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A Tale of Two Cities: Replication of a Study on the Acculturation and Adaptation of Immigrant Adolescents From the Former Soviet Union in a Different Community Context

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While a great deal of research has been conducted to understand acculturation and its relationship to adaptation in the new country, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the ways in which the characteristics of the local community impact these processes. The present study addresses this gap in the literature by exploring the potential role of community differences in the acculturation and adaptation processes of 269 refugee and immigrant adolescents from the former Soviet Union who resettled in two different community contexts. Specifically, a prior study on acculturation and adjustment among high school students (D. Birman, E. J. Trickett, & A. Vinokurov, 2002) was replicated with the same émigré population in a contrasting community within the same state. The contrast between these communities allowed us to test hypotheses emerging from an ecological perspective concerning (1) patterns of acculturation, (2) levels of discrimination and its effect on acculturative outcomes, and (3) community differences in the relationship between acculturation and outcomes. In addition to the focus on community differences, the study also employs a multidimensional measure of acculturation and assesses acculturation to both American and Russian culture. Furthermore, adaptation is assessed across different life domains; including peer relationships, family relationships, school adaptation, and psychological adaptation. Findings support the general ecological perspective, suggesting the importance of studying acculturation and adaptation as a reflexive process in which culture and context are very much intertwined.

KEY WORDS: acculturation; assimilation; refugees; immigrants; adolescents; ethnic identity; discrimination; community adaptation.

The wave of immigration in the past quarter century has been accompanied with a dramatic increase in the study of the acculturative process for immigrants. This process is defined as cultural change resulting from intercultural contact between two or more cultural groups (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986; Phinney, 1990). Of specific importance in this literature is the question of how differing patterns of acculturation relate to successful adaptation in the new country (Gordon, 1964; Holtzman & Bornemann, 1990; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990). Reviews of this literature suggest a varied picture of both the acculturation process and its relationship to adaptation. With respect to the process per se, for example, Gibson (1987) describes a separatist strategy for Punjabi Sikh families and adolescents in California, while Portes and Rumbaut (1990) describe a bilingual acculturation style among Cuban adolescents in Miami. The relationship of acculturative styles to adaptation is likewise varied across groups and contexts (Birman, 1994; Moyerman & Forman, 1992; Rogler et al.,

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1991), with studies reporting positive, negative, or curvilinear relationships between acculturation and adjustment.

Multiple explanations for these inconsistent patterns have been offered. For example, researchers have noted that acculturation is a much more complex phenomenon than what is often portrayed in the literature (Birman, 1994), highlighting the potential discrepancy between the construct and its measurement (Escobar & Vega, 2000). Further, research has suggested that the acculturation process and outcomes for varied immigrant groups differ because of the cultural distance between the culture of origin and the destination culture (e.g., Nguyen, Messe, & Stollak, 1999; Wong-Rieger & Quintana, 1987). In addition, for some cultural groups, broad social processes such as racism may affect the acculturation process and its relation to well being (Portes & Zhou, 1994) since discrimination against the newcomer group can prevent "structural assimilation" (Gordon, 1964; Rumbaut, 1994).

Surprisingly little attention, however, has been paid to the ways in which the characteristics of the local community impact the acculturation and adaptation process (Birman, 1994; Padilla, 1980; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990). Because the acculturation process unfolds in specific communities and represents a transaction between acculturating individuals, groups, and communities, culture and context should be inseparable in the study of the acculturation process. Thus, for example, the ethnic composition of the local "mainstream" community can affect the extent of "cultural distance" facing newcomers, as well as whether they experience discrimination. Unfortunately, most studies sample from a single community context and fail to describe this community in ways that help explain the acculturation patterns found in the data. By ignoring or minimizing the implications of local context for the ecological validity (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) of the reported data, the role of community influences on the acculturation process is obscured.

In a series of studies reporting on the acculturation and adaptation of émigré adolescents from the former Soviet Union within a particular resettlement community (Birman & Trickett, 2001; Trickett & Birman, 2005; Vinokurov, Trickett, & Birman, 2002), including one published in this journal (Birman, Trickett, & Vinokurov, 2002), we have become acutely aware of this gap in the literature. Data reported in these studies were obtained from a unique local community context characterized by ethnic density, with a large local concentration of émigrés from the USSR living within a relatively homogeneous surrounding community. As a result, we cautioned that the "generality of the specific patterns of findings to other Russian refugee adolescent populations is difficult to discern." We further suggested that future research "replicate this work in community and school contexts which differ on such factors as ethnic density and tolerance of cultural diversity" in order to help clarify the role of community context in determining acculturation experiences (Birman et al., 2002, p. 602).

The present paper follows up on this recommendation by reporting on a replication of this earlier study in a contrasting community context where members of the same immigrant group were dispersed throughout multicultural neighborhoods and schools. The analyses presented here explore community differences in both the pattern and predictive value of acculturation, and the findings support the view that acculturation is best understood as a contextual phenomenon.

Community Context, Acculturation, and Adaptation

Ethnic Density

Although relevant literature is limited, it nevertheless supports the importance of considering the role of community context, in particular, its ethnic density, as it affects various dimensions of immigrant and refugee acculturation, including language, identity, and behavior. With respect to learning the new language, for example, Chiswick and Miller report that living in areas with a higher concentration of native language speakers is related to a lower probability of language fluency, reading, and writing in the host language, across destination countries (Chiswick & Miller, 1996), including the United States (Chiswick & Miller, 1992; Logan, Alba, & Zhang, 2002), Canada (Chiswick & Miller, 1992, 2001), Australia (Chiswick & Miller, 1999), and Israel (Chiswick, 1998). The effect is even more pronounced for recent immigrants, those who are older when they immigrate, and those with less education (Chiswick, 1998). Chiswick and Miller (2001) theorize that an increased concentration of native language speakers affects immigrant language acquisition by decreasing postimmigration exposure to the destination language.

Ethnic enclaves also have an effect on retention of the native language (Portes & Schauffler, 1994). In a comparison of Miami, where immigrant communities are highly clustered, and Ft. Lauderdale, an adjacent area where immigrants are far more dispersed, the children of immigrants residing in Miami were twice as likely to be bilingual as those residing in Ft. Lauderdale due to their increased likelihood of retaining the native language while simultaneously learning English.

There is also evidence that ethnic enclaves affect other aspects of acculturation such as ethnic identity and behavior. In a study comparing three samples of Croatian immigrants, Zivkovic (1994) found that parental ethnic identity and behavior were highest among members of a socially and geographically discrete "closed community." Significantly lower parental ethnic identity and behavior were found in an "intermediate community," comprising of a more diverse group of Croatian immigrants who socialized with each other but did not live in the same neighborhood. The lowest degree of parental ethnic identity and behavior was found among Croatian immigrants dispersed throughout the United States (Zivkovic, 1994). Interestingly, the effect of living in an ethnic enclave on adolescent ethnic identity was in the opposite direction, with adolescents from the "closed community" reporting significantly lower ethnic identity than their peers in both the intermediate and open communities.

