

**Interplay of European, National and Regional Identities:
Nations between States along the New Eastern Borders of the European Union**

Series of project research reports

Reports on qualitative sub-studies

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Research Report #18-1

**ENRI-BIO:
Biographical Study**
(methodology, data, main outcomes)

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Project host and coordinator

About the ENRI-East research project (www.enri-east.net)**The Interplay of European, National and Regional Identities:****Nations between states along the new eastern borders of the European Union (ENRI-East)**

ENRI-East is a research project implemented in 2008-2011 and primarily funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Program. This international and inter-disciplinary study is aimed at a deeper understanding of the ways in which the modern European identities and regional cultures are formed and inter-communicated in the Eastern part of the European continent.

ENRI-East is a response to the shortcomings of previous research: it is the first large-scale comparative project which uses a sophisticated toolkit of various empirical methods and is based on a process-oriented theoretical approach which places empirical research into a broader historical framework.

The distinct ethno-national diversity in this region, along with the problems resulting from it was generated by dramatic shifts of borders, populations and political affiliation which have continued until today. The prevailing pattern of political geography of this part of Europe was the emergence and the dismemberment of empires, a process which created ethno-national enclaves within the boundaries of new nation states. These minorities were frequently drawn into interstate conflicts and subjected to repression, ethnic cleansing and expulsion. The subjects of interests were ethnic minorities in the supra-region "Wider Eastern Europe", i.e. the region between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, along the current geo-political "East-West" division line. Estimated 8 to 10 millions of people are affected by "ethnic splits" or minority groups, whose ethnic compatriots would constitute a titular majority in another country, some of them even on each side of this contemporary geopolitical east-west dividing border line.

The complex ENRI-East study was designed as a comprehensive set of theoretical, methodological, empirical and comparative work streams exploring the interplay of identities among the twelve ethnic minorities in the supra-region of Central and Eastern Europe. These ethnic groups are: Russians in Latvia and Lithuania, Belarusians and Ukrainians in Poland, Slovaks in Hungary, Hungarians in Slovakia and in Ukraine, Poles in Ukraine, in Belarus and in Lithuania, Belarusians in Lithuania as well as Lithuanians in Russia (Kaliningrad oblast). The project includes also a case study of Germany, where our target groups were the ethnic Germans returning to their historical homeland after the centuries of living in other European countries as well as Jewish immigrants (so called "quota refugees" who had moved to the country since 1989).

ENRI-East addresses four general research themes. The first one deals with the interplay of identities and cultures by comparing 'mother nations' and their 'residual groups abroad'. The second theme is a cross-cutting approach which addresses the nations and the states: more exactly, the attitudes and policies of 'mother nations' and 'host nations' toward the 'residual groups' and vice versa. The third research theme comprise the reality of self organization and representation of "residual groups abroad" (ethnic minorities) along the East European borderland. Finally, the last research theme of the project deals with path dependencies, historical memories, present status and expected dynamics of divided nations in Eastern Europe.

The empirical data base for ENRI-East was generated through 5 sub-studies implemented in all or several project countries:

- ENRI-VIS (Values and Identities Survey): face-to-face formalized interviews with members of 12 ethnic minority groups in eight countries, 6,800 respondents;
- ENRI-BIO: qualitative, biographical in-depth interviews with members of 12 ethnic minority groups in eight countries (144 interviews);
- ENRI-EXI: semi-structured expert interviews with governmental and non-governmental representatives of ethnic minority groups in eight countries (48 interviews);
- ENRI-WEB: online content analysis of weblogs and Internet periodicals run or maintained by ethnic minority group members;
- ENRI-MUSIC: special study on cultural identities and music; an innovative, multi-disciplinary pilot effort in Hungary and Lithuania.

The series of ENRI-East research reports(www.enri-east.net/project-results)

Main outcomes of the ENRI-East research program are summarized in the series of research papers and project reports as outlined below. The whole collection of papers will be publicly available on the project web-site by December 2011, while some papers can be accessed since September 2011.

