Ethnic Self-Esteem and Intergroup Attitudes Among the Estonian Majority and the non-Estonian Minority

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Abstract

The study was focussed on the relationships between ethnic self-esteem and various indicators of intergroup attitudes in a representative sample of adult population of Estonia (N=1142). Attitudinal variables that discriminated most between persons with high and low ethnic self-esteem were identified. Among Estonians ethnic self-esteem was related to positive ingroup bias, readiness for outgroup contact, perceived threat from the outgroup, attitudes to non-Estonian minority, and attitudes toward minority integration. Among non-Estonians ethnic self-esteem was related to readiness for outgroup contact, ethnic sterotypes, and various attitudes towards minority integration. An attempt was made to reconstruct the system of intergroup attidues of prototypical persons with high and low ethnic self-esteem and to describe psychological implications of high and low ethnic self-esteem for members of majority and minority groups. Various theoretical models (social identity theory, integrated threat theory, social dominance theory) were used for interpretation of the results.

Keywords: Intergroup attitudes, social identity, collective self-esteem, social representations.

The question of identity and intergroup attitudes has attracted increasing interest among social scientists in recent years. Very often such interest is motivated by attempts to regulate some real life intergoup tensions. Analogously to Israel or Northern Ireland, Estonia has been the object of such investigation.

Relations of the Estonian majority and the non-Estonian minority have their roots in the recent sociopolitical history of Estonia. After regaining its independence in 1991, a restitutional citizenship policy has been implemented and, as the result, the permanent population was recategorised into Estonian citizens and non-citizens with unequal status and power. The dividing line is largely analogous to an ethnic division into Estonians and non-Estonians on the basis of everyday language use (Estonian or Russian). There are different descriptions of the intergroup situation in Estonia depending on the interpretation of the recent past (*e.g.* Semjonov 2000, Pettai 1996). Most crucial is the dividing line that regards the non-Estonian minority as 'illegal immigrants' who have to be naturalized, differentiating between them and the 'legitimate residents' who have legally settled in Estonia during the existence of the Soviet Union. The recent history plays an important role in the way Estonians define their relationships with non-Estonians.

Numerous surveys (*e.g.* Kruusvall 1998, Pettai & Proos 1999) have revealed divergent (and often asymmetric) attitudes towards many aspects of the interethnic situation in Estonia held by Estonian majority and non-Estonian minority. The focus of this study is the attitudinal variability within these groups: instead of comparing people who nominally belong to different ethnic groups, we will compare people who have different 'strength' of ethnic identity. Ethnic self-esteem (ESE) will be used as a measure of intensity of identification with one's ethnic group.

Collective self-esteem and intergroup attitudes

Collective self-esteem (CSE) is usually understood as the self-evaluation of one's social identity: it is a concept that describes 'the extent to which individuals generally evaluate their social group positively' (Crocker & Luhtanen 1990: 60). In other words: CSE is an indicator of an individual's attitudes towards his or her particular belongingness to relevant social categories.

Alternatively, Rahimi (1999) claims that CSE is more directly related to a collective self-concept, understood as a cognitively oriented explanation of the individual's understanding of the membership (s)he assumes to share with other group members. The collective self-concept relates to the systems of values and emotions that are believed (by the individual) to be collectively shared with the social group(s) of which the individual considers himself or herself to be a member. In line with the

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constructivist paradigm, Rahimi (1999) defines semiotic collective identity as semiotically constructed and CSE as an attitude towards this identity.

Several studies indicate that CSE (like personal self-esteem) is related to the subjective well-being of a person. An aspect relevant to this study is that CSE affects also the way in which people evaluate ingroups and outgroups, how they perceive the intergroup situation and which strategies they choose in relating to the outgroup.

It is possible to derive opposing hypotheses from social identity theory (Tajfel 1981) concerning the relationship of the collective self-esteem and outgroup attitudes: outgroup hostility may be related both to low and high CSE. Experimental studies with minimal groups and studies of real groups with a history of intergroup conflict have given mixed and controversial results concerning relations between self-esteem and intergroup differentiation (Brown 2000). People with high CSE are more likely to protect their social identity in threatening situations (Crocker & Luhtanen 1990), and tend to use direct confrontation and overt ingroup favouritism in conditions of conflict or perceived threat to their identity (Aberson *et al.* 2000). On the other hand, people with low CSE are more likely to express hostility towards outgroups (as a strategy of ego-protection) and they evaluate outgroup members more negatively than those with high CSE (Luhtanen & Crocker 1992, De Cremer & Oosterwegel 1999, Ruttenberg & Zea 1996). These mixed results concerning the relationship between the level of CSE and outgroup hostility may be caused by the use of different measures and the divergent functioning of various dimensions of CSE. Different CSE subscales have shown different patterns of relations with other variables (*e.g.* Long & Spears 1998). For example, high scores on the CSE public subscale were related to orientation towards intergroup harmony and conciliation in both majority and minority groups in Northern Ireland (Leach & Williams 1999).

There are also indications that relations between different dimensions of CSE with other attitudes and behaviour intentions are different in majority and minority groups (cf. Jackson & Smith 1999, Luhtanen & Crocker 1992, Valk 2000). In Estonia, a variant of the CSE scale has been used in a study on local identity (Uljas & Post 2002), but it has not been applied to the measurement of ethnic identity.

Valk (2000) has studied two dimensions of ethnic identity: ethnic pride and ethnic differentiation (measured by a self-constructed instrument) and their relations with group attitudes and individual self-esteem among Estonian and Russian adolescents. She did not find differences in the level of ethnic pride among Estonians and non-Estonians. However, majority and minority group status had a different impact on the relations between these variables: among Estonians ethnic differentiation was related to a negative outgroup and a positive ingroup evaluation, whereas ethnic pride showed no correlation to either ingroup or outgroup attitudes. Among Russians ethnic pride had a positive correlation both with ingroup and outgroup evaluations. The author concludes that the salience and meaning of different ethnic identity aspects may vary across minority and majority group members. The Estonian ethnic identity seems to be based on ethnic differentiation (self-distinction from other ethnic groups).

Valk & Karu (2000) have described the ingroup variation of the content of ethnic pride among Estonians living abroad and living in Estonia. The meaning of ethnic identity varied considerably among people with an equally strong ethnic pride and a feeling of belonging.

