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Titular Identification of Russians in Former Soviet Republics

EDWIN POPPE & LOUK HAGENDOORN

THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION provoked a dramatic change in the status of the 25 million Russians residing in the 14 non-Russian successor states. Overnight they became ethnic minorities. They lost their dominant position to the titulars, i.e. the national populations after which the newly independent republics are named. Russians, the core nation of the USSR, often had not assimilated into the union republics outside the Russian Federation, they had not learned the local language, and they did not identify with their republic of residence or with the titular population. They now found themselves in 'nationalising' states in the 'near abroad' and thus had to consider the nature of their national identification.¹

How do people react if their in-group loses societal status? According to social identity theory, members of deprived-status groups may, firstly, try to maintain their social identity by rejecting the legitimacy of the (new) status inequality, or they may, secondly, collectively attempt to change the position of their in-group ('voice'), or they may, thirdly, try to adapt to the new situation by making comparisons on new dimensions on which the in-group holds a higher status than the relevant out-group ('social creativity').² However, members of low-status groups may also try to change their position individually by becoming members of the high-status group ('exit').³ This article deals with titular identification of Russians in the near abroad. Alternative options of national-oriented identification, such as civic or cosmopolitan ones, which imply other identity management strategies, are beyond the scope of this article.⁴

Following precedents set by theories three main factors can be distinguished that may affect the strength of titular identification of Russians in the near abroad: assimilation, ethnic competition and perceived threat. Most studies, and certainly those that follow a social psychological approach, focus on individual-level factors affecting national identification and do not take into account the effects of the inter-group context.⁵ In our study we will apply a cross-national comparative design in which the effect of contextual-level factors, such as characteristics of the republics, on the strength of Russians' titular identification can be determined in addition to the effect of individual-level factors. The latter type refers to individual perceptions and circumstances reflecting earlier assimilation, competition and threat, while the contextual type of factors refers to features of competition, threat and assimilation at a national level. At the level of the context, we will deal with country characteristics, such as unemployment rates and proportion of Russians speaking the titular language in the family, as well as with features of the out-group (titulars) which reflect a

competitive context for the in-group, or which reflect the out-group's prior assimilation to the in-group (russification).

We assume that the relevant context for Russians in former Soviet republics is not only the situation in the country as a whole but also the typical inter-group relation with the national majority. For example, a titular group that is strongly 'russified' implies a different inter-group context than a titular majority that speaks only the indigenous language. In the latter case the context offers different incentives for competition and assimilation. In summary, this study examines titular identification of Russians in former Soviet republics by considering three categories of factors (earlier assimilation, ethnic competition and threat) at two levels of analysis (individual-level and contextual-level). In our view, these factors are crucial for future inter-group relations in the new states: the question is whether the two groups perceive each other as a threat or competitor, and how far apart they are in terms of mutual linguistic, social and cultural adaptation.

Earlier assimilation

The first factor we will consider in order to understand titular identification of Russians in the near abroad is their earlier assimilation. Mixed marriages, proficiency in the language of the out-group and length of duration of residence in the host country are useful measures of earlier assimilation. Post-Soviet studies show that earlier assimilation favours identification with the titular group.⁶ In other words, Russians who are married to titulars, who have a parent of titular origin, who have lived for a long time in the republic and who speak the titular language identify more strongly as titulars.

Titular identification may be affected not only by earlier assimilation of individuals but also by earlier assimilation of the in-group as a whole, i.e. at the contextual group level. The proportion of Russians in the republics having mixed marriages and being proficient in the titular language, as well as the period of Russians' presence in the republic, may affect Russians' titular identification. Laitin models the dynamics of this factor in terms of 'tipping-effects' by which the increased assimilation of Russians reinforces the tendency of other Russians to follow because increasing assimilation undermines the position and opportunities of the remaining in-group as a whole.⁷ This model suggests that titular identification will be stronger among Russians in republics in which more Russians are assimilated.⁸

Titular identification among Russians may be affected the other way round by earlier assimilation (russification) of the titular group. Russians may be more inclined to titular identification in those republics in which russification is stronger. Hence titular identification of Russians is expected to be stronger in those republics in which the proportion of titulars involved in Russian–titular marriages or speaking Russian in daily life is higher.

Ethnic competition

A second factor that may affect titular identification of Russians is competition. For the purposes of this study we will distinguish between theories and studies focusing

on competition at the individual level and those focusing on indicators of competition at the contextual level.

A prominent theory dealing with inter-group competition at the individual level is realistic group conflict theory. Realistic group conflict theory proposes that (perceived) competition between groups over scarce resources (i.e. realistic conflicts) reinforces the salience of group membership and leads to rising inter-group hostility.⁹ In other words, stronger ethnic competition implies weaker identification with the out-group and vice versa. The evidence for this effect is from experimental and field studies.¹⁰ Closely related in approach is relative deprivation theory, which predicts that national identification is affected not only by competition but also by outcomes, in particular if outcomes differ from what is considered legitimate.¹¹ Hence the feeling that out-groups have more than they deserve reinforces in-group identification and reduces out-group identification.

Both realistic group conflict and relative deprivation theory emphasise conflicts of interest on 'real' issues, such as property, money or economic and political power. There is in our view another domain of potential inter-group conflict, namely on cultural issues such as language, religion and way of life. In our study we will examine the effects of perceived economic, political and linguistic competition. Moreover, we expect that resources will be weaker and therefore competition stronger among Russians in lower socio-economic positions, and thus that titular identification is relatively weak among Russians with lower levels of education, income and occupational status.