Individual papers are written by ENRI-East experts from all project teams and the whole series is edited by the Coordinating Team at the CEASS-Center at the Institute for Advanced Studies under the guidance of the Principal Investigator Prof. Hans-Georg Heinrich and Project Coordinator Dr. Alexander Chvorostov.

Summarizing and generalizing reports

1. Theoretical and methodological backgrounds for the studies of European, national and regional identities of ethnic minorities in European borderlands (Edited by Prof. Claire Wallace and Dr. Natalia Patsiurko)
2. Interplay of European, National and Regional Identities among the ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe (main results of ENRI-East empirical program) (Edited by Prof. Hans-Georg Heinrich and Dr. Alexander Chvorostov)
3. ENRI-East Thematic Comparative papers and synopsizes of authored articles of ENRI-East experts (9 tender papers and further bibliography of project-related publications)

**Contextual and empirical reports on ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe:
(edited by respective team leaders)**

4. The Polish Minority in Belarus
5. The Slovak Minority in Hungary
6. The Russian Minority in Latvia
7. The Belarusian Minority in Lithuania
8. The Polish Minority in Lithuania
9. The Russian Minority in Lithuania
10. The Belarusian Minority in Poland
11. The Ukrainian Minority in Poland
12. The Lithuanian Minority in Russia (Kaliningrad oblast)
13. The Hungarian Minority in Slovakia
14. The Hungarian Minority in Ukraine
15. The Polish Minority in Ukraine
16. Special Case Study Germany

Series of empirical survey reports:

17. ENRI-VIS: Values and Identities Survey
 - o Methodology and implementation of ENRI-VIS (Technical report)
 - o ENRI-VIS Reference book (major cross-tabulations and coding details)
18. Qualitative sub-studies of ENRI-East project (methodological and technical reports)
 - o Methodological report on Biographical Interviews (ENRI-BIO)
 - o Methodological report on Expert Interviews and data base description (ENRI-EXI)
 - o Methodological report on the pilot study on Musical cultures and identities (ENRI-MUSIC)
 - o Methodological report and main findings of the Pilot study of web-spaces (ENRI-WEB)

Disclaimer:

The treatment of historical, statistical and sociological data and facts, their scientific accuracy and the interpretations as well as the writing style are the sole responsibility of the authors of individual contributions and chapters published in the ENRI Research Papers. The positions and opinions of the project coordinator and of the editors of ENRI-East series of research papers as well as of the ENRI-East consortium as a whole may not necessarily be the same. By no means may the contents of the research papers be considered as the position of the European Commission.

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http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ssh/home_en.html

http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/index_en.html

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ABOUT THE STUDY

1.1 General Methodological Approach: Aims and Research Questions of the ENRI-East Biographical study

a. *Objectives of the ENRI-East biographical study*

The ENRI-East biographical study was one of five qualitative studies conducted in the project. It was designed in the third year of the project following completion and primary analysis of the quantitative survey of the 12 ethnic minorities. Qualitative biographical interviews with informants from these ethnic minorities were designed to complement data collected through literature and document analysis, quantitative survey and other qualitative studies in the project. The biographical study aimed to provide a better understanding of the meaning system of ethnic self-identification and the making of individual identities, including the balance between regional, national and European identification. It was also aimed at understanding at how geopolitical changes in Eastern and Central European countries were reflected in this process.

As described in the project's Description of Work, the research questions were:

- What does it mean to be European, belonging to a nation or region for the specified groups?
- What are the general perceptions of Europe and nations in these countries with respect to the own nationality?
- What are the images of Europe, nations and nation-states among the specified groups?
- What is the interplay between regional, national and supranational self-identification of these people, as in the EU-CIS borderlands?
- What are the practices, narratives and discourses concerning compatibility and incompatibility of identities under the condition of belonging to a minority in these countries?
- Under what conditions do strong national identities prevail and under what conditions do people claim more particular (regional) or universal (European, cosmopolitan) identities?
- How are identities constructed in order to fulfil a possible need of differentiation between Europe, the nation and the region?