Both these studies have not studied the general population and they have used self-constructed measures that are difficult to relate to similar studies elsewhere. Outgroup attitudes were measured with a single measure. The present study will apply an abridged scale of ethnic self-esteem (Crocker & Luhtanen 1992) and will focus on the relationship of ethnic self-esteem with multiple indicators of intergroup attitudes in a representative sample of the adult population of Estonia. Observing the relationships of ESE with various indicators of outgroup attitudes will enable us to get access to the systemic relations between these attitudes. In particular, we will observe how within-group variability in terms of ESE differentiates the amount and quality of contact with the outgroup, perceived ethnic discrimination, perceived threat, ethnic stereotypes and various minority attitudes. The choice of relevant variables derives from a set of theories on intergroup relations: the social identity theory (Tajfel 1981), the integrated threat theory (Stephan *et al.* 1998, 2000), the social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), the acculturation theory (Berry 1984), and the intergroup contact model (Allport 1954). Each of these variables has been separately used in empirical studies on ESE or CSE.

The aims of this study are the following:

1) to find out the set of attitudinal variables that discriminate most between persons with high and low ESE;
2) to reconstruct the system of intergroup attitudes of prototypical high and low ESE persons;
3) to find out in what sense high and low ESE have different psychological implications for members of majority and minority groups.

Theoretical models and hypotheses

There are various theoretical models that provide a logical framework for the relationships between social identity and intergroup attitudes. We can divide these models into two main groups:

1) individualistic models (*e.g.* social identity theory, social categorisation theory), which postulate intraindividual cognitive or motivational explanatory factors (*e.g.* need for positive self-esteem, self-categorisation) and presuppose the individual-based nature of CSE.
2) constructivist models (cf. Frable 1997, Doise 1988, 1990, 1998, Breakwell 1993, Rahimi 1999), which focus on contextual (sociohistorical, interpersonal and intergroup) factors that shape social identities and presuppose that social identity is socially (semiotically) constructed and has different meanings for different groups.

In social identity theory, CSE is conceptualised as a stable individual trait. Some authors have expressed doubts in such a conceptualisation of CSE (Long & Spears 1998). Another possibility is to conceptualise CSE and the systems of beliefs related to it as social constructions that emerge and are maintained in a particular cultural and historical context of intergroup relations (cf. Frable 1997, Verkuyten 2000, Rahimi 1999). According to theoretical approaches that focus on sociocultural factors, social identity and CSE are constructions that emerge and are maintained in a dialogical process between individuals and their sociocultural environment (other people, cultural messages). However, these models are descriptive and it is not possible to derive exact predictions from them.

We will present some relevant theoretical approaches together with our hypotheses deriving from these models.

According to the *classical social identity theory* (Tajfel 1981), maintaining sufficiently high self-esteem (or a positive social identity) is the main motivating factor in intergroup bias and ethnocentrism. Positive social self-esteem is acquired through assessing one's group to be better than other groups or as being distinctive from other groups. Low CSE is understood as an indicator of threatened identity, and it is supposed to produce intergroup differentiation. People with high and low CSE will use different strategies for supporting their identity. High CSE will lead to the enhancement of the ingroup, and low CSE will use the tactic of outgroup derogation for enhancing their self-esteem.

As an elaboration of this theory, Jackson & Smith (1999) consider the perception of the intergroup context as one dimension of social identity. They describe two subtypes of social identity: *secure and insecure social identity,* with the perceived threat from the outgroup as the main differentiating factor. Outgroup negativity is caused by a perceived threat from the outgroup. Only if a person has an *insecure* social identity, he or she tends to perceive intergroup relations as competitive, conflicting and threatening, and to reject other groups. Differently from classical social identity theory the authors suppose that low CSE is not necessarily the only indicator of threatened identity, and that persons with high CSE may also have an insecure and subjectively threatened identity. Here the relationships are probably bidirectional: insecure identity causes hostility, and the perception of threat from the outgroup causes insecurity of identity.

According to Jackson & Smith (1999*), secure* social identity (whether high or low) need not be related to a negative attitude towards the outgroups; on the contrary, intergroup relations are seen in a positive light by such people. Perceived positive intergroup relations do not pose a threat to identity and lead to a low level of outgroup negativity. A prediction from this model is that intergroup bias in the form of outgroup derogation will be more strongly related to an insecure social identity, and a secure social identity will be related to a more positive view of the outgroup.

Verkuyten (1998) has reported that ESE was negatively related to *perceived group discrimination*. In a study of minorities in Holland, he found that perceived group discrimination was related to ethnic self-esteem, but not to individual self-esteem. The author supposes that the relationship may be bidirectional: ESE influences the perception of discrimination, and perceived discrimination affects CSE.

Similarly, Rahimi (1999) has found that CSE was negatively related to *perceived racism* (persons with low CSE perceive more situations as racist, especially when targeted at their ingroup members). He interprets the result as an indication of the defensible interpretation of the environment by persons with low CSE.

The *integrated threat theory* (Stephan *et al.* 1998) distinguishes four types of threats that can cause prejudice and negative attitudes related to the outgroups: realistic threats (*e.g.* economic threats, immigration, crime, pollution), symbolic threats (perceived group differences in morals, values, norms,

etc.), intergroup anxiety (embarrassment on the interpersonal level) and negative stereotypes (beliefs that outgroup members are aggressive, dishonest, *etc*.). In our questionnaire, several questions dealt with *realistic and symbolic threats*. In line with the *realistic group conflict theory* (Campbell 1965) and the *integrated threat theory* (Stephan et *al*. 1998), an objective conflict of interests between groups (*i.e.* a real threat from the outgroup) and a perception of symbolic threat from the outgroup increase ethnocentrism. Studies in Northern Ireland (*e.g.* Leach & Williams 1999) and Israel (*e.g.* Rouhana & Fiske 1995) seem to corroborate this proposition. In particular, a significant positive relation was found between perceived threat and right-wing political orientation in Israel, and Jews and Arabs did not share the same sources of threat: for Jews the existence of the Arab minority itself is threatening, whereas the Arabs perceive their exclusion from the institutional power. In Estonia, divergent sources of outgroup anxiety among Estonians and non-Estonians have been described by Kruusvall (1998): Estonians expressed anxiety related to symbolic threats from the outgroups (especially concerning the Estonian language usage), whereas non-Estonians were mostly worried about state policy concerning the minorities. According to this line of reasoning, we can expect that ESE will have a differentiating effect on the perception of threat from the outgroup.