Ethnic competition theory posits that ethnic competition between social groups for scarce resources at the level of the context (i.e. material goods, power and status) reinforces identification with the in-group and leads to inter-group conflicts.¹² The evidence pertains mainly to the effects of economic and political inter-group competition, as indicated by differential levels of unemployment,¹³ income per capita,¹⁴ the numerical size of the groups,¹⁵ the cultural division of labour¹⁶ and the permeability of particular segments of the labour market.¹⁷ In line with ethnic competition theory, we expect that Russians will show weaker titular identification in more competitive inter-group contexts, that is, in countries where the proportion of Russians in the national population and in leading positions is higher, and in which there is more unemployment, higher inflation and less economic growth.

We are not aware of studies focusing on the contextual effects of attitudes of out-groups on national identification. We expect, however, that if the out-group perceives more competition, it will act more competitively and thus reduce the inclination to identify with the group with which it competes. Hence we expect that Russians will identify less strongly as titulars in republics in which the titulars have a stronger position in terms of income, occupation and education and perceive more economic, political and linguistic competition from Russians and consider Russians to be better off than they deserve (relative deprivation).

Perceived threat

The third factor that may affect titular identification is perceived threat. Threat can refer to many things, but is often associated with the possible loss of political,

economic or cultural position and influence.¹⁸ Some authors approach threat as an aspect of competition.¹⁹ We consider threat as conceptually different from competition because competition may be perceived as fair and thus is not always threatening.²⁰

A number of studies show the reinforcing effects of perceived threat on negative attitudes or stereotypes of out-groups.²¹ Hence we may expect that the more threat is perceived by Russians, the weaker will be their identification with titulars. In this context different types of perceived threat seem relevant and they may differ in their effect. The first is economic threat, as indicated by the expectation that the economic situation will deteriorate in the immediate future. The threat may provoke a stronger feeling of dependency on the in-group. The second is political threat, expressed in the fear of Russian intervention or of fifth column intentions about fellow Russians in the republic, i.e. that Russians are more inclined to serve the interests of Russia than of the republic in which they reside. The effects of these threats will be that they either reinforce pre-existing national identifications or reinforce a Russian identification because titulars react negatively to Russians in reaction to them. Hence indirectly these factors are a threat also to Russians.²²

The power theory of inter-group relations deals with the effects of threat at the group level.²³ This theory proposes that any threat to the power of the dominant group provokes stronger in-group identification and a negative response towards the minority group. In line with this prediction, we expect that if titulars perceive Russians as a threat, they will react in a threatening way to Russians and this will in turn weaken titular identification among Russians. A specifically threatening image of Russians is that titulars perceive Russians as a fifth column of Russia and we expect that fifth-column perceptions among titulars will go hand in hand with weaker titular identification of Russians.

Hypotheses

The above considerations lead us to formulate three hypotheses. The first hypothesis refers to the effects of previous assimilation, ethnic competition and perceived threat at the individual level, while hypotheses 2 and 3 refer to the effect of the same type of factors at the level of republics or titular out-groups respectively.

1. The stronger the earlier assimilation of Russians (1a), and the weaker the perception of ethnic competition (1b) and perceived threat (1c), the stronger their titular identification.
2. The stronger the earlier assimilation of Russians as a whole in the republic (2a) and the weaker the ethnic competition in the republic (2b), the stronger the titular identification of Russians in the republic.
3. The stronger the earlier assimilation (i.e. russification) of titulars in the republic (3a), and the weaker their perception of ethnic competition (3b) and perceived threat (3c), the stronger the titular identification of Russians in the republic.

The hypotheses are tested among Russians in Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Kazakhstan. These five countries were selected because they represent different contextual circumstances for Russian minorities, such as differences in numerical

presence, macroeconomic situation and socio-economic positions of titulars (see Tables 1 and 2). Characteristics of these republics and of the titulars in these republics referring to earlier assimilation, ethnic competition and perceived threat will be related to differences between republics in the strength of titular identifications (i.e. testing hypotheses 2 and 3). Differences in effects between republics can emerge due to two causes: effects of the context of the republic or of differential distribution of relevant individual-level factors across republics. Only the first type of effects will be referred to as contextual, while the second type is compositional. Composition effects indicate that the effects of contextual variables on identification are mediated by or due to individual-level variables. For instance, titular identification may be lower in republics with higher unemployment rates owing to higher levels of perceived competition in these republics compared to republics with lower unemployment rates. Therefore we will examine whether the effects of contextual variables are due to differences in social composition or perceptions at the level of the individual or to contextual circumstances. Only contextual effects will be considered as confirmation of the hypotheses.

The surveys

Surveys were conducted among Russians and titular nationals in Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Kazakhstan in the autumn of 1995 and in the spring of 1996. The samples were drawn in urban areas with at least 10% of Russians. The surveys were carried out in urban areas because 70–90% of Russians in the five republics reside in cities. The capital city was always part of the sample and the other areas were drawn at random from a list of cities satisfying the above criterion. The selected cities were Minsk, Gomel', Mogilev and Polotsk in Belarus; Kyiv, Cherkasy, Lugansk and Armyansk in Ukraine; Chisinau, Beltchy, Bendery and Dondyushany in Moldova; Tbilisi, Batumi and Rustavi in Georgia; and Alma-Ata, Chimkent, Ural'sk and Pavlodar in Kazakhstan. In each city a random route procedure was followed in order to select the respondents. Street names were randomly chosen from an alpha-numerical pool, houses were picked by randomly selecting house numbers, and finally, respondents older than 15 years were selected whose birthday was closest to the date of the interview. The nationality was asked before the interview. Only those respondents who considered themselves to be Russian or titular were interviewed. The participation was on a voluntary basis; non-response was extremely low, namely less than 3%.