Primary results from the quantitative ENRI-VIS study as well as the Cultural Identities and Music pilot study enabled us to further nuance some of the above questions, creating a more clearly defined focus to the study, specifically how ethnic identities are formed and how these identities are reflected upon in the informants' life-stories.

b. *Research Questions for the ENRI-East Biographical Interviews*

- How do people from ethnic minorities describe their ethnic origin and nationality? (How do they relate their own identities to the more general ones of the group? How have these emerged or changed? Have people become 'mobilised' in their national identities or are they passive? If they are mobilised, how did this come about? What is the role of the kin-nation in defining these national identities and how do people feel about the kin-nation? Are there gender differences in how people relate to their ethnic origins?)
- What are the European, regional, and national identities of minority groups? (Here we focused upon what their identities are, how they have changed and what tensions there

might be between regional and national identities, as well as to what extent the minority identities are strengthening or weakening?)

- What is the role of locality in ethnic/national/European self-identification? (How do people think about where they live and where they were born? Do they have a sense of belonging to that place?)
- What is the role of geopolitical changes in ethnic minorities' identifications? (This included historical changes, war, deportation, the impact of 1989 and the enlargement of the EU. The aim was to find out how personal biographies are linked to larger historical processes of change)
- What are the main channels for forming the cultural identities of various generations? (This included the way in which identities are formed, for example through language, dialect, music, songs, food, poetry and literature, mass media, rituals, faith, education and how are these linked to gender etc.)

c. *Conceptual note on the Methodology*¹

Methodology for the biographical study was developed within the conceptual framework of the European biographical approach. Further development of the biographical method in European social sciences over the last three decades, the active exchanges among sociologists who use this method to study individual identities and activities of the ESA Research network 3 (RN03) “Biographical perspectives of the European societies”, enabled us to discuss our approach to the methodology of the ENRI-East biographical study. The main advantage of applying biographical method in the qualitative study of identities of ethnic minorities was that the main focus of the study was an individual’s life course and experiences at different stages of that life course, progressing from childhood to adolescence and into adult life and biographical methods are widely used in disciplines where the object of study is an individual and the events of their life. In sociological research into developing and changing identities affected by significant historic and social changes, as experienced by people in Eastern European countries, these methods have been applied to understand individual accounts of life experience within contemporary cultural and structural settings. This form of research was designed to shadow the major social changes that were occurring beyond the mere broad social level. Biographical research allows for the perception of these major social shifts through its analysis of the interpretation of new experiences by individuals, within families, small groups and institutions. (Roberts 2002; Chamberlayne, Bornat and Wengraf 2000; Semenova 1998).

The biographical approach rests on the view of individuals as creators of the meanings that form the basis of their everyday lives. Individuals then act according to meanings through which they make sense of social existence. At its most basic level, this realism asserts that there is some objective knowledge of reality: an empirical, material basis for individual experience, stories reflecting a lived reality (Roberts 2002).

Although the main method of data collection was the biographical interviews, it was necessary to consider adding elements of structured thematic-based dialogue with an individual for a certain period of time. Biographical interviews also accommodated conversation about other available “life course or personal documents” (Plummer 1990, Roberts 2002, Semenova 1998). These in our study included pictures, notes, memoirs, newspaper cuttings, flags, coins, coats of arms and other national symbols

¹ The author of this paper would particularly like to acknowledge contributions from the University of Aberdeen team, Prof. Claire Wallace, Kathryn Vincent, Austrian team (Natalia Waechter), Belarusian (Natalia Veremeeva, Oksana Ivaniuto), Lithuanian (Kristina Sliavaite), Latvian (Oksana Zabko) and Ukrainian (Kseniya Kizilova) teams during the early stages of the ENRI-BIO study, which enabled us to adjust the methodology and technique of the biographical interviews.

and items that shed light on the individual's life course. Such materials revive memories and stories about ourselves that can be retold and may intimately connect with self-identity (Roberts, 2002). Even other forms of writing not usually examined, such as curricula vitae and internet web pages were also recommended for consideration by the national teams. The teams also collected peoples' publications and autobiographies, because the main characteristic feature of such documents is that individuals describe their life stories in their own words. Additional factual and subjective information was included, covering other people's photographs and videos, particularly of families, relatives and friends.