There are indirect indications that the level of ESE is also related to a preferred *strategy of intergroup adjustment (acculturation)*. The theory of acculturation by J.Berry (1984) defines four major strategies of mutual adjustment or identity orientations, depending on whether or not members of a group 1) want to maintain their distinct group identity, and 2) want to have positive relationships with the outgroups (integration, marginalisation, separation and assimilation orientations). A study on the relationship between identity and intergroup strategies (Bergman 1998) indicates that within-group variations in the identity construction were consistently related to specific strategies (evaluations and actions) towards the outgroup members. Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000) reports results concerning the relationship of perceived discrimination to acculturation strategies among Russian speaking adolescents in Finland: the more they were oriented towards assimilation and integration, the less perceived discrimination they reported, whereas the more they were oriented towards separation or marginalisation, the more discrimination they perceived.These relationships will be tested in our study, where ESE is understood as a result of identity construction.

According to the *social dominance theory* (Sidanius & Pratto 1999), social dominance orientation is a basic psycho-social-institutional mechanism that produces and maintains group-based hierarchical relations. A generalised orientation towards group-based hierarchy or equality is formed as a combination of individual tendencies and shared beliefs (legitimising myths) that provide moral and intellectual legitimacy for social practices, which support or reduce group-based social inequalities in the society. SDT relates personality characteristics, individual behaviour, shared societal beliefs, and institutional systems, integrating both an individual level and a societal level of analysis.
Based on the line of reasoning presented above, we propose the following hypotheses for our study:

1. persons with high and low ESE will differ also in the magnitude and pattern of their attitudes towards the outgroup and interethnic relations. There are theoretical reasons to expect that persons with high and low ESE will show different scores on the measures of group bias, perceived discrimination, and perceived threat.
2. various attitudes that differentiate persons with high and low ESE are interrelated and form certain patterns, so that they can be described as a system
3. high and low ESE will have different implications for members of majority and minority groups

Method

Sample

The study is based on the results of a joint project 'Monitoring of integration 2000' which was carried out by a group of researchers from Tallinn Pedagogical University and the Open Society Institute (grant awarded by the Foundation for Integrating non-Estonians). The survey was carried out at the Saar Poll in March 2000, using a national representative sample of 1,142 respondents. The sample consists of 655 Estonians (57.3%) and 483 non-Estonians (42.7%), of whom 408 were Russians (35.7%), 35 Ukrainians (3.1%), 19 Byelorussians (1.7%), three Jews (0.3%), five Finns (0.4%) and 13 persons of other ethnic origin (1.1%). Among non-Estonians 211 persons (18.5% of the whole sample) are citizens

of Estonia, 160 persons (14.0%) are without any citizenship (bearers of an alien's passport), 101 persons (8.9%) are citizens of Russia and 13 persons (1.1%) are citizens of some other state. The following analysis will compare Estonians and non-Estonians.

Measures and procedure

The questionnaire was designed by the work group with the objective of monitoring interethnic attitudes in Estonia. Many questions were composed on the basis of widespread propositions expressed in the Estonian media. For the purpose of this study, measures of outgroup contact (perceived discrimination, perceived threat, *etc.*) were chosen among these questions. In some cases, single item measures were used (*e.g.* minority attitudes, attitudes toward integration). In other cases, summation indexes were constructed (*e.g.* index of perceived symbolic and realistic threat, index of group bias, index of readiness for outgroup contact).

The *amount of contact with the outgroup* was measured by two summation indexes, each composed of 6 items (interaction with the outgroup members now and ten years ago).

The *Quality of contact with the outgroup* was measured by a question concerning the amount of help from the members of the outgroup, and a summation index of five items concerning the frequency of ethnic conflicts in different spheres of life.

Readiness for outgroup contact was operationally defined as a score on the summation index of four items (presented in Table 1).

Perceived ethnic discrimination was operationalised as a score on a 1-item measure of general discrimination (Are any ethnic groups discriminated in Estonia? 1- often …. 4 - not at all) and on a 1-item measure of personally experienced ethnic discrimination (Have you personally experienced ethnic discrimination?). In addition, the *perceived economic inequality between Estonians and non-Estonians* was measured (summation index of two items presented in Table 2).

Ethnic stereotypes (group bias) were measured by comparing and ranking 16 traits according to how well they characterise Estonians and local non-Estonians in general. Two indexes were computed, first, a group bias index as a difference between characterising power of a trait to Estonians and non-Estonians (subtracting the sum of respective values from each other): the more the value of the index is below zero, the more in favour of Estonians this trait is evaluated to be, and the more it is above zero, the more it is evaluated as being characteristic to non-Estonians. The other index (the Positivity index) was constructed by summing all scores to positively evaluated traits and subtracting scores to 2 negatively evaluated traits (sloppy, alcoholic). The less the value of the index is, the more positive is the average assessment of Estonians or non-Estonians.

Minority attitudes were measured by a battery of questions that reflect widespread opinions about the position of non-Estonians in Estonia.

P*erceived threat from the outgroup* was operationalised as a score on two summation indexes, each constructed of three items. The two indexes were the index of symbolic threat (*If citizenship of Estonia will be given without the language exam, it will threaten 1) the existence of the Estonian nation, 2) the existence of Estonian language, 3) the existence of the Estonian state*) (*alpha = 0.935*) and the index of realistic threat (*Do you think that the existence of different ethnicities in Estonia will increase 1) crime in Estonia, 2) spread of drugs in Estonia, 3) spread of prostitution in Estonia 1 - yes, 3 - no*) (*alpha = 0.896*).

Attitudes towards integration were measured by two sets of questions that concern the importance of various aspects of integration ('meaning of integration') and assessment of the successfulness of integration ('assessment of integration').

An indication of outgroup attitudes is also an index of *rights entitlement.* A block of questions measured attitudes concerning readiness to entitle various political, social and economic rights to different categories of Estonian inhabitants (all inhabitants, citizens and those having residence permit, only citizens, only Estonians). Two indexes were constructed by counting the responses that were restrictive (rights only to Estonians and to citizens) and responses that were not restrictive (rights to all inhabitants and to those with residence permits).

ESE was measured using a shortened and modified version (eight items) of the CSE scale (Luhtanen & Crocker 1992). We used a race-specific variant of the instrument where all questions were referring to one's ethnic group (cf. Susag 1999, Lilli & Diehl 1999).