In total 6,300 Russians and titulars participated: 1,500 (750 Russians and 750 titulars) in Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan and 900 (450 Russians and 450 titulars) in Moldova and Georgia. The present study focuses on the titular identification of Russians; the (aggregated) scores of titulars in each country will be used only as indicators of out-group features. Approximately 90% of the respondents identifying themselves as Russian when asked by the interviewer prior to the actual interview indicated that Russian was their passport nationality. In Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova 8–9% of the respondents identifying themselves as Russians had a titular passport and 27% of Russians in Moldova had a Ukrainian passport. We consider the self-identification question a more important criterion of Russian nationality than

TABLE 1
COUNTRY CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR CORRESPONDING CONTRASTS WEIGHTS

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Belarus</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Moldova</i>	<i>Georgia</i>	<i>Kazakhstan</i>
<i>Earlier assimilation</i>					
Inter-ethnic marriages of Russians ¹ (%)	74	57	61	46	26
Contrast weight	+5	+1	+3	-2	-7
Russian presence in the country since ²	9th Cent.	9th Cent.	1939	18th Cent.	18th Cent.
Contrast weight	+5	+5	-4	-3	-3
Russians with titular language proficiency ³ (%)	25	32	11	23	1
Contrast weight	+1	+2	-1	+1	-3
<i>Ethnic competition</i>					
Russians residing in the republic ² (%)	13	22	13	6	38
Contrast weight	-6	+4	-6	-12	+20
Non-titulars in leading positions in industry ³ (%)	22	27	35	30	60
Contrast weight	-3	-2	0	-1	+6
Unemployment rate 1993 ⁴ (%)	16	17	14	34	21
Contrast weight	-4	-3	-6	+13	0
Inflation rate 1991-94 ⁵ (%)	1,323	2,816	119	19,462	796
Contrast weight	-1	-1	-1	+4	-1
Economic decline 1991-94 ⁵	39	52	57	82	51
Contrast weight	-17	-3	-3	+26	-3

Note: The contrast weights reflect the values of the country characteristics. The contrast weights have to add up to zero in order to be used in a *a priori* contrast analysis of variance. For instance, the contrast weights for non-titulars in leading positions in industry are calculated as follows. First, the mean score across countries is calculated: $(22 + 27 + 35 + 30 + 60)/5 = 34.8$. The deviation of the country scores from this mean score $-12.8, -7.8, -0.2, -4.8, +25.2$, divided by 4 (for the sake of convenience) and rounded off, leads to the contrast weights $(-3, -2, 0, -1, +6)$.

Sources: 1. R. Kaiser, *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1994); 2. L. Hagendoorn, K. Phaet, R. Henke & R. Drogendijk, *Etnische verhoudingen in Midden-Oost-Europa* (Ethnic Relations in Central and Eastern Europe) (The Hague, WRR, 1995); 3. C. D. Harris, 'The New Russian Minorities: A Statistical Overview', *Post-Soviet Geography*, 34, 1993, pp. 1-27; 4. J. Chinn & R. Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States* (Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1996); 5. J. Eatwell, M. Ellman, M. Karlson, D. Mario Nuti & S. Shapiro, *Transformation and Integration. Shaping the Future of Central and Eastern Europe* (London, Institute for Public Policy Research, 1995).

passport because the latter is often determined by strategic decisions or due to historical circumstances such as changing borders.²⁴

Individual-level variables

The dependent variable *titular identification* was measured by the degree of agreement with the statement 'I am a member of the titular population'. The item response format was a five-point scale (1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree).

Four indicators of earlier assimilation were assessed. *Mixed marriage* indicates Russians who were married to a titular (answer code 1, others were coded as 0), and *mixed parentage* indicates Russians who had one Russian and one titular parent (answer code 1, others 0). The participants had six answer categories for the *duration of residence in the republic* (1 = less than 5 years; 2 = 5-10 years; 3 = 11-15 years;

TABLE 2
TITULAR FEATURES AND THEIR CORRESPONDING CONTRAST WEIGHTS

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Belarus</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>	<i>Moldova</i>	<i>Georgia</i>	<i>Kazakhstan</i>
<i>Earlier assimilation (russification)</i>					
Russian–titular marriages of titulars (%)	12	21	14	5	1
Contrast weight	+ 2	+ 10	+ 4	– 6	– 10
Russian–titular parentages of titulars (%)	12	23	7	5	1
Contrast weight	+ 3	+ 14	– 3	– 5	– 9
Titulars who speak Russian in family (%)	90	61	22	8	39
Contrast weight	+ 5	+ 2	– 2	– 4	– 1
<i>Ethnic competition</i>					
Titulars who indicate they earn (more than) average (%)	27	19	24	20	32
Contrast weight	+ 3	– 6	+ 1	– 5	+ 7
Titulars who are chiefs or specialists (%)	19	31	36	48	37
Contrast weight	– 15	– 4	+ 2	+ 14	+ 3
Titulars with high education (%)	18	25	33	83	59
Contrast weight	– 3	– 2	– 1	+ 4	+ 2
Perceived competition (1–5)	1.8	2.4	2.6	2.1	2.7
Contrast weight	– 6	+ 1	+ 3	– 2	+ 4
<i>Perceived threat</i>					
Economic threat (1–5)	3.3	3.4	3.2	2.2	2
Contrast weight	+ 4	+ 5	+ 2	– 7	– 4
Fifth-column threat (0–100%)	31	44	47	66	59
Contrast weight	– 2	– 1	0	+ 2	+ 1
Russian intervention (1–5)	3.3	3.5	3.7	4.3	3.4
Contrast weight	– 3	– 1	0	+ 6	– 2

Note: The contrast weights reflect the values of the titular features. For an example of the calculation of contrast weights see note in Table 1.

Source: Titular sample of survey.

4 = 16–20 years; 5 = more than 20 years (but less than whole life); 6 = whole life). *Proficiency in the titular language* was measured by asking the degree to which they were proficient in the titular language (1 = no proficiency at all; 2 = poor passive proficiency and no active proficiency; 3 = moderate passive proficiency and no active proficiency; 4 = good passive proficiency and poor active proficiency; 5 = excellent proficiency).

