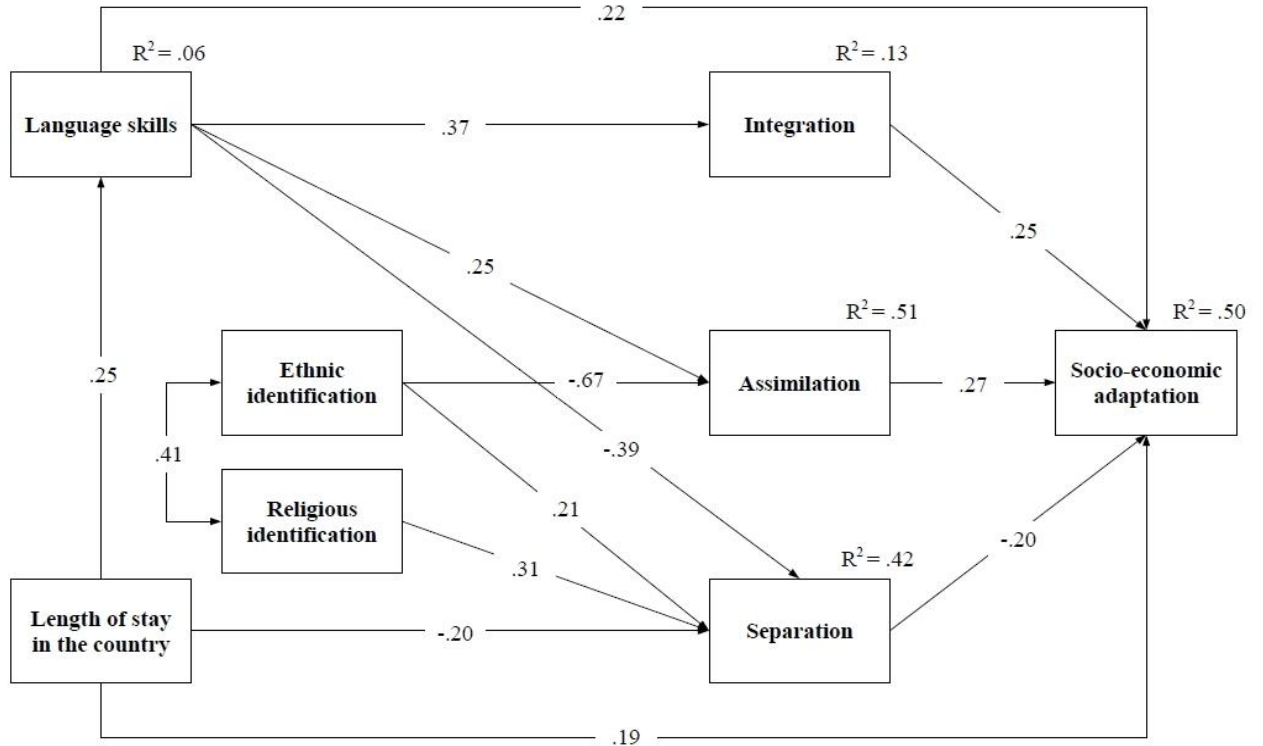
*** — $p < .001$; ** — $p < .01$; * — $p < .05$ (two-tailed).

For the construction of the path model the program AMOS was used. During testing, to evaluate of the links of model, bootstrapping was used. Bootstrapping has several advantages over the conventional tests of mediation, such as the Sobel test, particularly when analysing multiple mediation in small and medium size samples (Hayes, 2009). Two models were tested, one model contains the previously detected not significant correlations and in the final model coefficients for these links considered to be zero. These two models are insignificantly different from each other. However, the final model produced smaller values of Akaike information criterion (64.34 and 62.21 respectively). Indicators of the final path model are recommended: $1 < \chi^2/df < 3$; CFI > 0.90 ; RMSEA < 0.10 ; SRMR < 0.09 (Hu & Bentler, 1999) to conclude that the model fits the empirical data. The resulting final path model of SEA of immigrants is shown in Fig. 3. Standardized regression coefficients of the final path model are shown in Table 3.

The results of the final path analysis showed that the character of link in the empirical model almost completely reflects the suggested theoretical model.

The proportion of explained variance in the dependent is 50%.

Fig. 3 Path diagram of socio-economic adaptation of immigrants



$\chi^2 = 12.21$; $df = 11$; $p = .35$; $\chi^2/df = 1.11$; CFI = .99;
RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .05

Notes: All path coefficients shown are significant ($p < .05$).

Table 3. Standardized regression coefficients of path model

DV	IV	β	R ²
Socio-economic adaptation	Length of stay	.194**	.50
	Language skills	.224**	
	Integration	.249**	
	Assimilation	.268***	
Integration	Language skills	.356***	.13
	Ethnic identification	-.669***	
Assimilation	Language skills	.251***	.51
	Religious identification	.310***	
	Ethnic identification	.213**	
Separation	Ethnic identification	.213**	.42
	Length of stay	-.197**	

	Language skills	-.390***	
Language skills	Length of stay	.194**	.06

*** — $p < .001$; ** — $p < .01$; * — $p < .05$.

Discussion

The results show that acculturation attitudes of immigrants, regardless of their length of stay in the host country, are associated with the level of their SEA, which is consistent with an earlier study on a sample of immigrants in Greece (Besevegis & Pavlopoulos, 2008) and Germany (Constant & Zimmermann, 2008).

The dependence of the low level of SEA of Russian-speaking immigrants in Belgium on the choice of the separation attitude is primarily due to a high proportion of unemployed among those who chose this acculturation profile. It can be assumed that the high level of SEA is associated with the integration attitude due to the fact that immigrants with this acculturation profile may have access to resources of their own ethnic group and host society (Besevegis & Pavlopoulos, 2008), while the assimilation attitude is adaptive, primarily because it facilitates contact with the host society (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999).