Data analysis

To examine our hypotheses, mean scores of persons with high and low ESE were compared (using an analysis of variance) on the measures of intergroup attitudes. Thereafter, discriminant function analysis was applied in order to find attitudinal variables that differentiate most between persons with high and low ESE.

For analytical purposes, we also distinguished persons with high and low ESE. Differentiation of groups of people with high and low levels of ESE was based on a 1/3 split, separately for Estonian and non-Estonian samples. Estonians whose ESE index was above 4.33 were classified as high ESE (N=202), and those whose ESE was below 3.829 were low ESE persons (N=197). Non-Estonians with the ESE index below 3.49 were classified as having low ESE (N=161) and those with the ESE index above 4.0 were classified as having high ESE (N=142).

Results

Relations of ESE to other variables

In order to examine our hypotheses that persons with high and low ESE differ on certain attitudinal variables, we performed an analysis of variance and a correlational analysis. The results will be presented separately for each group of variables.

Contacts with the other ethnic group
The *Amount and kind of contacts* with the other ethnic group in different spheres of life is related to ESE only among Estonians, and the relationship is not uniform: among people with low ESE there are slightly more of those who have non-Estonians in their family (13.1% compared to 6.6%), whereas among people with high ESE there are relatively more of those who have contacts with non-Estonians as neighbours, co-workers or co-students.

The *Quality of contacts* with other ethnic group is marginally related to ESE only among Estonians. Among those who have low ESE, there are relatively more people who have positive personal experiences with the outgroup (respectively 42.6 and 32.8% have got help from non-Estonians). A general perceived level of interethnic conflicts or personally experienced conflicts on ethnic grounds was not related to ESE.

Table 1. Attitudes to different forms of contacts between ethnic groups:
Mean scores in different ESE groups and analysis of variance results
Would you go to…. (1 – on the first occasion….5 – never)

	Low ESE	High ESE	F	p
Estonians				
Live in a city where majority of inhabitants are ….	3.59	3.98	29.635	***
Live in a quarter where majority of neighbors are …	3.49	3.84	30.092	***
Work in a firm where majority of colleagues are ….	3.20	3.48	16.256	**
Live in a family where some members are…	3.73	3.99	16.993	**
Non- Estonians				
City	2.76	3.09	6.242	**
Neighbors	2.57	2.77	7.755	*
Co-workers	2.55	2.84	4.693	**
Family	3.09	3.51	6.189	***

* $p<0,05$ ** $p<0,01$ *** $p<0,001$

As Table 1 shows, the results present a very clear picture: the relation between ESE and the readiness to contact is moving in the same direction among Estonians and non-Estonians.

While the actual amount and quality of contacts with the outgroup were weakly related to ESE, *general readiness* to interact with the other ethnic group was significantly related to ESE both among Estonians and non-Estonians. The readiness to interact with the representatives of the other ethnic group is strongly related to the level of ESE (more strong relationship among Estonians): the lower ESE

is, the greater is the readiness to interact with the other ethnic group in different spheres of life, and vice versa: the higher ESE is, the weaker is the readiness to have daily contacts with the outgroup

Table 2. Perceived inequality between ethnic groups: Mean scores
Please assess economic inequality between the following groups in contemporary Estonia (1 – very great inequality…5 – there is no inequality)

	Low ESE	High ESE	p
Estonians and non-Estonians	2.56	3.10	0.001
Estonian citizens and non-citizens	2.53	3.14	0.001

Perceived discrimination
ESE is significantly related to the *perception of ethnic discrimination in Estonia*. Correlation between the index of ESE and perceived discrimination measure was 0.126***, but only among Estonians (the higher ESE is, the less perceived discrimination). The higher ESE is, the less discrimination is noticed in general in Estonia. There was significant difference between the mean scores of this item among persons with high ESE (M=3.64) and low ESE (M=3.47), p<0.01. The same pattern is revealed in the whole sample and only among Estonians: people with low ESE are more sensitive towards ethnic discrimination, whereas people with high ESE tend to deny the existence of ethnic discrimination in Estonia.

Personally experienced discrimination was not related to ESE among Estonians, but it had a weak relationship with ESE among non-Estonians (Mean (low ESE)= 2.30, Mean (high ESE) =2.52, p<0.05).

Correlations between perceived abstract and concrete discrimination were rather strong, especially among non-Estonians: Estonians 0.400***, non-Estonians 0.569***. Verkuyten (1998) reports similarly moderate correlations between perceived group (abstract) and individual (concrete) discrimination.

Perceived inequality between Estonians and non-Estonians
Estonians with low ESE are more sensitive towards social inequality between different ethnic groups. Estonians with higher levels of ESE tend to be less sensitive towards social inequality (Table 2).

Perceived threat from the outgroup
The higher ESE is among Estonians, the more symbolic threat is perceived to stem from granting Estonian citizenship to persons who do not know the Estonian language sufficiently enough (Table 3).

Table 3. Perceived threat among Estonians: Mean scores
If citizenship of Estonia will be given without the language exam, it will threaten g) the existence of the Estonian nation, h) the existence of the Estonian language, I) the existence of the Estonian state

	Low ESE	High ESE	p
Threat to the existence of Estonian nation	2.37	2.08	0.001
Threat the existence of Estonian language	2.19	1.96	0.01
Threat to the existence of Estonian state	2.58	2.30	0.001

Correlation with the index of ESE and the index of symbolic threat among Estonians is 0,116** and among non-Estonians r=0,139**. The higher ESE is among Estonians, the more they perceive a threat from non-Estonians who will become citizens without the knowledge of Estonian language. Among non-Estonians the relation is opposite: the higher ESE is, the less threat they admit (*i.e.* the more they oppose to the claims by Estonians).

Other measures of perceived threat (threat from Russia, how probable is that conflicts between Estonians and non-Estonians threaten Estonian security?) had highly significant differences in mean values among Estonians and non-Estonians, but different levels of ESE separately in the Estonian and non-Estonian group did not differentiate the level of perceived threat.

Attitudes related to the position of non-Estonians in Estonia
Next we will observe a question battery that deals with the general attitude towards the position and role of non-Estonians in the Estonian society (only significant differences are reported) (Table 4).