The biographical interviews aimed at decoding meanings in the system of informants' self-identification and therefore complemented findings from other sources of information in the ENRI-East study. Since the biographical interviews were conducted in the second half of the project, and hence at a time when most of the data (documents, quantitative and qualitative data) had been collected, the qualitative interviews were intended to be used to create the narrative that combines other information in a meaningful way. The choice of the biographical approach for the methodology for qualitative in-depth interviews was chosen instead for the following reasons:

- The object of our study - identities which are individual, multiple and floating in nature - require more in-depth knowledge about their past, present and future
- The fact that significant historical events in Eastern Europe created ethnic minorities necessitates the linking of macro and micro levels of analysis
- Significant generational differences in ethnic self-identification were identified in other studies in European countries

1.2 Method of data collection

a. *Language*

The interviews were conducted in the language in which informants felt most comfortable. This did not exclude the interviewing of ethnic minority representatives in the official language of the country where they lived or any dialect they might choose. For example, Russians in Lithuania had a preference for being interviewed in Lithuanian, whereas generally, the younger generation of informants chose the official language of the country where the interview took place. Interviewers noted dialects and languages and any shifts during the interviews in their reports.

b. *Selection of informants for biographical interviews*

The ENRI-East biographical interviews were conducted with selected informants from 8 Eastern and Central EU countries and Eastern European non-EU countries, and covered 12 ethnic minorities in total. Biographical interviews took place in Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia.

These interviews involved Russians, Belarusians and Poles in Lithuania; Russians in Latvia, Ukrainians and Belarusians in Poland, Slovaks in Hungary, Hungarians in Slovakia, Poles in Belarus; Poles and Hungarians in Ukraine, and Lithuanians in Russia (Kaliningradskaya oblast). The interviews took place in the following locations:

- **Latvia:** interviews were carried out in Riga, Rēzekne and Daugavpils. The Russian and Latvian populations in these areas are roughly equal.
- **Lithuania:** Lithuanian interviews were undertaken in and around Vilnius, a very multi-cultural city, whose population includes large numbers of Poles, Russians and Belarusians.

- **Belarus:** Interviews took place in the Grodno region and Minsk. In the Grodno region about 60% of the population is Belarusian with a strong Polish community of around 25% of the population. In Minsk, Russians are the largest minority group.
- **Ukraine:** Hungarian interviews were mostly conducted around the Zakarpattya region where Hungarians constitute about 12% of the population. Polish interviews were mostly in the Zhitomir Oblast, an area of Ukraine with the largest Polish minority (about 3.7%).
- **Hungary:** Hungarian interviews were carried out in Budapest, and in Tótkomlós, which has a significant Slovak minority.
- **Poland:** Polish interviews were carried out in the Podlaskie province, which is one of the most diverse of all Polish provinces.
- **Russia:** interviews were carried out in the city of Kaliningrad (former Eastern Prussian Königsberg), which has significant Belarusian, Ukrainian and Lithuanian ethnic communities.

Table 1: Geographical coverage of the ENRI-East Biographical study

Region	Country of Residence	Ethnic Minority
Baltic States	Lithuania	Russians
		Belarusians
		Poles
	Latvia	Russians
East Central Europe	Poland	Ukrainians
		Belarusians
	Hungary	Slovaks
	Slovakia	Hungarians
Non-EU Eastern Europe	Belarus	Poles
	Ukraine	Hungarians
		Poles
	Russia (Kgd. Oblast)	Lithuanians

The main objective of the selection of informants was to sample a variety of concepts of ethnic self-identification rather than people. Therefore, by using a heterogeneous sample regarding citizenship, ethnicity, location, gender and age group we aimed to ensure that it represented the diversity of opinions on the subject matter and provided insight into our research questions. Additionally, we covered some of the same localities used in the quantitative survey. Informants from the earlier quantitative survey (ENRI-VIS) and musical survey were also successfully approached again for a second involvement in the study in Hungary.