Furthermore, the literature suggests that community context affects the relationship between acculturation and adaptation. For instance, beyond the differences in acculturation described above, the study of Croatian immigrants also found that living in an ethnic enclave resulted in significantly higher reports of adolescent–parent conflict compared to more open communities. Based on these findings, Zivkovic (1994) speculates that adolescents living in an ethnic enclave may perceive ethnic identity as a source of conflict between their home and school lives, whereas adolescents in more open communities may experience ethnic identity as a more symbolic and nonconflictual choice. Although studying a different population and outcome, Schnittker's (2002) finding that neighborhood differences interacted with cultural participation to affect the self-esteem of adult Chinese immigrants in California also supports the importance of considering community context. Specifically, the study found that "Chinese cultural participation is more advantageous in predominantly Chinese neighborhoods than in neighborhoods with few or no Chinese" (p. 67).

Discrimination

In addition to ethnic density, the importance of discrimination as a potential community influence on the process of acculturation is consistent with the more general insight (Bankston & Zhou, 1997; Portes & Zhou, 1994) that the outcome of the acculturation process is affected not only by what immigrants bring with them, but also "the opportunities and restrictions they find in their immediate environment once they arrive" (Bankston & Zhou, 1997, p. 236). However, despite this observation, the specific effects of discrimination on the acculturation process have not been extensively explored in contrasting community contexts, nor are the potential implications straightforward. For instance, while the potential deleterious effects of discrimination may be buffered in ethnically dense communities through increased availability of social support, cultural knowledge, and sense of continuity with one's prior life (Bankston & Zhou, 1997; Liebkind, 1996), paradoxically, the very presence of an ethnically dense neighborhood or enclave may activate a sense of threat to the nonimmigrant surrounding community and thus increase the potential for discrimination. This perceived threat may be moderated by the degree to which immigrants learn the language of the host country. For example, in a study of intergroup encounters between an East Indian immigrant and native Canadian community, Clement, Noels, and Deneault (2001) found that one's ability to communicate in the language of the host country improved the quality of intergroup interactions.

In turn, perceived discrimination affects acculturation and is believed to affect adaptation. For instance, research (Portes & Zhou, 1994) has suggested that for nonwhite immigrants, discrimination can activate a "reactive identification" that reinforces the retention of ethnic culture. A comparable reactive process has been posited with respect to African American adaptation to "white culture" in Cross' (1995) description of "oppositional identity." With respect to adaptation, the specific stressor of discrimination has been emphasized as a potentially important community influence on the process of acculturation. Schnittker (2002) cites discrimination as a powerful source of social comparison that should be included in explanatory models of the effects of

neighborhoods on psychological outcomes such as self-esteem, although he did not find a relationship between discrimination and psychological outcomes in his Chinese immigrant sample.

While inconclusive, this literature suggests that the composition of the local community may (1) affect levels of perceived discrimination which in turn may (2) affect the acculturation process and, in so doing, (3) influence the relationship between acculturation and adaptation. The literature, however, relies almost exclusively on ethnic minority samples, and does not address how discrimination may affect the acculturation and adaptation of first generation white European immigrants who, on the one hand, stand out as foreigners because of language and customs, but, on the other hand, can "blend in" with the white majority. Along these lines, Portes and Zhou (1994) speculate that the demographics of white European immigrants allow a level of access to the dominant culture often denied ethnic minorities and, as a consequence, hypothesize that their adaptation may be facilitated by acculturation to the dominant culture. The only empirical study dealing with this issue (Birman & Trickett, 2001), however, suggests that, in a sample of refugee adolescents from the former Soviet Union, level of perceived discrimination contributed to higher levels of Russian identity. This finding supports the "reactive identification" hypothesis in a white sample. The present study extends this investigation of the relationship of discrimination to the acculturation process among white adolescents to a different community context.

STUDY RATIONALE

The present study was intended to extend the contextual research on acculturation and adaptation cited above in two ways. First, the study was designed to heighten the issue of community differences in the acculturation process by focusing on one highly specific immigrant/refugee group—Soviet émigrés—in two distinct community contexts within the same state in the United States. This contrast allowed us to identify plausible community effects in order to generate theory and hypotheses about community context and the acculturation and adaptation processes through maximizing our "sensitivity to phenomena through the juxtaposition of the similar but different" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 518). Secondly, the study was designed to operationalize both acculturation and adaptation in a highly differentiated manner by adopting an "orthogonal" multidimensional model of acculturation and a life domains approach to assessing adaptation.

Heightening the Role of Community Differences in the Acculturation Process

Focus on Former Soviet Adolescents

The samples for both studies consisted of adolescents from the former Soviet Union. Since the mid-1970s, approximately 7,00,000 émigrés from the former Soviet Union have come to the United States for permanent resettlement (Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2002), with approximately 5,50,000 entering the country with refugee status. The US government granted refugee status to Jews who were seen as seeking freedom from ethnic discrimination in the former Soviet Union. The American Jewish community has provided extensive support to these refugees in the hope that, after escaping the atheist and anti-Semitic Soviet regime, they would embrace an American Jewish religious lifestyle. However, the literature suggests that Soviet Jews are predominantly secular and may not easily integrate into American Jewish communities (Gold, 1992; Markus & Schwartz, 1984; Simon & Simon, 1982a, 1982b).[4]

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, an additional influx of approximately 150,000 immigrants have entered the United States holding immigrant visas. While some of these immigrants are also ethnic Jews, most are from the dominant ethnic groups of the former Soviet Republics and include Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians, and others. Despite these ethnic differences, however, it is important to note that both refugees and immigrants consider Russian to be their native language and culture as a result of the great emphasis on assimilation during the Soviet period.

[4]While Soviet Jews continued to receive refugee status because they were fleeing discrimination, for many, the decision to immigrate was not purely political, as those who held strong political views had opportunities to leave earlier, in the 1970s and 80s. Since the early 1990s, for many, refugee status provided an opportunity to resettle elsewhere, and many refugees came with substantial family savings, making their migration more similar to that of immigrants. Thus, the distinction between refugees and immigrants from the former Soviet Union during this period may not be substantial, with the exception that the majority of refugees were ethnically Jewish. However, because Jews had assimilated to Russian culture within the former Soviet Union, acculturation to Russian culture is assessed in the present study.

Cultural differences between the former Soviet Union and Western nations pose particular challenges for the adaptation of refugee adolescents with respect to school, parents, and peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1970). Existing literature from the United States and Israel on school adaptation (Aronowitz, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Horowitz & Kraus, 1984), psychological adjustment (Markowitz, 1994) or risk for maladjustment (Belozersky, 1990; Mirsky, 1997; Mirsky, Baron-Draiman, & Kedem, 2002; Mirsky & Kaushinsky, 1989; Slonim-Nevo & Sheraga, 1997), and family dynamics (Aroian, Spitzer, & Bell, 1996; Galperin, 1989; Markowitz, 1994; Slonim-Nevo, Sharaga, & Mirsky, 1999; Slonim-Nevo & Sheraga, 1997) support this view. Despite the common challenges facing refugees and immigrants from the former Soviet Union, however, experiential differences have been reported depending upon the specific resettlement community in which the group lives (Gold, 1992; Markowitz, 1993).