The indicators of ethnic competition refer to four beliefs on competition and one on relative deprivation and three social structural demographic variables. Perceived ethnic competition and relative deprivation were assessed by agreement with the following statements: ‘The political interests of the Russians living in the republic are in conflict with those of the titulars’ (perceived political competition); ‘The economic interests of the Russians living in the republic are in conflict with those of the titulars’ (perceived economic competition); ‘The use of the Russian language at schools and higher educational institutes reduces the educational opportunities of the titulars’ (perceived language competition); ‘Russians living in the republic have better oppor-

tunities to find a good job than titulars' (relative deprivation, reversed scale). The response format for each item was a five-point scale (1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree). Reliability analyses indicated that these five items formed an internally consistent *perceived ethnic competition* scale with Cronbach's alpha coefficients between 0.60 and 0.76 across countries.

Three socio-economic status variables were assessed. A subjective estimation of *income* was requested, with the following answer categories: low, below average, average, above average and high (ranging from 1 to 5). *Occupation* was asked by four occupational categories (1 = without occupation; 2 = blue-collar worker; 3 = white-collar worker or qualified worker; 4 = chief or specialist); and *education* had three answer categories (1 = elementary, lower secondary; 2 = secondary, secondary specialised; 3 = higher education, an undergraduate).

One question referred to personal economic threat ('In which way, do you think, will your personal economic situation change in the next two years?') and one question to collective economic threat ('In which way, do you think, will the economic situation in your republic change in the next two years?'). These two items, answered on a five point scale (1 = will be rather better to 5 = will be rather worse), were combined into one *economic threat* variable. Cronbach's alpha coefficients vary between 0.82 and 0.93 across countries.

Two types of political threat were assessed, namely Russian intervention and fifth-column intentions of Russians. Three questions were asked on Russian intervention: 'How will Russia respond, in your opinion, if the rights of the Russian minority are limited? (a) diplomatic pressure? (b) economic sanctions? (c) military intervention?'. The response format for each question was a five-point scale (1 = will not be used at all to 5 = will be used fully). These three items were combined into one political threat variable. Cronbach's alpha coefficients vary from 0.58 to 0.72 across countries. Another indicator of political threat is the attribution of fifth-column intentions to Russians: 'how many Russians in the republic feel more close to Russia than to the republic'; 'how many Russians in the republic will serve the interest of Russia even if it is against the interests of the republic'; 'how many Russians in the republic will support an attempt by Russia to bring the republic under control', on a scale from 1 to 100%. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the combined score vary between 0.72 and 0.89 across republics.

Contextual level: country characteristics

Overviews of social demographic statistics (e.g. data collected by Goskomstat) were used to select country-level indicators of earlier assimilation and ethnic competition. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the republics and their corresponding contrast weights which were constructed in order to test the effect of country characteristics by analysis of variance.

The indicators of earlier assimilation are the percentages of inter-ethnic marriages among Russians, the duration of Russian presence in the country and the percentages of Russians with titular language proficiency per country. The indicators of ethnic competition are the percentages of Russians residing in the republic, the percentages

of non-titulars in leading positions in industry,²⁵ unemployment rates, inflation rates and economic growth indices (see Table 1).

Contextual level: out-group features

The aggregated scores per country of the titular samples in the survey were used as indicators of out-group features that may affect national identification of Russians. The mean scores of titulars in the republic and their corresponding contrast weights are presented in Table 2.

The indicators of earlier assimilation are the percentages of titulars married to a Russian, the percentages of titulars having one Russian and one titular parent and the percentages of titulars who speak Russian in their family. The indicators of ethnic competition are the percentages of titulars indicating they earn more than the average in the republic, the percentages of titulars who are chiefs or specialists, the percentages of titulars with high education and titulars' mean score on perceived ethnic competition. This latter variable was composed of five items on economic, political and linguistic competition and relative deprivation. The question wording of these items was similar to those presented to the Russians (apart from the reversal of national group names). These five items formed a reliable *perceived ethnic competition* scale; Cronbach's alpha coefficients vary between 0.62 and 0.74 across countries.

The indicators of perceived threat are economic threat, threat of Russian intervention and fifth-column intentions. The mean score of titulars on personal economic threat and collective economic threat are combined into the indicator *economic threat*; Cronbach's alpha coefficients vary between 0.83 and 0.92. The mean score of titulars on the three questions on Russian intervention are used as an indicator of political threat; Cronbach's alpha coefficients vary between 0.55 and 0.69. The other indicator of political threat is the mean score of titulars' attribution of fifth-column intentions to Russians. Cronbach's alpha coefficients vary between 0.78 and 0.88 across countries.

Data analysis

The effects of individual-level variables on titular identification were tested by regression analysis. The effects of earlier assimilation, ethnic competition and the perceived threat indicators were analysed separately and, subsequently, simultaneously. All the analyses were controlled for the effects of age, gender and country.²⁶

The effects of variables at the level of the context, i.e. country characteristics and titular features, were tested by analysis of variance. First, analysis of variance (Oneway, Tukey's-b *post hoc* test) was performed to describe significant differences of titular identification across countries. Second, by means of *a priori* contrast analysis of variance we tested whether the distribution of contextual factors matched the variation of the means of titular identification across countries.²⁷ This was done for earlier assimilation of the Russian group as a whole and ethnic competition in the country as well as for titulars' russification, perceived competition and threat

TABLE 3
EFFECTS OF EARLIER ASSIMILATION, COMPETITION AND THREAT ON TITULAR IDENTIFICATION

<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Model 1: assimilation</i>	<i>Model 2: competition</i>	<i>Model 3: threat</i>	<i>Model 4: all</i>
Mixed marriage	0.12***			0.07***
Mixed parentage	0.07**			(n.s.)
Duration of residence	0.06**			0.06**
Proficiency in titular language	0.24***			0.16***
Education		- 0.10**		- 0.08**
Perceived competition		- 0.30***		- 0.17***
Fifth-column threat			- 0.23***	- 0.09***
Threat of Russian intervention			0.15***	0.10**
R	0.36	0.34	0.28	0.42
Rsqr	0.13	0.12	0.08	0.17