The selected informants represented three generations of people:

- The younger generation who were born and brought up in the post-communist era (16-22)
- The middle generation who experienced the transition from the post-war to communist era and significant geo-political, economic, social and cultural changes (35-60)
- The older generation who experienced the Second World War and post-war period (65+)

The selection was split evenly between male and female informants on the assumption that cultural and family identities have significant gender differences. Informants were selected from the three generations of the ethnic minority populations on the basis of self-identification with certain ethnic minorities.

Field Work²

Due to the complexity of the design method for biographical interviews, formal training of field work leaders was organised prior to the main field work following the pilot study, and was conducted in Belarus. A manual with detailed instructions for the interviewer's reference was also produced. The manual was placed on the ENRI-East website and was available for downloading. Supporting forms (brochures, letters of consent, family tree charts, map of Europe) were also available for downloading from the ENRI-East website.

² The author of this paper would like to particularly acknowledge contribution from Dr Natalka Patsiurko, University of Aberdeen for her input into implementation of the biographical interviews in Poland and Ukraine and maintenance of the high quality standards of interviewing across the ENRI-East team.

2 REFLECTION OF THE HISTORICAL EVENTS IN THE INFORMANTS' NARRATIVES

We planned to conduct 12 interviews per ethnic group, which would have resulted in 144 being conducted. In actuality 153 were conducted, exceeding the initial projection. This was due to some teams having to interview additional number of informants because of a variety of problems with the initial interviews conducted. Each interview was unique because of how the interviewers' interviewing techniques developed. Most started with an ice-breaker question such as:

- How long have you been living here?
- What was your childhood memory about the place?
- How has it changed since that time?

This opening was followed by an examination of the informants' life story starting from their place of birth before continuing into themes defined by the ENRI-East experts. The informants were asked to summarise their biography, starting from place of birth and childhood memories, and to cover the issues outlined below. We have already emphasized the fact that it was important that informants were allowed to tell their own story, so the topics suggested to the interviewers were more of a checklist to explore various issues. If the respondent covered the issues in their story it was not necessary to ask additional checklist questions.

However, as our practical experience of conducting interviews showed, clarification or probes were required. A key consideration was how major historical events had impacted on the biography of each respondent.

a. *Ethnic origin*

We have emphasized the difference between ethnic origin and nationality. We were aware that if informants were asked about their nationality we were likely to receive an answer concerning their citizenship, which was most likely to be the country where they lived, and so the question was related to ethnic origin rather than nationality. Nationality (citizenship) issues did however become apparent over the course of the interviews.

One of the ways used to approach issues of ethnic origin was to direct the informants into a talk about their family background, particularly their parents, grandparents and spousal family. Areas focused on were the languages spoken and ethnic backgrounds of these family groups. Use of prepared templates of family trees proved to be successful in "locating" family "roots" and "branches".

One of the key indicators of ethnic origin is language. The informants were therefore asked about their mother tongue:

Example of probes:

- What languages were spoken within your family when you were young?
- What languages do you speak now (at home, university, work place, with friends, with neighbours)?
- How has language use changed since you were little, and are you happy with these changes?
- Interviewers also asked what other languages the person spoke and to whom they usually spoke these languages

b. *Faith*

Faith and religious beliefs are considered to be significant markers of ethnic identity in Central and Eastern European countries, both when the group is resident in its kin-nation and in a host nation. Decades of official atheism in the countries of former Soviet Union and the diminished role of the church in Eastern and Central European countries was taken into account when this layer of the interviews was planned. The focus was placed on people's description of their religious belief and faith. Identification of the places and language of worship were important dimensions in the biographical interview, as well the discussion of religious occasions and festivals attended by the informants. It was noted in the interviews that "faith" can refer to not only a spiritual community but also to a physical building.

c. *Attitudes towards the place where they live*

The aim of this part of the interviews was to investigate the ethnic minorities' sense of place and belonging, particularly concerning how important the particular locality was in the formation of their ethnic identity.