Distinct Community Contexts: Concentrated and Dispersed

The original study and its replication took place in two contrasting suburban communities, within the same state, in which large numbers of former Soviet families reside (see Table I). The community where the data were collected in the original study (Birman et al., 2002; Birman & Trickett, 2001; Trickett & Birman, 2005; Vinokurov et al., 2002) represented a geographically small area where former Soviet émigrés were concentrated in a few neighborhoods and schools just outside the city line ("Concentrated Community"). Furthermore, this émigré community was itself situated within an American Jewish enclave with a large geographic concentration of Jewish religious, educational, and recreational institutions largely built up in the 1950s. In fact, Jewish organizations estimate that 65% of the surrounding community's population is Jewish (Y. Sokolova, personal communication, 2003).

In contrast, the data for the replication were collected throughout an entire County where former Soviet émigrés were dispersed throughout the County's multicultural neighborhoods and schools ("Dispersed Community"). While this community also has a significant Jewish population, estimated to be 25% (Y. Sokolova, personal communication, 2003), and many Jewish organizations, the surrounding Jewish community is also dispersed, in keeping with the County's overall suburban sprawl.

Table I supports these observed community characteristics by referencing socioeconomic indicators from Census Data for the Concentrated Community, the County within which it is located, the Dispersed Community/County, as well as the state within which both communities are located (American FactFinder, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). In terms of similarities, the Concentrated and

Table I. Demographic Characteristics of the Concentrated and Dispersed Communities

Demographic Indices[a]	Concentrated		Dispersed county/ community	State
	Community	County		
Total Population	29,123	754,292	873,341	5,296,486
Race				
White	86%	74.4%	59.5%	62.1%
African American	8.5%	20.1%	15.1%	27.9%
Asian	3.5%	3.2%	11.3%	4.0%
Hispanics	1.5%	1.8%	11.5%	4.3%
Language spoken at home is not English	30%	9.6%	31.6%	12.6%
Russian or Ukrainian Ancestry	22%	2.9%	4%	1.8%
Foreign born population	20%	7.1%	26.7%	9.8%
Arrived in U.S. 1990–2000	13.6%	3.3%	11.9%	4.7%
% Over age 25 with bachelors degrees or higher	54.6%	30.6%	55.1%	31.4%
Labor force participation for 16 yr old and older	64%	66.6%	71%	67.8%
Employment in management, professional, and related occupations	57.5%	39.5%	56.6%	41.3%
Ave household size	2.25	2.46	2.66	2.6
Median family income	$84,578	$59,998	$84,035	$61,876
% Families below poverty line	5%	6.5%	3.7%	8.5%

[a]American FactFinder, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Dispersed Communities have comparable median family incomes, levels of education, and employment in management or professional occupations, although these indicators are lower for the County within which the Concentrated Community is located. In terms of differences, a comparison of the Dispersed Community with the Concentrated Community reveals greater racial diversity and a greater percentage of foreign-born residents within the Dispersed Community.

Comparing the Concentrated Community to the County within which it is located suggests that the homogeneity hinted at above results from the Concentrated Community's existence as an ethnic enclave. Specifically, the Concentrated Community was characterized by a very large percentage of residents of Russian or Ukrainian ancestry (22%) compared to a lower percentage in the County as a whole (3%). Consistent with this finding, the Concentrated Community also had a higher percentage of foreign-born residents and a larger percentage of the population had arrived during the 1990–2000 decade than in the surrounding County. These data suggest that a large influx of émigrés from the former Soviet Union came to resettle within one geographic location in the County.

Finally, a comparison of the County that encompasses the Concentrated Community with the Dispersed Community/County reveals greater homogeneity surrounding the Concentrated Community. Specifically, the Dispersed Community/County was characterized by greater racial diversity, percentage of foreign born, and more households with a language other than English spoken at home. In addition, the Dispersed Community/County had substantially greater immigrant arrivals in the decade 1990–2000 than the County encompassing the Concentrated Community.

Unpacking the Complexities of Acculturation and Adaptation

Acculturation

In defining the acculturation process operationally, we drew first on the "orthogonal" model of acculturation emphasizing the independent assessment of acculturation to both the new and the old cultures. This perspective (Berry et al., 1986; Oetting & Beauvais, 1990) underlies our prior work with this population (Birman et al., 2002; Birman & Trickett, 2001; Birman & Tyler, 1994) and is used by other acculturation researchers with different groups (e.g. Cortes, Rogler, & Malgady, 1994; Nguyen et al., 1999; Oetting & Beauvais, 1990). The assumption that this process occurs both with respect to the new culture and the culture of origin allows the researcher to examine the nature of the relationship *between* acculturation to the two cultures. For example, a negative relationship between acculturation in the two cultures (Birman, 1998; Birman et al., 2002; Birman & Tyler, 1994; Cortes et al., 1994; Nguyen et al., 1999) might suggest a potential cultural incompatibility in retaining both cultures, as the adoption of one aspect of the new culture may be related to losing it in the old.

In addition, our model views the acculturation process as multidimensional, involving three distinct processes: language competence, identification, and behavioral participation (Birman & Trickett, 2001). Language competence assesses an individual's capacity to communicate in the languages of the two different cultures. Identity refers to the extent to which individuals embrace membership in either of the two cultures (Phinney, 1990), while behavioral acculturation, or engaging in behaviors characteristic of one culture or another, is seen as resulting less from the individual's capacities and preferences, such as language competence, than from the transaction of the individual with the environment since some communities provide more opportunities to participate in one or both cultures than others. Thus, in contrast viewing acculturation as consisting of one of four overall acculturative styles, as proposed by Berry (1980), our perspective describes the overall acculturation process in terms of three discrete acculturative processes that may unfold in different combinations (e.g. Birman, 1994) across populations and settings (Birman & Trickett, 2001).

Adaptation

Adaptation refers to the process of coping with the varied demands of the social contexts of importance to individuals. In assessing the adaptation of refugee adolescents in the two communities, we adopted a life domain (Swindle & Moos, 1992) perspective that views lives as comprised of a range of varied settings, or "microsystems" which must be negotiated. For adolescents, important domains include not only psychological well-being, but families, schools, and peer groups comprised of both

immigrants and nonimmigrants (Birman et al., 2002). Each of these life domains may reflect differing kinds of adaptive requirements. For example, among peers or family, the development of successful supportive relationships may be viewed as an adaptive outcome; while at school, academic achievement may be regarded as one indication of successful coping.