Table 4. Beliefs about the position of non-Estonian minority: Mean scores

Item	low ESE	high ESE	p
Actual homeland of local non-Estonians is Estonia	2.41	2.79	***
Cultural and historical heritage of non-Estonians is well protected in Estonia	2.49	2.16	***
Knowledge of Estonian should be compulsory	1.79	1.48	***
Emigration of non-Estonians would be useful for Estonia	2.53	2.14	***

Estonians with low ESE tend to agree more with the statement that Estonia is the homeland of local non-Estonians. Estonians with high ESE tend to not agree with this statement. Estonians with low ESE are more worried about the protection of cultural and historical heritage of non-Estonians, whereas persons with high ESE tend to be satisfied with the present situation. Estonians with low ESE tend to believe more that non-Estonians are loyal to the Estonian state, whereas Estonians with high ESE tend to doubt this assertion. Estonians with high ESE support strict language requirements more. The data indicates that Estonians with high ESE tend to perceive more symbolic threats that are related to the lack of knowledge of the Estonian language by non-Estonians and living in separate cultural and informational worlds. Relatively more Estonians with high ESE believe that if non-Estonians leave the country, it would be useful for Estonia. Estonians with high ESE tend to believe more that Estonians and non-Estonians live in separate worlds of culture and information.

The results support the hypothesis that high and low ESE persons showed significant differences in their scores on outgroup attitudes. Among non-Estonians, only two items were rated differently by persons with high and low ESE. Among non-Estonians, higher ESE is related to a slightly stronger opposition to the statement that the emigration of non-Estonians could be useful for Estonia. Non-Estonians with higher ESE tend to agree less with the statement that Estonia provides better opportunities for improving their living conditions than Russia. So we see that non-Estonians with high ESE tend to express more opposition to Estonian's perceived threat connected to the disloyalty of non-Estonians and the dissimilarity of non-Estonians.

The higher ESE is among Estonians, the less they consider Estonia as a real homeland for local non-Estonians, the more they would like to make the Estonian language compulsory for all, and the more they support the emigration of non-Estonians. The questions on language and the emigration of non-Estonians correlate with ESE in the opposite directions among Estonians and non-Estonians.

An integrative exclusion index has been constructed on the basis of separate items of this question battery (Kruusvall 2000), which describes the general attitude of keeping away the minority group (the greater the value of the index, the more a person has the tendency to exclude the non-Estonians).

Table 5. Mean values of exclusion index in groups with low, medium and high ethnic self-esteem

Level of exclusion	Mean value of ESE (Estonians)
0 lowest	3.84
1	3.94
2	4.02
3 highest	4.12

The correlation between the index of ESE and the index of exclusion is rather high (r=0.234**). Comparing the mean values of ESE on different levels of exclusive attitude (Table 5), we see a clear relationship: the more Estonians tend to exclude non-Estonians, the higher their level of ESE is. Or in another way: Estonians whose attitude is more tolerant towards non-Estonians, have a lower level of ESE.

Discriminating variables

One of our research aims is to find out the set of attitudinal variables that discriminate most between persons with high and low ESE. How do people with low and high ESE differ in attitudes towards outgroup and intergroup relations in Estonia? Which attitudes are most important as predictor variables in predicting low and high ESE group membership? In order to find the answer to this research question, we applied discriminant function analysis, which allows us to evaluate the distinctions among the groups on the basis of a set of attitudes. We will explore the predictors contributing to the difference among groups on the dimension that differentiates the groups, and the degree to which we can accurately classify members into their respective groups.

We separately compared Estonians and non-Estonians who had low and high scores on the ESE measure (lowest 1/3 and highest 1/3, respectively). The predictors were all variables that showed significant group differences in the one-way analysis of variance.

A. Within-group differences among Estonians with high and low ESE.

When 22 predictors (that showed significant group differences in a one-way analysis of variance) were used, the discriminant function was highly significant (Wilks' *Lambda* = 0.674, p<0.001). This means that there is a reliable separation of the high and low ESE groups based on all 22 predictors combined. A total of 78.3% cases were correctly classified on the basis of this discriminant function.

The matrix of correlations between predictors and the discriminant function (Table 6) suggests that the best predictors for distinguishing between Estonians with high and low ESE are: pro-Estonian ingroup bias, belief that Estonian language knowledge should be compulsory, readiness for outgroup contact, attitude toward considering Estonia as a real homeland for non-Estonians, readiness to allocate rights to various categories of people in Estonia, attitude towards the emigration of non-Estonians and a general exclusive attitude towards non-Estonians. Least differentiating were perceived discrimination, perceived symbolic threats and defining integration through changes in the legislation concerning non-Estonians.

Table 6. Correlations between predictors and the discriminant function: Estonians

Predictor variable	Correlation
Positive ingroup bias	0.528
Knowledge of Estonian	0.427
Readiness for outgroup contact	-0.410
Estonia is a real homeland	-0.395
Learning in Estonian schools	0.378
Entitlement permissiveness	0.366
Emigration	0.357
Exclusion	-0.330
Separate worlds	0.292
Loyalty	0.291
Political participation	0.252
Realistic threat	0.250
Estonian language knowledge	-0.239
Experienced help from outgroup members	-0.227
Increase in parliament	-0.223
Cultural heritage	0.196
Experience of political repressions	0.193
Perceived inequality	-0.166
Symbolic threats	0.144
Perceived discrimination	-0.032
Canonical R	0.571
Eigenvalue	0.484

Estonians with high ESE have more positive ingroup stereotypes and they are less ready for contacts with outgroup members. Their attitudes towards minorities can be characterised as more exclusivist (Estonia is not their real homeland, restrictive attitudes towards the entitlement of rights to various categories of people in Estonia, agreement that the emigration of non-Estonians would be useful and

that Estonians and non-Estonians live in separate worlds, doubt in the loyalty of non-Estonians, denial of their political participation, higher level of perceived threat), and more assimilative (stressing the importance of Estonian language knowledge and the learning of non-Estonians in Estonian schools) than Estonians with low ESE.

B. Within-group differences among non-Estonians with high and low ESE.

12 variables that distinguished low and high ESE groups among non-Estonians were entered as independent variables into discriminant function analysis. The resulting discriminant function was highly significant (Wilks' *Lambda* = 0.718, p<0.001). A total of 73.2% cases were correctly classified (Table 7).