Note: Values represent standardised (Beta) coefficients: (n.s.) non significant; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. All effects are controlled for age, gender and country of origin. The following variables are left out of the table because they did not have a significant effect: income, education, occupational status and economic threat.

respectively. Subsequently, the nature of the significant effects was examined by entering co-variables in the analysis. First, individual-level factors of the relevant category were entered to determine whether these variables explained the effect of contextual factors on the dependent variable. This was the case when the initial significant contrast was not (or less) significant after controlling for these individual-level factors, and when the contextual factors were related to these individual-level factors.²⁸ If effects of contextual factors remained significant after controlling for individual-level variables of the same category, individual-level variables of other categories were entered as well in the analysis. If a contextual factor remains significant after controlling for all individual-level variables, then it shows a context effect (that is, the effect is due to differential societal circumstances). In other cases it refers to composition effects (the effect of the contextual factor on national identification is due to differential distribution of individual-level variables across the republics).

Individual-level factors predicting titular identification of Russians

The four indicators of earlier assimilation all contribute to the degree of titular identification of Russians. Longer residence in the republic, being married to a titular, having one Russian and one titular parent and, especially, a good command of the titular language reinforce titular identification of Russians in the five states of the former Soviet Union (see Table 3, model 1).

Of the indicators of ethnic competition, specifically the level of education and perceived competition affect titular identification of Russians, while income and occupational status do not (Table 3, model 2). Hence, when Russians perceive less competition between Russians and titulars and are less well educated, they identify more strongly as titulars. The finding that less well educated Russians are more

inclined to identify as titulars is the opposite of what was expected. We assumed that less well educated Russians would perceive more ethnic competition and therefore would identify less as titular. Hence the results confirm the hypothesis where it concerns *perceived* competition, but not where it concerns the socio-economic conditions assumed to stimulate competition.

The effects of the three indicators of perceived threat on titular identification of Russians are not consistent, as can be seen in model 3 in Table 3. Lower threat of fifth-column intentions and a higher threat of intervention from Russia reinforce titular identification, but economic threat does not affect titular identification. Hence the effect of political threat from outside the republic (i.e. intervention from the Russian Federation) is opposite to the effect of political threat from inside the republic (i.e. fifth-column intentions of fellow Russians in the republic). This finding indicates that, among those Russians who are already tending to titular identification, a threat of intervention from outside the republic triggers a stronger titular identification.

Several indicators of earlier assimilation, ethnic competition and perceived threat make a unique contribution to the explanation of Russian identification in the overall analysis shown in model 4 of Table 3. Titular identification is stronger among Russians who are married to a titular, who have lived relatively longer in the republic, who speak the titular language more fluently, who are less educated, who perceive more ethnic competition with titulars, who perceive fewer fifth-column intentions of fellow Russians in the republic and who perceive more threat from intervention by Russia. Proficiency in the titular language and perceived competition are relatively strong predictors of titular identification of Russians. In sum, hypothesis 1 is only corroborated with respect to the effects of earlier assimilation and *perceived* ethnic competition.

Country characteristics related to titular identification of Russians

Titular identification of Russians varies significantly across republics;²⁹ it is stronger in Belarus (mean = 2.96; standard deviation = 1.50) than in Ukraine ($M = 2.35$; $SD = 1.43$) and is weakest among Russians in Georgia ($M = 2.00$; $SD = 1.28$), Kazakhstan ($M = 1.90$; $SD = 1.43$) and Moldova ($M = 1.82$; $SD = 1.33$). The next step is to relate this inter-republican variation in titular identification to differences in country characteristics reflecting earlier assimilation and ethnic competition.

All three country-level indicators of earlier assimilation are significantly related to Russians' titular identification across the republics (see first column in Table 4). Titular identification is stronger in the republics with a higher proportion of inter-ethnic marriages among Russians, with a longer duration of Russian presence and with a higher proportion of Russians proficient in the titular language. The duration of residence contrast is the most robust in this respect. However, analysis of co-variance indicates that the nature of the effects of these country characteristics is not contextual, but compositional due to variation in earlier assimilation at the individual level.

Table 4 also shows that inter-republican differences on indicators of ethnic competition correspond to the strength of Russians' titular identification across republics. Titular identification of Russians is stronger in republics with a lower

TABLE 4
EFFECTS OF COUNTRY CHARACTERISTICS ON TITULAR IDENTIFICATION

<i>Contextual characteristics</i>	<i>Analysis 1</i>	<i>Analysis 2</i>	<i>Analysis 3</i>	<i>Nature of effect^a</i>
<i>Earlier assimilation</i>				
% inter-ethnic marriages of Russians	$t = 9.80^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
Russian presence in the country	$t = 14.21^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
% Russians with titular language proficiency	$t = 9.29^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
<i>Ethnic competition</i>				
% Russians in the republic	$t = -3.43^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
% non-titulars in leading positions	$t = -10.47^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
Unemployment rate, 1993	$t = -3.73^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
Inflation rate, 1991–94	$t = -3.45^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
Economic decline, 1991–94	$t = -8.14^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition

*** $p < 0.00$; analysis 1: contrast analysis (without co-variables); analysis 2: contrast analysis with individual predictors of same category as co-variables; analysis 3: contrast analysis with all individual predictors as co-variables (i.e. age, gender, mixed marriages, mixed parentage, duration of residence, proficiency in titular language, income, education, occupational category, perceived competition, economic threat, fifth-column perceptions and Russian intervention)
Note:^a Subsequent analyses indicated that the effects of contextual factors on individual-level factors of the same category were all significant and always stronger than their effect on titular identification. Hence the contextual-level factors are related to individual-level variables of particular categories, which are the main predictors of titular identification.

proportion of Russians in the population and in leading positions, and with lower unemployment rates, lower inflation rates and smaller economic decline. These are compositional effects due to inter-republican variation in perceived competition. In other words, a less competitive inter-group context reduces perceived ethnic competition of Russians, which leads to stronger titular identification of Russians.