In addition, these life domains are presumed to vary in the kind of "acculturative press" they exert. Thus, for immigrant adolescents, acculturation to American culture may be adaptive at school but not with ethnic peers (Birman, 1998; Nguyen et al., 1999). On the other hand, acculturation to one's native culture may be adaptive in the family but maladaptive at school. Adopting this life domains perspective provides a more contextually comprehensive sense of the relationship between acculturative process and outcomes than is found in studies that focus on single life domains such as psychological adaptation (Feldman, Mont-Reynaud, & Rosenthal, 1992; Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990; Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992; Rumbaut, 1994; Schnittker, 2002) peer relationships and antisocial behavior (Wall, Power, & Arbona, 1993), school success (Lese & Robbins, 1994; Manaster, Chan, & Safady, 1992), and family interaction (Rick & Forward, 1992). Thus, the present study assesses a variety of aspects of adaptation across varied life spheres that themselves differ in their acculturative demands.

Research Questions

The opportunity to juxtapose the "similar but different" using highly differentiated measures of both acculturation and adaptation led to the following research questions:

(1) *Do acculturative patterns differ in the two communities*? Based on the ecological perspective, we hypothesized that patterns of acculturation would differ in the two communities. More specifically, based on prior literature on community differences in acculturation (Chiswick & Miller, 2001; Portes & Schauffler, 1994; Vinokurov, Birman, & Trickett, 2000), we hypothesized that Russian language and behavior would be higher in the Concentrated and English language and American behavior would be higher in the Dispersed community, whereas no community differences in identity were likely to emerge. We further explored whether or not our hypothesized community differences in acculturation levels would be reflected in differences in the rates of acculturation through a community comparison of acculturation patterns with length of time in the United States. Finally, we explored the relationship between acculturation to the American and Russian cultures to see if the pattern we found in the Concentrated Community would also hold true for the Dispersed Community. Specifically, in the Concentrated Community, we previously found that acculturation to the American culture was substantially negatively related to Russian acculturation, particularly with respect to identity, suggesting that the pattern for these adolescents was to identify with either one culture or the other (Birman & Trickett, 2001).

(2) Does *perceived discrimination* vary across the two communities, and does it differentially predict Russian and American identity in the two communities? Perceived discrimination was found to be an important predictor of Russian identity in the Concentrated Community (Birman & Trickett, 2001), suggesting that adolescents may have been engaging in "reactive identification" with their native culture in response to perceived discrimination by Americans in the school context. Adding the Dispersed Community allowed us to assess both the absolute level of perceived discrimination in the two communities and its potential role in predicting the maintenance of Russian cultural identity across community contexts. In addition, since reactive identity includes both the affirmation of the culture of origin and rejection of the dominant culture, perceived discrimination should predict not only higher levels of Russian acculturation but also lower levels of American acculturation.

(3) *Does acculturation differentially predict outcomes across life spheres in the two communities*? Based on the ecological perspective, we expected the relationship between acculturation and adaptation to differ in the two communities, as particular acculturative styles may be more adaptive in one community than another. Our prior research in the Concentrated Community (Birman et al., 2002) found that different dimensions

of both American and Russian acculturation predicted adaptation in different life domains. For example, American identity was related to higher GPA and reduced loneliness, while Russian identity predicted greater support from Russian friends. Differential patterns were also found for language and behavioral acculturation. In the present study we were interested in whether patterns of relationships between acculturation and adaptation would differ across the two communities, as evidenced by significant interactions between community and acculturation variables in predicting a range of adaptation variables explored in the prior study.

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

Combined Sample

A total of 269 adolescents participated in the study, 149 from the Concentrated Community and 120 from the Dispersed Community. The overall sample was evenly divided by gender (54% male, 46% female) and high school grade level (grades 9–12). Their mean age was 16. On average, the adolescents were 10.5 years old when they arrived in the United States and had lived in the United States for 5.6 years (range of 1.3 to 16).

Reflecting the differences in the two communities, the Concentrated Community sample was comprised of those who entered the United States with refugee status, and the overwhelming majority self-identified as Jews (88%). In the Dispersed Community, the total percentage of those who self-identified as Jews was 43%. There the sample was evenly split between those who arrived with refugee status (51%) and those who had immigrant visas (49%). The majority of refugees in the Dispersed Communities were also Jewish (82%), whereas most immigrants (83%) were not.

Sample 1: Concentrated Community In the Concentrated Community, all the adolescents attended the same high school and were identified through school records and discussions with school personnel. Participants were approached about participation through letters sent to parents in Russian explaining the nature of the research. As the researchers were known to the school and perceived as supportive by members of the émigré community, there were only three parental refusals (2%). Assent was obtained from all remaining students, yielding a 98% response rate. Only adolescents born prior to their parents' migration to the United States were included in this study ($N = 149$ out of 162). All the measures were administered in English and were completed by students during one or two class periods during the school day.

Sample 2: Dispersed Community In the Dispersed Community, a random sample of students was selected from a school system list of all junior and senior high school students in the County whose home language was Russian (see Buchanan, 2001). Letters in Russian were sent home to parents explaining the study and were followed up by a telephone call to recruit participation. Written parental consent and student assent were obtained prior to data collection. This procedure yielded an 86% response rate. Only high school students ($N = 120$ out of 222) were included in this study. All the measures were administered in English in the students' homes.

Measures[5]

Acculturation

The Language, Identity and Behavioral Acculturation Scale (LIB, Birman & Trickett, 2001), previously used in several studies of this population (Birman et al., 2002; Vinokurov et al., 2002), was used to assess acculturation to the Russian and American cultures independently.[6] The Language subscales consist of nine parallel items asking respondents to rate their ability to speak and understand Russian and English. The Identity Acculturation subscales consist of seven parallel statements

[5]In order to examine the psychometric comparability of the original samples, Cronbach alphas were initially run separately for each sample. Since the reliabilities proved to be similar, only alphas for the combined sample are reported.

[6]The *Language, Identity, and Behavior Susbscales* were adapted from a number of existing acculturation measures. The Language subscale was developed as part of the Multidimensional Scale for Latinos (Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, & Buki, 2003). The Identity subscale was adapted from the American Identity Scale developed by Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997). The Behavioral subscale, used with Russian speaking adults in the Birman and Tyler (1994) study, adapted items from the 1978 version of the Behavioral Acculturation Scale (Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines, & Aranalde, 1978) to a bicultural framework.

regarding the degree of identification with each culture (e.g., "I consider myself American/I consider myself Russian") and the extent to which respondents regard this identification positively (e.g., "I am proud to be American/I am proud to be Russian"). The Behavioral Acculturation subscales ask participants to rate the extent to which they engage in behaviors associated with each culture (e.g., language use, media, music, entertainment, food) in nine parallel items. The response format for each subscale consists of a 4-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all* to *very well, like a native* for the Language subscales, and *not at all* to *very much* for the Identity and Behavioral subscales. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the present sample were .94 and .93 for the English and Russian Language subscales, .91 for both the American and Russian Identity subscales, and .78 and .81 for the American and Russian Behavioral subscales, respectively.