Immigrants who choose the separation attitude face difficulties in their attempts to make contact with the host society and to acquire basic social skills such as learning the language of the country or obtaining employment (Nesdale & Mak, 2003). Therefore, immigrants should change their acculturation orientation to a more integrative or assimilative, and begin actively and independently seeking contacts within the host society, and improving language skills, which are mainly acquired in the interaction with native speakers (Grigoryev, 2014b).

Future studies considering acculturation attitudes as factors of adaptation should also take into account the influence of the host society. The meta-analysis confirms that the relationship between integration attitude and adaptation is moderated by the conditions in the host society (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

There is also the issue of whether to orient research towards the study of acculturation attitudes or behaviour, as these concepts are not interchangeable (Arends-Tóth, van de Vijver, & Poortinga, 2006). Studies show that the integration attitude may be preferred, but is not always easily accomplished in behaviour (Ward, 2009). At present, existing models include both real (behavioural) and ideal (attitudes) acculturation orientations (see Navas et al., 2005; Navas, Rojas, García & Pumares, 2007). In general, studies show that behaviour is a more powerful predictor of psychological and sociocultural adaptation than attitudes (Ward & Kus, 2012), and

so it is important to consider these distinctions in further studies.

Previously, research has suggested that a low level of language skills is one of the main obstacles to employment upon arrival in country (Aycan & Berry, 1996; Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2008). In support of this assertion are data from studies in which was found the relationship between language skills and employment opportunities of refugees (Beiser & Hou, 2001; Hou & Beiser, 2006). If immigrants initially have a good level in the language of the host country, it is much easier for them either to obtain the necessary qualifications to work, or to directly get a job. Otherwise, immigrants must either rely on the work of the secondary labour market, or in extreme cases, immigrants can remain unemployed for a long time (Grigoryev, 2014b). Also, the initial language skills contribute to the amount of contact with the host society, and therefore the choice of more integrative attitudes. However, in the future, the impact of attitudes on language skills should also be considered.

The choice of acculturation attitudes by immigrants is associated with the characteristics of social identity, which is consistent with the assumption that acculturation attitudes and parameters of identity should correspond to each other (Georgas & Papastylianou, 1998). Strong ethnic identification is negatively associated with the assimilation attitude and positively associated with the separation attitude. Strong religious identification is positively associated with the separation attitude. The obtained results are well explained by the above-mentioned linear bipolar model of immigrant adaptation. However, the existing literature, devoted to cultural change, includes competing views about the relationship between the culture of origin and the host culture in the process of acculturation. For example, a competing model suggests that some changes cover only certain aspects of ethnic identification (Laroche, Kim, Hui & Tomiuk, 1998). As for strong religious identification, it can be assumed that it is associated with a strong ethnic identity and reflects a commitment to the preservation of cultural values, and therefore more strongly affects the separation of immigrants. A significant negative association with the assimilation attitude has not been revealed, perhaps in a secular country like Belgium, which guarantees freedom of religion, giving up one's religious views is not so important. The main theoretical basis for the consideration of the economic area of immigration has been obtained mainly from studies of one host country (United States). However, previous cross-cultural studies have shown differences in the results of the adaptation of similar immigrant groups (in fact, even more so for immigrants from the same country of origin, but living in different geographical contexts) (Kogan, 2006; Model & Lapido, 1996; van Tubergen, 2004). For example, in Canada, it was revealed that some ethnic groups faced greater difficulties in finding a job in Montreal compared to other cities (Richmond, 1974; Richmond, 1989). The phenomenology of immigration and economic adaptation is likely to vary depending on a variety

of cultural, social, political and historical factors (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). Trying to solve this problem, some researchers have begun to study the impact of local conditions in the host country, such as the destination city, in a sample of particular groups of immigrants. These case studies of the effect local context on the model of economic adaptation provide valuable information about the experience of particular ethnic groups (Levanon, 2009).

Several attempts to generalize these findings have been proposed in the literature. For example, one can find the generalized statement that immigrant groups differ in acculturation attitudes or generalizations on the themes: the policy of the integration of migrants (i.e., active support against passive acceptance), labour market conditions (i.e., discriminatory or neutral behaviour towards immigrants), occupational and industrial composition of the ethnic economy (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Portes & Zhou 1993). Therefore, if previously only some scientists speculated that it is inappropriate to use models based on the experience of one ethnic group to explain the experience of others (see e.g., Sellers et al., 1998), now many researchers have realized that a major limitation for the further study of acculturation, in general, is that the majority of published studies are based on the consideration of a sample consisting of a single ethnic group, taken from one particular national context, which of course limits the external validity of our theories and research — both in relation to the selected groups, as well as in relation to the context (Ward, 2013). Today, some researchers are already working in this direction.

According to studies in Australia it is expected that the socio-cultural and economic aspects of adaptation are only a cultural skill that is strongly associated with an increase in material welfare (Scott & Scott, 1991). In support of this assumption are coping strategies related to issues of economy and employment of immigrants from Hong Kong in Australia (Mak, 1991). A recent study in Singapore also suggests that now there is a sense in developing culturally-specific markers of acculturation (Leong, 2014).

Also, future studies need to take into account that for the study of SEA of second-generation immigrants, the method, in the form in which it is presented in this study, is not appropriate. For this purpose, consideration should be given to SES. In particular, it was shown that high SES of immigrants associated with the assimilation attitude (Naumann, Benet-Martínez & Espinoza, 2013). It can be concluded that this study confirms the relationship between acculturation attitudes of immigrants and their level of SEA, and significantly supplements and expands the understanding of the role of social identity and acculturation attitudes in the process of acculturation.

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