Table 7. Correlations between predictors and the discriminant function: Non-Estonians

Variable	Correlation with the discriminant function
Competing capacity	-0.476
Emigration	0.419
Equal security	0.366
Increase of participation	-0.362
Loyalty	-0.356
Readiness for outgroup contact	0.330
Better conditions than in Russia	0.323
Personally experienced ethnic discrimination	0.261
Citizenship	0.185
Outgroup bias	0.132
Estonian language	0.079
Similarity of way of life	-0.004
Canonical R	0.531
Eigenvalue	0.392

More than persons with low ESE, the non-Estonians with high ESE stress the importance of competing capacity, the increase of participation and the equal security of non-Estonians; they deny more resolutely the usefulness of non-Estonians' emigration, as well as better life conditions in Estonia compared to Russia, and the importance of non-Estonians' loyalty as a characteristic of integration; they report more personally experienced discrimination and are less ready to interact with Estonians on a daily basis.

Conclusion

Our aim was to examine the relations of ethnic self-esteem with intergroup attitudes. We hypothesized that high and low ethnic self-esteem will be related to significant differences in various attitudes on intergroup relations in Estonia.

The results show that there is within-group variation in the level of ESE both among Estonians and non-Estonians, but different levels of ESE differentiate more the Estonians' attitudes on ethnic relations.

We analysed relations of ESE with a set of variables that characterise intergroup relations: the amount and quality of contact with the outgroup, readiness for outgroup contact, perceived ethnic discrimination, perceived inequality between ethnic groups, perceived threat from the outgroup, ethnic stereotypes, minority attitudes.

Most correlations between ESE and separate variables were quite weak. Nevertheless, the overall pattern of relations was consistent. Discriminant function analysis enabled us to extract the attitudinal variables that differentiate persons with high and low ESE most strongly among Estonians and non-Estonians.

Relations between ESE and *other variables* that characterise intergroup relations were in the same direction both among Estonians and non-Estonians only in one case (readiness to outgroup contact), but in all other cases in the opposite directions (*e.g.* group stereotypes, perceived inequality, perceived threat, assessment of state minority policies). That indicates that majority and minority group position may have different implications for the relationship between these variables.

To summarise, we found the following relations of ESE to the observed variables:

a) Contact
In our study, the level of ESE was not very clearly related to the *amount and form of outgroup contacts*, whereas the relationship with *hypothetical readiness to intergroup contact* was strong and consistent. The lower ESE is, the more ready a person is to engage in daily contacts with members of the outgroup (both among Estonians and non-Estonians). According to the contact hypothesis (Allport 1954, Pettigrew 1998), the amount and quality of contacts with the outgroup is related to outgroup attitudes: contacts that are cooperative, individualised, voluntary and positive improve intergroup relations.

b) Perceived ethnic discrimination was not related to ESE in the predictable way. Our results show that on the abstract level perceived discrimination correlated with ESE only among Estonians (the higher ESE is, the less perceived discrimination), whereas on the level of personal experiences perceived discrimination correlated only slightly with ESE among non-Estonians.

c) Ethnic stereotypes (group bias)
ESE among the Estonian majority was positively related to ingroup favouritism (positive stereotypes of one's own ethnic group). In contrast, ESE among minority non-Estonians was positively related to outgroup derogation. This result departs from the results of Valk (2000), who found that Russians high in ethnic pride rated both in and outgroups more positively than did Russians with low ethnic pride, and no connections between ethnic pride and ethnic attitudes were found among Estonians. Our results would be in line with the predictions of SIT and some research results (*e.g.* Verkuyten 2000) (for minority groups, ethnic identity is typically related to ingroup preference rather than to outgroup dislike, whereas for the majority groups both ingroup preference and outgroup dislike tend to be related to identification) if we reverse the majority-minority group labels. We see that in this case Estonians show a behavioural pattern that is characteristic to minorities, and non-Estonians behave like majorities.

d) Perceived threat
Among Estonians ESE is positively correlated with perceived threats from the outgroups (both symbolic threats [*e.g.* language knowledge], and realistic threats, [*e.g.* crime level]). Persons with high ESE express significantly more sense of threat than persons with low ESE. Analogous findings are reported by Susag (1999) in a Finnish-American group: high ESE persons were more sensitive to threats to their ethnic group.
    Among non-Estonians, a high level of ESE is related to lesser admittance of threats caused by non-Estonians. However, we can not compare Estonians and non-Estonians directly on this dimension because the questions were not equivalent.

e) Attitudes related to the non-Estonian minority
The level of ESE differentiated the following beliefs among Estonians: Estonia as the homeland for non-Estonians, preservation of non-Estonian culture in Estonia, loyalty of non-Estonians to the state, compulsory status of the Estonian language, emigration of non-Estonians and the cultural separation of Estonians and non-Estonians. The higher ESE is among Estonians, the more exclusive are their attitudes towards non-Estonian minorities, the more they have doubts regarding their belongingness to Estonia, and the stricter are their criteria for inclusion.

f) Attitudes towards minority integration
The higher ESE is among Estonians, the more emphasis they put on the loyalty and language knowledge of non-Estonians as criteria of integration, and the less they tend to allow non-Estonians to participate in the political life of Estonia. It appears that Estonians with high ESE would like to assimilate non-Estonians, and hold them on a hierarchically inferior position in the society.
    The higher ESE is among non-Estonians, the more emphasis they put on the competing capacity of non-Estonians and their participation in the political life.
However, it should be stressed that most of the aspects of integration were assessed similarly by groups with high and low ESE.

g) Entitlement of rights
The higher ESE is among Estonians, the more restrictive they are in the entitlement of various rights to different categories of people in Estonia. Among non-Estonians, ESE did not differentiate attitudes towards rights.

To summarise, we found that *the higher ESE is among Estonians*, the less they admit to the existence of ethnic discrimination in Estonia, the more they perceive a threat stemming from non-Estonians, the more positive stereotypes they hold of their ingroup, the greater emphasis they put on the loyalty and language knowledge of non-Estonians, the less ready they are to accept the participation of non-Estonians in the political life of Estonia, and the more reluctant they are to entitle rights to different categories of people. *High ESE among Estonians* is related to a distrusting and distancing attitude towards non-Estonians and to the belief that the present citizenship policy is too mild. Estonians with high ESE tend to disvalue cultural heterogeneity in the society. They also tend to deny economic inequality between Estonians and non-Estonians. Estonians with high ESE seem to not feel connected to the outgroup, and they tend to overlook the outgroup's needs. Estonians with high ESE tend to perceive symbolic and realistic threats stemming from the outgroup. Persons with high ESE seem to be on an especially rigid position in the matters of language.