Peer and Family Adaptation

We defined peer and family adaptation in terms of satisfaction with social support available from peers and family members, reasoning that such support would indicate peer and family acceptance and involvement. We used the Social Support Microsystems Scales (Seidman, Aber, Allen, & French, 1996), which asked respondents to rate each of several potential providers of support, using a 3-point scale ranging from *not at all* to *a great deal*, in terms of how helpful they are "when you have a personal problem," "when you need money and other things," and "how much fun" you have with them. The scale was modified to consider Russian and American peers separately. Reliabilities for this sample were .87 for American peers, .86 for Russian peers, and .82 for family support.

School Adaptation

School adaptation was assessed by grade point average, attendance, and sense of school involvement (Goodenow, 1993), representing academic, behavioral, and psychological indexes, respectively. Grades and attendance were collected from school records at the end of the school year. Weighting for grades in honors and gifted and talented classes resulted in a possible GPA range from 0 to 6. In the combined sample, the average GPA was 3.19, ranging from 0.13 to 5.38. The Sense of School Involvement measure is a 17-item scale asking adolescents to rate their feelings of acceptance and inclusion in the school context. Students rate the items on a 5-point scale from *not at all true* to *completely true*. The reliability for the overall sample was .90.

Psychological Adaptation

Psychological adaptation was assessed with the UCLA Loneliness scale and an abbreviated form of the Hopkins Symptom Checklist. The UCLA Loneliness scale assesses social isolation through responses to 13 items asking such questions as "How often do you feel isolated from others?" (Russel, 1996). The alpha reliability for the combined sample was .88. The abbreviated Hopkins Symptom Checklist consisted of 14 items selected from the Hopkins Symptom Checklist-21 developed by Green, Walkey, McCormick, and Taylor (1988). In the present study, seven items assessing somatization were omitted because they were viewed as less relevant for an adolescent sample. The remaining items assess distress related to anxiety and depression, using a 4-point scale to rate the degree of distress related to items such as "feeling inferior to others." Reliability for this sample was .88.

Discrimination Hassles

Discrimination hassles were assessed because perceived discrimination in the school environment had been previously identified as an important factor in the lives of the adolescents in the Concentrated Community (Birman & Trickett, 2001). The measure consists of nine items asking respondents about incidents of discrimination in the school against them personally or against other former Soviet students. These included, being made fun of because of one's accent, seeing another Russian student being treated unfairly by the administration, or being told by a teacher not to speak Russian in the school. These items were part of a 38-item Acculturative Hassles scale (Vinokurov et al., 2002) developed for Soviet Jewish refugee adolescents, yielding a test-retest reliability of .79 over a 10-day period. Respondents indicate whether a particular hassle occurred during the prior month, and, if it did, how stressful it was on a scale from 1 (*not at all stressful*) to 4 (*very stressful*). Hassles are summed to yield an overall frequency score, and a mean of how stressful the endorsed hassles are yields an "intensity" score.

Table II. Means of Age, Parents' Education and Length of Residence in United States in the Concentrated and Dispersed Communities

	Communities		
	Concentrated ($N = 149$) [M (SD)]	Dispersed ($N = 122$) [M (SD)]	F
Adolescents' age	16.15 (1.2)	16.18 (1.2)	0.05, *ns*
Parents' education	3.87 (.99)	3.93 (.76)	0.27, *ns*
Length of residence in the U.S.	5.76 (2.7)	5.12 (3.1)	$2.96^{\dagger}$

$^{\dagger}p \leq .10$ level.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Comparison of Sample Demographics

The demographic comparability of the two samples was examined by testing for differences on key variables using a MANOVA for continuous variables (see Table II) and chi-squares for categorical variables (see Table III). There were no significant differences between the two groups in terms of adolescent gender or age at the time the data were collected. Family characteristics were also comparable, with no significant differences in terms of parents' education level, or number of parents, siblings, and grandparents residing with the adolescents.

Despite these overall similarities, a few differences emerged. There was a trend indicating that émigrés in the Concentrated Community had lived in the United States slightly longer than émigrés in the Dispersed Community. In addition, a significantly greater percentage of adolescents in the Concentrated Community considered themselves Jewish compared to the Dispersed Community (88% vs. 48%). In addition, the largest number of families in the Concentrated Community came from Ukraine (39%), with the others coming from Belarus (16%) and Russia (14%), whereas in the Dispersed Community the majority (54%) came from Russia, only 22% from Ukraine, and 13% from Belarus. As a result of these findings, Jewish identification and length of residence were included in all subsequent analyses to control for their possible contribution to any community differences that emerged.

An additional preliminary analysis assessed the correlations among the Language, Identity, and Behavior acculturation subscales for each culture. The average intercorrelation of the three subscales was .43 for the three Russian acculturation subscales and .40 for the three American acculturation subscales, ranging from a high of .57 to a low of .20. As a result they were maintained as separate subscales in subsequent analyses.

Research Question 1: Do Acculturative Patterns Differ in the Two Communities?

Patterns of acculturation in the two communities were examined by assessing differences in (a) levels

Table III. Frequencies of Gender, Jewish Identification, and Former Republics of Origin in the Concentrated and Dispersed Communities

	Frequency (%)		
	Concentrated communities ($N = 149$)	Dispersed communities ($N = 122$)	Chi-Square
Gender			
Male	82 (55)	63 (53)	.172, *ns*
Female	67 (45)	57 (47)	
Identify as Jewish	121 (88)	57 (48)	48.16^{***}
Former Republics of origin			
Russia	21 (14)	66 (54)	69.42^{***}
Ukraine	58 (39)	27 (22)	
Byelorussia	24 (16)	16 (13)	
Uzbekistan	9 (6)	2 (2)	
Azerbaijan	9 (6)	1 (1)	
Moldova	7 (5)	1 (1)	
Kazakhstan	3 (2)	2 (2)	
Latvia	3 (2)	1 (1)	
Other or not specified	14 (9)	4 (3)	

$^{***}p < .001$.

of acculturation; (b) the extent to which acculturation is associated with length of residence; and (c) the relative independence or "orthogonality" of acculturation to the two cultures for each of the acculturation dimensions (i.e., Russian and American language, Russian and American behavior, Russian and American identity).

Community Differences in Levels of Acculturation

The means for all six acculturation variables are presented in Table IV, and community differences were tested via standard multiple regression analyses to control for Jewish identification and length of residence in the United States in predicting level of acculturation. Thus, six separate multiple regression analyses were conducted, one for each component of acculturation. Possible interaction effects of pairs of predictors were examined, and the significant interactions are also reported in Table IV.

Community of residence was a significant factor in three of these regressions, with American Identity and Behavioral acculturation being higher in the Dispersed Community, and Russian Behavioral Acculturation higher in the Concentrated Community. No significant community differences were observed with respect to Russian identity, Russian or English language competence.