Taken together, hypothesis 2 is not corroborated because the country characteristics do not directly affect titular identification but only by affecting individual-level indicators of earlier assimilation and ethnic competition, which are the main predictors of titular identification of Russians.

Titular features related to titular identification of Russians

The third hypothesis to be tested is about the effects of titulars' earlier assimilation, ethnic competition and perceived threat on degree of titular identification of Russians across the republics.

The indicators of earlier assimilation (i.e. russification) of titulars are significantly related to the titular identification of Russians in the republics (see first column in Table 5). Titular identification of Russians is stronger in republics in which the proportion of inter-ethnic marriages and parentage of titulars is higher and, especially, in which the proportion of titulars speaking Russian in their family is higher. The nature of marriage and parentage effects is compositional. They are due to differences in individual-level earlier assimilation across the republics. The effect of proportion of titulars speaking Russian in the family, however, is partly compositional and partly contextual (see Table 5). Hence a higher proportion of Russian-speaking titulars in a republic reinforces titular identification among the Russians.

Three features of titulars reflecting or stimulating ethnic competition appeared to be related to titular identification of Russians. Titular identification of Russians is

TABLE 5
EFFECTS OF TITULAR FEATURES ON TITULAR IDENTIFICATION

<i>Contextual characteristics</i>	<i>Analysis 1</i>	<i>Analysis 2</i>	<i>Analysis 3</i>	<i>Nature of effect^a</i>
<i>Earlier assimilation (russification)</i>				
% Inter-ethnic marriages of titulars	$t = 6.12^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
% Inter-ethnic parentage of titulars	$t = 9.26^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
% Titulars who speak Russian in family	$t = 14.12^{***}$	$t = 5.00^{***}$	$t = 4.05^{***}$	context + composition
<i>SES and perceived competition of titulars</i>				
Income of titulars	n.s.	–	–	–
% Titulars with high education	$t = -9.96^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
% Titulars who are chiefs/specialists	$t = -12.81^{***}$	n.s.	–	composition
Perceived ethnic competition	$t = -13.69^{***}$	$t = -3.51^{***}$	$t = -3.37^{***}$	context + composition
<i>Perceived threat of titulars</i>				
Economic threat	$t = 8.69^{***}$	$t = 4.87^{***}$	n.s.	composition
Fifth-column perceptions	$t = -12.45^{***}$	$t = -6.34^{***}$	$t = -3.66^{***}$	context + composition
Russian intervention	$t = -6.58^{***}$	$t = -4.96^{***}$	n.s.	composition

*** $p < 0.00$; analysis 1: contrast analysis (without co-variables); analysis 2: contrast analysis with individual predictors of same category as co-variables; analysis 3: contrast analysis with all individual predictors as co-variables (i.e. age, gender, mixed marriages, mixed parentage, duration of residence, proficiency in titular language, income, education, occupational category, perceived competition, economic threat, fifth-column perceptions and Russian intervention)

Note: ^a Subsequent analyses indicated that the effects of contextual factors on individual-level factors of the same category were all significant and always stronger than their effect on titular identification. Hence the contextual-level factors are related to individual-level variables of particular categories which are the main predictors of titular identification, while three contextual-level factors have an additional context effect.

stronger in republics in which the competitiveness of titulars, by their higher education or positions, or their perception of ethnic competition, is lower. The varying level of income of titulars across the republics is not related to titular identification of Russians. The effects of the two socio-economic indicators of competition are compositional, while the effect of perceived competition is partly compositional and partly contextual (see Table 5). Hence a low perception of ethnic competition among titulars in the republic reinforces titular identification of Russians.

The analyses of threat perceived by titulars show different effects of economic and political threat (Table 5, first column). In republics where titulars perceive more economic threat titular identification of Russians is stronger. This suggests that perceived economic threat reinforces the social cohesion between titulars and Russians (at least as experienced by Russians). However, as can be seen in the other columns of Table 5, this is a compositional effect. Political threat, on the other hand, reduces Russians' titular identification of Russians. Russians identify less as titulars in republics where the titulars perceive Russians as a fifth column and fear intervention by Russia (Table 5, first column). The effect of Russian intervention is a compositional effect, while the effect of fifth-column attributions is partly compositional and partly contextual (see other columns of Table 5). In sum, titular identification of Russians is reinforced by the absence of titulars' fears of fifth-column intentions of Russians in the republic.

Taken together, titular identification of Russians is affected by titulars' earlier assimilation, ethnic competition and perceived threat, in particular by the proportion of Russian-speaking titulars, their perceived ethnic competition and the threat of fifth-column intentions among Russians in the republic. Hypothesis 3 is corroborated.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that earlier assimilation, ethnic competition and perceived threat are important factors in explaining titular identification of Russians in former Soviet republics. Specific individual-level indicators of these three categories of factors affect the strength of titular identification. Titular identification is stronger among Russians who are married to a titular, who have lived relatively longer in the republic, who speak the titular language more fluently, who are less educated, who perceive more ethnic competition with titulars, who perceive fewer fifth-column intentions among fellow Russians in the republic and who perceive more threat from intervention by Russia. Inter-republican differences in Russians' titular identification appeared to be the effect of unequal distribution of individual-level factors across republics as well as contextual circumstances. Titular identification of Russians is particularly stronger in republics in which the proportion of Russian-speaking titulars is higher, in which titulars perceive less competition between Russians and titulars, and in which titulars perceive less threat from fifth-column intentions of Russians. These findings contribute in several ways to the existing literature on national identification and post-Soviet studies.