Our results are in accordance with the report by Valk (2000), where strong ethnic identity among Estonian adolescents was related to negative attitudes towards other ethnic groups, but in contrast with the results of some other studies (*e.g.* Long & Spears 1998) where people with high CSE were less negative about the outgroup than people with low CSE.

The higher ESE is among non-Estonians, the less they admit any dangers to Estonians, the less positive are their stereotypes of Estonians, the less ready they are to interact daily with Estonians, the more emphasis they put on the increase of the competing capacity of non-Estonians and their participation in the Estonian political life, the more they approve state support to the integration policy.

High ESE among non-Estonians is related to a symbolic confrontational attitude towards the outgroup (denial of language requirements, denial of Estonians' claim that emigration of non-Estonians would be profitable or that conditions in Russia are worse than in Estonia; greater acceptance of the inevitability of ethnic conflicts) and with ingroup-outgroup differentiation (denial of growing similarity of Estonians and non-Estonians). Non-Estonians with high ESE have more negative stereotypes about Estonians than persons with low ESE. Analogously to Estonians, this group is more reluctant to accept the worries of the outgroup (*e.g.* perceived threat expressed by Estonians).

Contrary to these results, Valk (2000) reports that Russian adolescents high in ethnic pride rated outgroups more positively than did Russians low in ethnic pride. The reason of discrepancy between the studies may derive from using different measures and from different populations studied.

In contrast, a *low level of ESE* among Estonians is related to more positive attitudes toward other ethnic groups, to greater readiness to interact with representatives of other ethnic groups in various spheres of life, to perception of greater similarity between different ethnic groups, to greater sensitivity towards individual and group discrimination and towards greater admittance of social inequality between ethnic groups. People with low ESE seem to be more sympathetic towards the outgroup's needs and worries and they are more ready to entitle rights to all people living in Estonia.

Discussion

How could we interpret our results? In real life, intergroup relations are complex and multilayered. It seems unrealistic to explain them only with one theoretical model. We will analyse several theoretical models that can account for our results.

A. Intraindividual factors
1. According to the classical social identity theory (Tajfel 1981), maintaining sufficiently high self-esteem (or a positive social identity) is the main motivating factor in intergroup bias and ethnocentrism. Threatened identity (low CSE) produces intergroup differentiation. People with high and low CSE will use different strategies for supporting their identity. High CSE will lead to the enhancement of the ingroup, and low CSE will use the tactic of outgroup derogation for enhancing their self-esteem. Our results only partly fit into this prediction (in case of group stereotypes). But when analysing relations with a wider set of variables, then a different picture emerges. People with high ESE performed both ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation. People with low ESE both in majority and majority groups tend to show more positivity towards the outgroup. We may conclude that motivational factors as conceptualized in SIT, are not the only relevant factors in this case.
2. An elaboration of the social identity theory has introduced some additional variables, like directness or indirectness of the expression of outgroup bias (Aberson *et al.* 2000). High CSE individuals have

shown greater ingroup bias when the expression is direct. No ingroup bias difference was found between high and low CSE groups when the expression was indirect. This means that high CSE individuals are more ready to overtly confront with the outgroup. Our results seem to fit with this prediction. Both Estonians and non-Estonians with high ESE tend to oppose the outgroup beliefs and worries more, persons with high CSE are more ready to explicit symbolic confrontation in the intergroup context, and high CSE persons use more direct ingroup bias strategies than people with low CSE. To test this model further, we should study whether the difference between low and high ESE persons disappears when we use more indirect measures of outgroup attitudes (cf. differentiation of blatant and subtle prejudice Pettigrew & Meertens 1995).

3. Jackson & Smith (1999) use the concepts of secure and insecure identity for explaining variations in outgroup attitudes. Does high ESE among Estonians refer to their insecure identity? Analysis of attitudes and opinions that accompany high ESE among Estonians indicates that in this group of Estonians we can observe a relatively high level of perceived threat from the outgroup. It is possible that that high ESE among Estonians is related to a sense of insecurity and, thus, serves as a strategy of self-protection. Even while occupying the majority position, many Estonians seem to be on a defensive position and perceive their identity as threatened. Similar tendencies have been reported by Jackson & Smith (1999) and Ruttenberg & Zea (1996): people with high CSE will use outgroup denigration as an identity-protective tactic, when they perceive their CSE as directly threatened. The fact that Estonians with high ESE have significantly more experiences of political repressions is an indirect indication that this group of Estonians may perceive greater threat from Russians as representatives of the former dominant group. Negative life experiences have caused insecurity and hostility towards non-Estonians in this category.

In the social identity theory, CSE is conceptualised as a stable individual trait. This interpretation enables us to treat our results as an indication of the relevance of a psychological parameter to some aspects of intergroup relations.

But SIT alone cannot account for the richness of intergroup attitudes. We also have to take into account the particular social and historical context of intergroup relations.

Contrary to SIT that conceptualises CSE as an individual trait, constructivist theories conceptualize CSE and beliefs related to it as social constructions that emerge and are maintained in a particular cultural and historical context. (cf. Frable 1997, Verkuyten 2000, Rahimi 1999).

Let us put our results in the context of some constructivist theories that emphasise intergroup and cultural level factors. In line with the *realistic group conflict theory* (Campbell 1965) and the *integrated threat theory* (Stephan *et al*. 1998, 2000), an objective conflict of interests between groups (*i.e.* real threat from the outgroup) and a perception of symbolic threat from the outgroup increase ethnocentrism. Our results (perceived threat, assessment of aspects of integration policy) again show different sources of threat for Estonians and non-Estonians, and consistent relations between the perceived threat and the level of ESE.

There are indirect indications in our study that the level of ESE is also related to a preferred *strategy of intergroup adjustment (acculturation)*. It seems that the majority group members with high ESE tend to choose the strategy of separation or assimilation when dealing with outgroup minorities (see question battery on minority attitudes). Persons with high ESE seem to believe in the self-sufficiency of their ingroup and, hence, they are self-distancing from the outgroup and not particularly interested in intergoup cooperation or interdependency between the groups. They reject the idea of any adjustment from the part of the majority. In our study, Estonians with high ESE are also relatively more hostile towards the ideology of cultural pluralism and intergroup harmony within the society compared to persons with low ESE.