Jewish Identification and Community Differences

Because Jewish identification emerged as a significant predictor of American identity (see Table IV), and many more of the respondents in the Concentrated Community identified as Jews, we wanted to make sure that differences in identity were due to community differences, and not Jewish identification. To assess this we compared the means of the Jewish and non-Jewish participants in the two communities. Overall American identity was slightly *lower* in the Concentrated Community (2.38 vs. 2.11, $p < .01$), where the overwhelming majority (88%) of the participants were Jewish. However, in both communities, Jews tended to be *higher* on American identity (2.15 in the Concentrated and 2.63 in the Dispersed) relative to non-Jews (1.87 in the Concentrated and 2.15 in Dispersed). Thus, American identity in the Dispersed Community appears to be higher despite the fact that a much smaller proportion of the respondents were Jewish.

Length of Residence in the United States

As seen in Table IV, length of residence was associated with all of the acculturation variables, with the exception of Russian identity, regardless of community of residence or Jewish identification. American language, identity, and behavioral acculturation appear to increase over time, while Russian language and behavioral acculturation decrease over time. Furthermore, a significant community by length of residence interaction was found with respect to American language and identity, and there was a trend with respect to American behavior at the .10 level. The relationship between length of residence and American language, identity, and behavior was stronger in the Dispersed Community, suggesting a faster process of American acculturation.

Table IV. Standardized Coefficients for the Regression of American and Russian Acculturation on Time in United States, Community of Residence (1 = Concentrated, 2 = Dispersed), and Jewish Identification

	Acculturation variables [Means (*SD*)]			Predictor variables (Betas)			
	Concentrated ($N = 149$)	Dispersed ($N = 122$)	R^2	Time in US	Community	Jewish identification	Time in U.S. by Community interactions
American							
Language	3.68 (.39)	3.61 (.55)	.37***	.58***	−.07	−.05	.51***
Identity	2.11 (.81)	2.38 (.77)	.14***	.19**	.19**	.18**	.45**
Behavioral	3.16 (.48)	3.33 (.48)	.27***	.47***	.15*	−.04	.38†
Russian							
Language	3.30 (.70)	3.41 (.68)	.23***	−.48***	.07	.01	–
Identity	2.73 (.63)	2.28 (.47)	.02	.05	.01	−.11	–
Behavioral	3.27 (.78)	3.16 (.64)	.14***	−.22***	−.27***	.03	–

†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table V. Intercorrelations between American and Russian Acculturation Variables by community

Pairs of variables	Community	Correlation coefficient
English language & Russian language	Concentrated	−.34***
	Dispersed	−.32***
American identity & Russian identity	Concentrated	−.53***
	Dispersed	−.14
American behavioral & Russian behavioral	Concentrated	−.46***
	Dispersed	−.30**

**$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Independence of Acculturation to the Two Cultures

To assess the "orthogonality" of acculturation in the two cultures, correlational analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between parallel acculturation variables (e.g. Russian and American identity; see Table V). In both communities, language and behavioral acculturation to the two cultures were significantly negatively related, suggesting that these dimensions of acculturation are not orthogonal. Taken together with findings on length of residence, this suggests that in both communities, English language and American behavior displace Russian language and behavior over time.

Community differences were found, however, with respect to *identity*. Russian and American identity appear to be relatively orthogonal in the Dispersed Community (−.14, *ns*), but significantly and highly negatively related in the Concentrated community (−.53, $p < .001$).

Research Question 2: Does Perceived Discrimination Vary Across the Two Communities, and Does It Differentially Predict Russian and American Identity Acculturation in the Two Communities?

Adolescents in the Dispersed Community reported an average of 1.7 discrimination hassles in the past month, compared to 3.3 incidents reported in the Concentrated Community ($F = 33.78, p < .001$). Whereas 134 of the 149 (90%) adolescents from the Concentrated Community reported experiencing at least one incident of discrimination, 88 out of 120 (73%) from the Dispersed Community reported at least one incident. Further, the average "intensity" of these hassles, a rating of how stressful they were perceived to be on a 4-point scale, was significantly greater in the Concentrated Community (mean of 2.60 vs. 1.98; $F = 36.95, p < .001$).

To assess whether or not perceived discrimination differentially predicted Russian and American identity in the two communities, we reran the previously reported multiple regressions, adding discrimination frequency on step 2, and discrimination intensity on step 3, to the variables previously included in the regression predicting the level of Russian and American Identity acculturation (discussed above). Regression coefficients for this analysis are presented in Table VI. This analysis included a slightly smaller sample ($N = 222$) as only participants reporting discrimination (82%) had intensity scores available. As seen in Table VI, higher Russian identity acculturation and lower American identity acculturation was significantly predicted by the frequency and intensity of discrimination incidents reported.

In addition, a community by intensity of discrimination interaction was significant for both Russian and American identity acculturation (see Table VI). Here, greater intensity of perceived discrimination was associated with higher Russian and lower American identity only in the Concentrated Community.

Research Question 3: Does Acculturation Differentially Predict Outcomes Across Life Spheres in the Two Communities?

The third research question addressed (a) the contributions of acculturation to adaptation in different life domains, and (b) community differences in the relationship of acculturation to outcomes in these domains. To test these questions, simultaneous multiple regression analyses were conducted with all six dimensions of acculturation (LIB Russian/LIB American) as independent variables predicting adaptation in each life domain. Parents' education, adolescents' gender, community of residence (Concentrated or Dispersed), length of residence in the country, and Jewish identification were entered together with the acculturation variables. The results are presented in Table VII.

Acculturation and Life Domains

Overall, the regressions support the general hypothesis that Russian and American acculturation

Table VI. Standardized Coefficients for the Regression of Russian and American Identity Acculturation on Discrimination Frequency and Intensity, Controlling for Community of Residence, Time in United States, and Jewish identification (Not Shown, See Table III)

	Predictor variables (Betas)		
Identity acculturation variables	Discrimination frequency	Discrimination intensity	Discrimination intensity by community interactions
American identity	−.25***	−.19**	.62**
Russian identity	.29***	.17*	−.63**

$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

variables are differentially related to adaptation in different life domains. Across both communities, Russian and American acculturation variables contributed positively in some domains, and Russian Acculturation contributed negatively in others. No instances of negative impact resulting from American acculturation were found.

More specifically, American acculturation dimensions uniquely contributed to positive school outcomes and support from American peers. With respect to school, American identity predicted higher GPA, fewer absences, and greater school involvement. American behavior and language also predicted school involvement. In addition, American behavioral acculturation was related to support from American peers and less loneliness.

With respect to the Russian acculturation dimensions, Russian language appeared to play a positive role in adjustment, as it was a significant predictor of both better grades and reduced symptoms on the Hopkins Symptom Checklist. However, while Russian behavioral acculturation uniquely predicted support from Russian peers in the positive direction, it was also a predictor of increased absences from school. Russian identity was also a predictor of both positive outcomes (greater support from parents and reduced loneliness) and negative outcomes (greater symptoms on the Hopkins Symptom Checklist and lower GPA).

Community Contributions

Community of residence had both main and interactive effects on adaptation. Community was a significant predictor with respect to all school outcomes, including GPA, absences, and school involvement, as well as support from American peers. In each case, school adaptation was greater in the Dispersed Community, where adolescents had higher GPAs, fewer absences, and greater school involvement. Support from American peers was also greater in the Dispersed Community.