Example of probes:

- What do you like as... living in...? What don't you like and why?
- What are the best and worst things about living where you live?
- How would you rate living there overall?
- How has your experience of living in this place changed?
- If you could choose to go (with or without your family) to a different place or country, where would you go?

d. *Attitudes towards education and employment*

Quality of education is an important issue for the representatives of ethnic minorities. Areas of particular note were the availability of education in the language of the given ethnic minority and the quality of acquired education and skills. Probes were designed to obtain more detailed and precise information about the quality and accessibility of education for respondents and their children and grandchildren. We envisioned that it might be possible to discover the presence of discrimination or suffered any disadvantages on the basis of ethnic origin.

Example of probes:

- How do you feel about the education that was provided for you when you were younger?
- What would you like to have been different about it?
- How do you feel about the education that is provided for your children and grandchildren?
- What would you like to be different about it?
- What should be done to improve it?

e. *Experience of ethnic tensions*

The interviews were aimed at discovering occurrences and the nature of ethnic tensions as experiences of the representatives of ethnic minorities, and a particularly subjective type of experience: Feelings of such tensions could not be accurately recorded by using structured questions because very often such tensions are highly contextualised. This context plays an important role in

understanding the nature and reasoning behind tensions between minority groups and the majority population, and the balance between objective and subjective perception of ethnic tensions in ethnic minorities.

Time-related context of ethnic tensions is another dimension that is commonly difficult to identify and reflect upon. This is because of the limits of human memory in recollecting these events as being part of experience or something of a more generalised knowledge from the locality or region which they could have knowledge of through media and other means of communication.

Example of probes:

- Have you ever felt discriminated against because to your ethnicity? (describe these experiences)
- Have you heard of others feeling discriminated against? (describe)
- How do you think your ethnic group is treated in general in this country?

f. *Relationship with the informants' kin-nation (that of their ethnic origin)*

This part of the study sought to find out whether the respondents felt themselves to be symbolically part of the kin-nation. Though this relationship could be measured by quantitative measures, the attachment to the kin-nation is a more emotional or “imagined” attachment, and therefore more effectively addressed through qualitative approaches.

Examples of probes:

- Have you ever visited the kin-nation?
- What did they think about it?
- Do you have relatives or friends there?

This issue was complicated by the fact that some of the informants had neither migrated nor moved to their current place of residence, nor came from ethnically-mixed families.

g. *European identity*

Since it is rather difficult to ask about this issue directly, the interviewers showed the informants the map of Europe and ask where their primary, secondary and tertiary identity lay (3 circles marked 1, 2 and 3). These maps formed part of the interview documentation.

Examples of probes:

- You said you would describe yourself as being from... What does it mean to you?
- What is the next largest region that you belong to? What does it mean to you? And the next largest? (Keep asking until Europe or World). Ask anyway:
- What does it mean to you to be European? Satisfaction with/criticism toward the current political map of Europe / or your province / district:
- You said earlier that you were ‘XXXX-ish’ or partly ‘XXXX-ish’. If you had to choose, do you feel more ‘XXX-ish’ or more European? Why do you say that?

The interviewers sought to explore attitudes towards the European Union and asked about the more recent enlargement of the EU which affected the country of their residence (in the case of Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) or their kin-nation state (in the case of Belarus, Russian and Ukraine). The interviewers addressed and this enlargement it had affected the informants, as well

as whether they saw advantages or disadvantages for themselves and/or for their ethnic group in EU enlargement.

h. Civil society participation and citizens' rights

The interviewers focused on the informants' participation in local, regional, national and international civil society organizations. Informants were asked to describe the nature of those organizations and their role in them. Of particular interest was whether the respondents were active in their ethnic association, as well as their views on ethnic related associations, be they cultural or political. Examples of political participation included political parties and associations, demonstrations and political rallies.

Examples of probes:

- When did you last participate in the elections: local, regional, national, European?
- Who/what did you vote for?
- Do you support political parties representing your ethnic minority? If so, why?
- Are you part of any groups, clubs or societies? (Probe: if so are these ethnic organizations or ethnically homogenous organisations?)
- How would you describe a typical member of this group?