The first contribution is that the study reveals additional factors related to titular identification compared with previous studies. While the findings confirm that (openness to) assimilation is related to inter-ethnic marriages and parentage, duration of residence in the country and proficiency in the titular language, as was shown in previous studies,³⁰ our study adds that perceived ethnic competition between Russians and titulars, perceived fifth-column intentions of fellow Russians in the republic and threat from Russian intervention also contribute to assimilation of Russians. One finding contradicts previous results, namely that less educated Russians are more inclined to titular identification; Laitin found the opposite in Estonia, Latvia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, and our finding also contradicts realistic conflict theory. A *post hoc* explanation for this unexpected finding is that more highly educated people are more involved in national cultural activities, which reduces the tendency to identify with out-groups.³¹

The results also confirm theories emphasising contextual-level factors in inter-group relations. The present study enhances ethnic competition theory and the power theory of inter-group relations by elaborating the nature of the relationship between national identification and ethnic competition and threat at the contextual level. The finding that the effects of many contextual-level factors on national identification are actually explained by individual-level factors shows how the context influences national identification. The historical presence of Russians in a republic, for instance, is confounded with the duration of residence of individual Russians, which is an important predictor of Russians' national identification. In a similar vein, a higher proportion of Russians and a deteriorating economic situation do not directly contribute to the strength of national identification, but they reinforce perceived ethnic competition, and perceived ethnic competition is a strong predictor of titular identification. Hence our study puts the effect of the context in perspective by indicating that the effects of many contextual-level factors are of a compositional nature.

Second, the present study contributes to the existing literature by showing the relative contribution of factors central in different theories and approaches. The overall analysis of individual-level indicators from the three categories of predictors shows that factors pertaining to ethnic competition and earlier assimilation are equally strong predictors of titular identification, and stronger than threat. The finding that threat is an additional determinant of national identification, albeit somewhat less influential and consistent, counters the notion of other scholars that threat is an aspect of competition,³² and validates our intuition that it is a separate predictor. The result that occupation, education and income play only a marginal role in national identification is in line with the findings of Laitin in four former Soviet republics, but does not correspond with what is found in the US and Western Europe.³³ Maybe socio-economic status is less differentiated in the former Soviet Union than in Western countries owing to communist policies, and therefore less important in affecting titular identification.

Noteworthy is the finding that contextual factors are important in explaining inter-republican differences in titular identification of Russians. The most important aspects of the context are not the economic situation or the proportion of Russians, as might have been expected, but the position and perceptions of titulars in the republic. In republics where many titulars speak Russian in the family, where titulars perceive less competition between Russians and titulars, and where titulars perceive less threat of fifth-column intentions of Russians in the republic, Russians tend to identify as titulars; in other words, they assimilate. This shows how important inter-group factors are in understanding inter-group relations in former Soviet states, as others have suggested as well.³⁴

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¹ 'Nationalising' states are states with a policy of national homogenisation. Cf. R. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996). The label 'near abroad' was coined by the political elite in Moscow to categorise the non-Russian former Soviet republics.

² H. Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London, Academic Press, 1978); H. Tajfel & J. Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup

Conflict', in W. Austin & S. Worchel (eds), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Monterey, Brooks/Cole, 1979), pp. 33–47; H. Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981).

³ The term 'exit' is used by Tajfel, *Human Groups ...*, following A. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty. Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1970). The term 'individual mobility' is used by Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups ...*. Nowadays the term 'assimilation' is more commonly used to classify ethnic group members who identify with the ethnic majority group.

⁴ For studies on various identification types among Russians in former Soviet states see for example M. Guboglo, 'The Disintegration and Synthesis of Identity in Post-Soviet Space and Time (The Case of Ukraine)', *The Harriman Review*, 9, 1996, pp. 92–102; P. Kolstø, 'The New Russian Diaspora—An Identity of its Own? Possible Identity Trajectories for Russians in the Former Soviet Republics', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 19, 1996, pp. 609–639; E. Poppe & L. Hagendoorn, 'Types of Identification among Russians in the "Near Abroad"', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53, 1, 2001, pp. 57–71. For taxonomies of identity management strategies see Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*; Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups ...*; M. Blanz, A. Mummendey, R. Mielke & A. Klink, 'Responding to Negative Social Identity: A Taxonomy of Identity Management Strategies', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 28, 1998, pp. 697–729.

⁵ S.T. Fiske, 'Stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination at the seam between the centuries: evolution, culture, mind, and brain', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30, 2000, pp. 299–322.

⁶ See for instance I. Bremmer, 'The Politics of Ethnicity: Russians in the New Ukraine', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46, 2, 1994, pp. 261–283; P.S. Pirie, 'National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48, 7, 1996, pp. 1079–1104; D. Laitin, *Identity in Formation. The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* (Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁷ D. Laitin, R. Petersen & J. Slocum, 'Language and the State: Russia and the Soviet Union in Comparative Perspective', in A. Motyl (ed.), *Thinking Theoretically About Soviet Nationalities* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 129–167.

⁸ For an opposite view see H.D. Forbes, *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture, and Contact Hypothesis* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997). Forbes points out that proceeding assimilation may create growing nationalistic resistance in the remaining in-group members and as a result reduce titular identification.

⁹ M. Sherif, *Groups, Conflict and Cooperation: Their Social Psychology* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967); R.A. LeVine & D.T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories and Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes and Group Behaviour* (New York, Wiley, 1972).

¹⁰ M. Sherif & C.W. Sherif, 'Research on Intergroup Relations', in W.G. Austin & S. Worchel (eds), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Monterey, Brooks/Cole, 1979), pp. 7–18; LeVine & Campbell, *Ethnocentrism*.