Interactions between community and the acculturation variables found to be significant in the regressions were tested. Significant interactions between American identity and community were

Table VII. Standardized Coefficients for the Regression of Adaptation in Different Life Domains on Community of Residence and American and Russian Acculturation, Controlling for Age, Gender, Parents' Education, Time in United States, and Jewish Identification

		Community and acculturation predictors (Betas)							
			American acculturation			Russian Acculturation			Interactions American identity × Community
	R^2	Community[a]	Language	Identity	Behavior	Language	Identity	Behavior	
Life domains									
GPA	.27***	.22***	.10, *ns*	.28***	−.11, *ns*	.15*	−.17*	−.02, *ns*	−.91***
Absences	.22***	−.19**	−.08, *ns*	−.14*	.06, *ns*	−.01, *ns*	−.06, *ns*	.25**	−.77**
School involvement	.27***	.20***	.17*	.25***	.22**	.11, *ns*	.07, *ns*	.03, *ns*	*ns*
Support from									
American peers	.43***	.26***	−.06, *ns*	.08, *ns*	.45***	−.04, *ns*	−.02, *ns*	−.08, *ns*	—
Russian peers	.50***	−.04	−.02, *ns*	.01, *ns*	.01, *ns*	.11†	.03, *ns*	.62***	—
Parents	.10**	−.01, *ns*	.15†	.11, *ns*	−.10, *ns*	.07, *ns*	.15*	.11, *ns*	—
Loneliness	.12***	.05, *ns*	−.12, *ns*	−.09, *ns*	−.24**	−.06, *ns*	−.14*	−.05, *ns*	—
Hopkins checklist	.10**	.08, *ns*	−.10, *ns*	−.01, *ns*	−.13, *ns*	−.20*	.16*	.09, *ns*	—

[a]Community Coded 1 = Concentrated, 2 = Dispersed.
†$p < .10$. $^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

found in the school domain for both GPA and absences (see Table VII). Plotting the interactions revealed that in both cases American identity contributed to better outcomes in the Concentrated Community but not in the Dispersed. Thus, adolescents in the Concentrated Community who were higher in American identity achieved a higher GPA and had fewer absences than those lower in American identity, while in the Dispersed community, level of American identity had no relationship to GPA or absences. These findings suggest the unique importance of American identity in the context of the Concentrated Community high school.

DISCUSSION

The present study assessed the relative generality/specificity of the process of acculturation and its relationship to adaptation in two contrasting community contexts. Results suggest a varied pattern of both similarities and differences in acculturation processes and their relationship to adjustment across community contexts. In this replication, differences in levels and patterns of acculturation were found on some dimensions of acculturation but not others. In addition, the relationship between acculturation and adaptation was found to differ by community with respect to one of the life domains considered, the school domain, on two of the three school adaptation variables. Taken together, the findings draw attention to the potential importance of community differences in the acculturation and adaptation processes.

Community Differences in Acculturation

Acculturation Levels

Language. In contrast to prior findings on adults living in different types of communities (Chiswick & Miller, 2001), language competence did not differ between residents of the Concentrated and Dispersed Communities with respect to either English or Russian. This difference may reflect the fact that, even in the Concentrated Community, our sample was a language minority within a surrounding local community, the ethnic enclave was not very large, and thus the need to interact with English speakers was considerable. Alternatively, it may reflect the developmental ease with which adolescents acquire English skills compared to adults. Furthermore, the adolescents in the study came from relatively well-educated families where learning English was likely to be encouraged. This constellation of circumstances may also have contributed to the relatively rapid process whereby the adolescents were losing their Russian language skills and the new language was becoming more dominant over time.

Identity. Findings with respect to identity were more complex. Russian identity did not differ by community, a finding that replicates our adult data on former Soviet refugees in different communities (Vinokurov et al., 2000). The lack of community impact on Russian identity may suggest that this aspect of the acculturation process is relatively stable over time, even as other aspects of the acculturation process show considerable change in this population. However, this finding differs from Zivkovic's (1994) data on Croatian immigrant adolescents in which ethnic identity was lower in ethnic enclaves compared to more open or dispersed communities. The cultures involved, the relative density or size of the communities in the different studies, or the cultural distance between the host and the newcomer's culture may account for differences in findings. In contrast, findings with respect to American identity revealed an important community difference. American identity was substantially higher in the Dispersed Community than in the Concentrated Community even though American identity was generally higher for Jewish participants, a smaller percentage of whom resided in the Dispersed Community. This suggests a strong community, rather than ethnic, effect.

Behavior. Community differences were also found with respect to behavioral acculturation, with Russian behavioral acculturation higher in the Concentrated Community and American behavioral acculturation higher in the Dispersed Community. These findings replicate prior work with Soviet adults (Vinokurov et al., 2000) and are most likely due to greater opportunities for involvement with Russian culture and Russian-speaking settings in the Concentrated Community. In contrast, the Dispersed Community may have provided greater opportunities, and perhaps even necessitated, participation in American cultural behaviors. Because community settings are so integral to this aspect of acculturation, behavioral measures of acculturation may capture characteristics of the community context in addition to those of the individuals being assessed.

Rate of Acculturation

In addition to community differences in absolute levels of acculturation, the significant length of

residence by community interactions suggest that community context also impacts how rapidly the adolescents acquired all three dimensions of American culture assessed in the study. Specifically, American acculturation seems to occur more rapidly in the Dispersed Community with respect to language, identity, and behavior compared to the Concentrated Community. In contrast, community context is less of an influence on the rate of loss with respect to identification with and attachment to Russian culture.

Orthogonality

Further complicating the community findings regarding identity level discussed above, a community difference also emerged with respect to the relationship between American and Russian identity. Namely, the two identities were significantly and substantially negatively related in the Concentrated Community but unrelated in the Dispersed Community. This pattern suggests that in the Concentrated Community, as American identity is acquired it displaces Russian identity. This reflects an assimilation pattern, similar to the one observed with respect to language competence. As suggested elsewhere, such a pattern may indicate cultural conflict (Birman & Tyler, 1994), where identifying with one culture is in conflict with identifying with the other. Thus, adolescents within some community contexts, such as the Concentrated Community, may experience an environmental press to choose their allegiance. Indeed, other work in the community suggests that the high school attended by these adolescents required just such a choice (Trickett & Birman, 2005), and that intergroup tensions in the community were also evident (Birman, 1997).

Such a pattern does not appear to be present in the Dispersed Community, where identifying oneself as American does not preclude identification as "Russian." Instead, American identity is acquired relatively quickly, while Russian identity does not diminish over time.