On the other hand, minority group members with high ESE in our study tend to prefer the strategy of separation and to oppose the strategy of assimilation. Doise (1998) has analysed personal identity as a *social representation*. Our study has demonstrated that ethnic identity can be similarly conceptualised as a social representation: there is common knowledge about ethnic identity; certain organising principles rule individual positioning in relation to this common knowledge frame, and levels of ESE as variants of individual positioning on this dimension are systematically related to a set of attitudes concerning the intergroup situation in Estonia. The strength of (ethnic) identity functions here as a regulative device in the choice and maintenance of certain belief systems.

In line with the *social dominance theory* (Sidanius & Pratto 1999), we propose to consider both CSE and related beliefs as components of a system that consists of some individual predispositions, on the one hand, and external (social cultural) supporting tools (legislation, ethnic policy, social representations and cultural beliefs concerning intergroup relations, messages from the media,

actual pattern of political forces, *etc*.). This set of tools reflects particular historical and sociopolitical circumstances.

A person with the individual tendency to self-distance from the outgroups (which may be related to the emotional memory of negative experiences) encounters various sociocultural supports to his tendency in Estonia: exclusive citizenship policy, permission to express hostility towards Russians in the media, dominant interpretation of the recent history that is unfavourable to non-Estonians (depicting them as occupants and illegal immigrants, collective memory of political repressions by Soviet authorities), state policy of division of permanent population into citizens and non-citizens, dominant ideological pattern of ethnocentrism, negative images of Russians as commonplace and taken-for-granted part of background culture, *etc*. We can speculate that this set of beliefs belong to a culturally established prototype of genuine Estonian identity (cf. Huddy 2001)

A person with a neutral or positive attitude towards non-Estonians (tendency of less ingroup bias, low CSE) can find different means of sociocultural support: policy of integration of non-Estonians, norm of political correctness, ideology of human rights.

The questionnaire that we analysed was constructed on the basis of widespread beliefs circulating in the media, and it contains fragments of various legitimising myths (*e.g.* socially constructed threat from the outgroup). The results show that people with high ESE tend to prefer those legitimising myths that enhance group hierarchy (*i.e.* inequality between majority and minority groups), and people with low ESE are likely to choose hierarchy-attenuating beliefs.

Different patterns of the relationship between ESE and a set of attitudes on interethnic relations indicate that high and low ESE persons construct *different meanings of ethnic identity*. Huddy (2001) has differentiated group prototypes, core values and representations of the outgroup as the main components of the meaning of identity. She maintains that it is the meaning (strength) of collective identity and not its existence that determines its psychological consequences.

The constellation of interconnected attitudes is regarded here as an indicator of the meaning of collective identity.

We can differentiate two broad sets of societal beliefs (Bar-Tal 1999) that are consistently related to different levels of ESE. It seems that persons with low and high ESE base their beliefs on different implicit ideological assumptions. Bar-Tal and colleagues (1994) have demonstrated that the so-called doves and hawks position in conflicting intergroup relations in Israel is related to choosing different types of arguments for legitimising their beliefs (respectively, peace and morality used by 'doves' or security and historical arguments by 'hawks'). It seems that the level of ESE is similarly related to certain systematically organised beliefs about intergroup relations.

On the one hand, the tendency to perceive legitimacy and stability of the existing intergroup situation, to preserve the status quo (*e.g.* citizenship policy), self-distancing and hostility towards other ethnic groups, justification of ethnic conflicts, *etc*., enables to characterise this complex of beliefs as *conservative* or *security-orientated* (cf. Braithwaite 1997). Persons with high ESE tend to rely on 'legitimising myths' that enhance ethnic group hierarchy (cf. Sidanius & Pratto 1999). Our results indicate that persons with high ESE in both majority and minority groups tend to construct their ethnic identity as an opposition to prototypical beliefs that are attributed to the outgroup.

Both among Estonians and non-Estonians, high ESE is related to a greater differentiation of ethnic groups and to attitudes that seem to be an assertive response to extreme positions attributed to the outgroup. Here it seems appropriate to use the term 'defensively constructed high CSE' (Rahimi 1999). It seems that they have an imaginary dialogue with the outgroup, and construct their self-definition by relating it to the outgroup – very similarly to the process that has been described by Kelman (1999) as negative interdependence between two identities: perception of the other as a source of one's own negative identity elements, especially viewing oneself as a victim and perceiving threat from the outgroup. Among non-Estonians with high ESE, claims for rights are relevant identity elements. In contrast, Estonians with high ESE tend to deny the entitlement of rights to non-Estonians.

In contrast, persons with a low level of ESE tend to perceive intergroup injustice, they have a more critical attitude towards the present situation in the minority policy, greater tolerance towards minorities and a preference for intergroup harmony. Such general orientation could be characterised as *liberal* or *harmony orientated* (cf. Braithwaite 1997).

Relations between the level of ESE and liberal/conservative orientation requires further research that would test whether high ESE among Estonians is related to political conservatism and a genera-lised social dominance orientation.

CSE has different meanings and psychological implications for members of the majority and minority groups. In many cases, an asymmetric pattern of relationships between ESE and intergroup attitudes was found.

Policy implications

The results indicate that mutual recognition of different ethnic groups in Estonia is promoted by relatively low ESE and hindered by relatively high ESE. In particular, strong ESE among Estonians might be a socio-psychological barrier for respecting non-Estonians as equal social partners in contemporary Estonia. On the other hand, strong ESE among non-Estonians is a barrier to understanding the worries and threats that are widespread among Estonians. Different levels of identification with the ethnic group appear to be related to qualitatively different collective beliefs. Among Estonians the set of attitudes and beliefs that is related to a high level of ESE is rather an obstacle for the mutual integration of Estonians and non-Estonians. Strong ESE may be functional in extreme situations that require collective mobilisation, but in more stable conditions high level of ESE may be dysfunctional. In this respect, promoting other variants of collective identity (and sources of collective self-esteem), *e.g.* civic national identity instead of an ethnic national one – a kind of transcendent identity that does not threaten particularistic identities of any group (cf. Kelman 1999), might be more perspective. The revealed ingroup diversity among Estonians implies differentiated strategies in constructing a common civic identity.

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