¹¹ W. Runciman, *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

¹² H.M. Blalock, *Towards a Theory of Minority Group Relations* (New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1967); L. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflicts* (New York, Free Press, 1956); S. Olzak, *Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1992); S. Olzak & J. Nagel, *Competitive Ethnic Relations* (Orlando, Academic Press, 1986).

¹³ S. Olzak, S. Shanahan & E.H. McEneaney, 'Poverty, Segregation, and Race Riots: 1960 to 1963', *American Sociological Review*, 61, 1996, pp. 590–613.

¹⁴ L. Quillian, 'Prejudice as a Response to Perceived Group Threat: Population Composition and Anti-immigrant and Racial Prejudice in Europe', *American Sociological Review*, 60, 1995, pp. 586–611.

¹⁵ Blalock, *Towards a Theory of Minority Group Relations*; Olzak, *Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict*; Quillian, 'Prejudice as a Response to Perceived Group Threat'; L. Quillian, 'Group Threat and Regional Change in Attitude Toward African-Americans', *American Journal of Sociology*, 3, 1996, pp. 816–860.

¹⁶ M. Hechter, 'Group Formation and the Cultural Division of Labour', *American Journal of Sociology*, 84, 1978, pp. 293–318.

¹⁷ E. Bonacich, 'A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market', *American Sociological Review*, 37, 1972, pp. 547–559.

¹⁸ H. Blumer, 'Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position', *Pacific Sociological Review*, 1, 1958, pp. 3–7; G. Breakwell, *Coping with Threatened Identities* (London, Methuen, 1986).

¹⁹ L. Quillian, L. Bobo & V.L. Hutchings, 'Perceptions of Racial Group Competition: Extending Blumer's Theory of Group Position to a Multiracial Social Context', *American Sociological Review*, 61, 1996, pp. 951–972.

²⁰ For a similar position see Blumer, 'Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position'; L. Hagendoorn,

H. Linssen & S. Tumanov, *Inter-group Relations in States of the Former Soviet Union. The Perception of Russians* (Hove, Psychology Press, 2001).

²¹ See for instance N.R. Branscombe & D.L. Wann, 'Collective Self-esteem Consequences of Outgroup Derogation when a Valued Social Identity is on Trial', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 24, 1994, pp. 641–657; W. Stephan, O. Ybarra & G. Bachman, 'Prejudice Toward Immigrants', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 29, 1999, pp. 2221–2237.

²² See also L. Hagendoorn & H. Linssen, 'Group Goal Attributions and Stereotypes in Five Former Soviet States', in J. ter Wal & M. Verkuyten, *Comparative Perspectives on Racism* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000), pp. 171–189.

²³ M.W. Giles & A. Evans, 'The Power Approach to Intergroup Hostility', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 30, 1986, pp. 469–486; M.W. Giles & K. Hertz, 'Racial Threat and Partisan Identification', *American Political Science Review*, 88, 1994, pp. 317–326. The power theory can be considered as a contextual variant of Blumer's theory of prejudice as a sense of group position. Because it is tentative to use country characteristics as contextual-level indicators of perceived threat, we will use out-group characteristics (i.e. perceived threat of the titular population in the republics) only as contextual-level indicators of threat. Some sociological studies, however, have used proportions of ethnic groups or decline in GNP as indicators of threat on the contextual level (e.g. Quillian, 'Group Threat and Regional Change ...'; Giles & Hertz, 'Racial Threat and Partisan Identification'). The problem with these studies is that they do not clearly disentangle the concepts of competition and threat.

²⁴ See for instance G. Smith, V. Law, A. Wilson, A. Bohr & E. Allworth, *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 134; Bremmer, 'The Politics of Ethnicity' p. 282.

²⁵ To our knowledge, no data are available on Russian representation in leading positions in the various republics. Therefore the proportional representation of non-titulars in leading positions (i.e. the percentage of titulars in leading positions subtracted from 100) is used as an indicator. We are aware of the possible bias in this indicator due to differential proportions across republics of non-titulars who are not Russians either. For instance, the proportion of Russians and titulars is relatively high in Ukraine (95%) and much lower in Moldova (78%).

²⁶ Age and gender do not affect Russian or titular identification in addition to earlier assimilation, ethnic competition or perceived threat. The categorical variable 'country', representing the five republics, is significant, indicating differences in national identification across republics; contextual factors are used to explain these inter-republican differences.

²⁷ See for instance E. Poppe, 'The Effect of Changes in GNP and Target Characteristics on National and Ethnic Stereotypes in Central and Eastern Europe', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 31, 2001, pp. 1689–1708; Hagendoorn, Linssen & Tumanov, *Inter-group Relations in States of the Former Soviet Union*. Multi-level analysis such as H. Goldstein, *Multilevel Statistical Models* (London, Edward Arnold, 1995), a more sophisticated way of analysis, was not appropriate owing to the low number of observations at the contextual level (i.e. five countries).

²⁸ R.M. Baron & D.A. Kenny, 'The Moderator–Mediator Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 1986, pp. 1173–1182.

²⁹ As indicated by analysis of variance: $F(4, 2948) = 69.12; p < 0.001$.

³⁰ Pirie, 'National Identity and Politics ...'; Laitin, *Identity in Formation*.

³¹ See for instance M. Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (New York, Cambridge University, 1985); for evidence from a laboratory study see K.A. Ethier & K. Deaux, 'Negotiating Social Identity when Contexts Change: Maintaining Identification and Responding to Threat', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 1994, pp. 243–251.

³² Quillian, Bobo & Hutchings 'Perceptions of Racial Group Competition'.

³³ H. Schuman, C. Steeh & L. Bobo, *Racial Attitudes in America, Trends and Interpretations* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1985); R. Eisinga & P. Scheepers, *Emocentrisme in Nederland, theoretische en empirische modellen* (Ethnocentrism in the Netherlands: theoretical and empirical models) (Nijmegen, I.T.S., 1989).

³⁴ Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*; J. Chinn & R. Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States* (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1996).