Community Differences in Perceived Discrimination

Community differences in perceived discrimination were found not only with respect to the degree of reported discrimination, but also in relationship to Russian and American identity acculturation. Community of residence affected both the level and intensity, or stressfulness, of perceived discrimination, with adolescents in the Concentrated Community reporting higher levels of both. In addition, across both communities, both level and intensity of perceived discrimination predicted Russian and American identity in both communities. The greater the number of reported incidents of discrimination, and the more stressful these incidents were, the higher the Russian and the lower the American identity. These findings support a "reactive identification" interpretation, in that as these adolescents experience discrimination, they are more likely to embrace their native identity and reject identification with American culture. Of course, a reverse causal or interactive process is also plausible, in which an existing acculturative style activates discriminatory reactions in the school and community context and/or sets in motion cycle of actions and reactions. Alternatively, it may be that Russian identity in the Dispersed community is less threatening because, in this multicultural context, it is less associated with group identity, whereas the number and visibility of Russians in the Concentrated Community may more likely activate a group identity schema among the non-Russians.[7]

However, the significant identity by community interactions for intensity of hassles suggests that the main effects conceal important local community differences. Specifically, discrimination intensity was an especially important predictor of both Russian and American cultural identity in the Concentrated Community. Thus, while adolescents experience discrimination in both communities, the incidents are relatively infrequent and perceived as "not a big deal" in the Dispersed Community. On the other hand, the greater frequency and intensity in the Concentrated Community, and the association of intensity with cultural identity in this community, suggests that discrimination experiences are highly salient in this context.

Importantly, however, discrimination is a factor in the lives of these adolescents, even though they are white. Typically, the immigration literature has only examined discrimination in the lives of immigrants who are visible ethnic minorities. In fact, the "reactive identification" concept emerged in this context. However, our data suggest that these first generation white immigrants not only experience discrimination at school, but also exhibit a pattern consistent with the dynamics of "reactive identification."

[7]The authors wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this alternative explanation of the findings.

Acculturation Predictors of Adaptation

A major purpose of this study was to assess whether previously reported findings in a different community were generalizable to other resettlement communities for this population. Analyses on the combined sample revealed that many of the previous findings in the Concentrated Community held for both communities. For example, American identity was positively related to all school outcomes across the two communities, as were Russian identity and support from parents. However, some acculturation by community interactions was also found within the school domain. Specifically, higher American identity predicted higher grades and fewer school absences in the Concentrated Community, but not in the Dispersed Community. These findings underscore the relative importance of identifying oneself as "American" for adolescents living in the Concentrated Community.

These findings further suggest that the schools and communities involved in this study differed in the "acculturative press" they exerted. "Acculturative press" is the term we have suggested elsewhere (Trickett & Birman, in press) to describe the pressures exerted on immigrant and refugee students by schools and the surrounding community. This concept draws on the earlier work of Murray (1938) in which environmental press refers to the kinds of behaviors environments support, encourage, reward, and punish in their members. For example, "academic press" refers to the extent to which the school environment validates and encourages academic achievement (Boyd & Shouse, 1997). The concept of acculturative press draws attention to the ways in which community settings signal what the expectations are about preferred styles of acculturation to immigrant and refugee adolescents. Specifically, the press in the Concentrated Community seems to be assimilationist (i.e., encouraging American acculturation while discouraging attachment to Russian culture). The fact that American identity is related to academic performance and attendance for the adolescents may suggest that students who succeed academically in the Concentrated Community either succumb to or embrace this assimilationist pressure. In the Dispersed Community, on the other hand, "being American" may be less important, as a wide range of cultural identities are visible and seemingly accepted, and a negative relationship between Russian and American identity does not exist.

The concept of acculturative press may also provide a framework for understanding community differences in school adaptation, with students in the Dispersed Community having advantages with respect to higher GPA, fewer absences from school, greater school involvement, and more supportive relationships with American peers. For instance, social comparison theory (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 2000; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002) offers one possible explanation consistent with the acculturative press perspective. It suggests that, in the presence of negative perceptions by others, individuals' competence and functioning may be negatively affected. That former Soviet adolescents reported twice the number of discriminatory experiences than their counterparts in the Dispersed community attests to presence of such negative perceptions in the school context. From this perspective, former Soviet students in the Concentrated Community, perceived negatively because they are "Russian" and discriminated against within their community, may in fact "confirm" the negative stereotypes by performing poorly under these conditions. However, it is difficult to clearly disentangle effects of the community context from other possible explanations. For instance, differences with respect to former republic of origin or rural versus urban residence in the former Soviet Union may influence ability to succeed in US schools, although overall parent educational levels did not differ across the two communities.

Summary and Study Limitations

The present study sought to explore the impact of community context on the acculturation and adaptation of émigré adolescents. The focus on immigrant and refugee adolescents who are white and who represent an understudied population presents a distinctive opportunity to extend the range of knowledge about the acculturation process and its relationship to adaptation. The pattern of findings reported in this study thus offer an additive framework for enlarging our understanding not only of cultural diversity, but of the ways in which context and culture interact and cannot, indeed, be separated. The study provides evidence that it is important when studying the acculturative process to account for community differences that affect the acculturation process.

As a correlational study, however, the study is limited in terms of making clear inferences about causality. For example, while we concluded that

differences in school adaptation may be attributed to the extent to which the communities and schools attended by the students were receptive of diversity, our correlational data do not rule out competing causal pathways or processes. For instance, positive school adaptation on the part of émigré students could, conceivably, improve school receptivity to cultural diversity. Similar alternatives were previously discussed with respect to the relationship between perceived discrimination and cultural identity.

In addition, our description of the communities involved was inadequate to do more than speculate on what specific community level factors and processes may have accounted for the findings. While we suggest that ethnic density and discrimination may be community level factors contributing to the pattern of reported findings, a far more refined appreciation for the nature of communities is needed to further the community–acculturation linkage. In addition to ethnic density and discrimination, economic opportunities for immigrants, the availability of behavior settings for cultural maintenance, and many more community level factors need explicit consideration in furthering an appreciation of the contexts in which acculturation takes place. Thus, theorizing about the nature of community contexts is a high priority.

However, the findings presented here do suggest a systematically different portrait of acculturation and adjustment for a relatively similar émigré group, resettled within 50 miles of each other in the same state and in communities with larger populations that are, in many descriptive ways, comparable. Our data suggest that a newly arrived adolescent from the former Soviet Union confronts a quite different school and community environment, and embarks on a different process of acculturation, potentially resulting in different adaptive outcomes, based on which location the family chose as their community of resettlement. As pointed out by Bronfenbrenner (1977) and others, the ecology of human development is reflexive, with ecological factors influencing personal characteristics, and individuals in turn shaping their ecological environments.

Thus, future work should focus on studying these reciprocal relationships in contrasting community contexts, whether through observation of naturally occurring differences or through intervention studies aimed at manipulating the "acculturative press" of microsystems, such as schools, to benefit new immigrant and refugee adolescents. Such inquiry will enrich an appreciation of the complexities of the adaptation process of immigrant and refugee populations by tying it to specific times and places in sociocultural history. In addition, it will provide an increasingly sophisticated framework for those concerned about how and where to intervene in the life domains of importance to immigrant adolescents.

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