The study also sought to find out how far there had been mobilization of the ethnic groups, particularly through politics or cultural organizations. The interviewers therefore sought to discover how the respondents had been involved in these mobilizations and how such participation affected their attitudes towards their ethnicity.

i. Lifestyle

As part of the interview, informants were asked about their lifestyles and interests in order to investigate the cultural channels through which ethnic identities are constructed.

Examples of probes:

- What is your favourite piece of music and how does it make you feel? Do musical preferences pass from generation to generation in the same family? Who plays a more important role in passing on musical preferences: parents, grandparents; school, the church, or anyone else?
- What is your favourite food? What is your family's favourite food?
- Sports and leisure activities: What is/are your favourite sport/s and what do you enjoy about them most?
- Favourite sports teams/clubs
- Other hobbies: literature, music, dancing, hiking, etc

j. Travel

We intended to find out the respondent's experience of travel and how changes in national boundaries, such as joining the EU, had made a difference. Our approach was based on the assumption that people who travel widely generally have stronger European identities.

Examples of probes:

- Is this the case with these informants?
- Perhaps the enlargement of the EU has actually made travel more difficult for them?
- Which places do they travel to (eastwards? westwards?) and what is the purpose of their travelling (to study? holiday? to find work?).
- Where would they like to travel and why?

k. *Completing an interview*

After the end of the interview the interviewees were thanked and presented with a gift. A contact number was provided for the local research group in case they would like to contact the group to provide an update on what they said. We did expect this to be used, but there had been such instances in the past and this was therefore taken into account in the current study.

3 DATABASE OF THE ENRI-EAST BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

a. *Anonymization and reporting*

The creation of the biographical interview data base was conducted in several stages. After interviews were transcribed (first in their original language), they were checked for compliance with the requirements as set out in the manual. When necessary, additional interviewing was conducted with the same informants in order to complete each interview. Approved and checked transcripts were then anonymised, translated into English by the local teams and stored a secure online storage facility. This was updated daily by the Oxford XXI and University of Aberdeen researchers.

There was a significant issue surrounding which documents could be submitted for storage and consequent use by the consortium. Original records from the interviews which included informants' names, audio files, initial transcripts and family trees, were required to be destroyed by the national teams' leaders after the study was completed. In the written consent forms collected from informants, the informants' allowed the National organisations to use the data only for scientific purposes.

Due to the impossibility of making audio files anonymous we discontinued the request for MP3 files from the reporting requirement. No audio files were required for any centralised storage and were kept by the national research teams. In addition to the transcripts of the biographical interviews in local languages and English, the local teams collected additional material such as newspaper cuttings, photographs and pictures of objects which were of significance to the interviewees, such as national flags, coats of arms, etc.

Transcripts and additional materials had to be moved from centralised online storage to the ENRI-East website, where they remained password-protected and stored until the end of the project. Social scientists and other researchers were required to make official requests to the ENRI-East Project Coordinator in order to download materials for further scientific use beyond the completion of the project.

b. *Database description*

Of the 153 interviews conducted, 139 transcripts were downloaded to the ENRI-BIO database. A summary description of this database is given in the table below:

8 countries	12 groups	Informants per group	Informants per country	Transcripts in the data base
1. Lithuania	Russians ru(LT)	12	36	12
	Belarusians by(LT)	12		12
	Poles pl(LT)	12		12
2. Latvia	Russians ru(LV)	12	12	12
3. Poland	Ukrainians ua(PL)	12	24	11
	Belarusians by(PL)	12		11
4. Hungary	Slovaks sk(HU)	12	12	12
5. Slovakia	Hungarians hu(SK)	18	18	12
6. Belarus	Poles pl(BY)	12	12	12
7. Ukraine	Hungarians hu(UA)	13	27	13
	Poles pl(UA)	14		12
8. Russia (Kgd. Oblast)	Lithuanians lt(RU)	12	12	8
Total number of interviews		153	153	139

4 MAIN OUTCOMES OF ENRI-EAST BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

4.1 Design and field work organization of the comparative biographical study

The ENRI-BIO study proved to be a successful element in the WP5 Qualitative studies. The design team received valuable contributions from almost all national partners in the ENRI-East project. This enabled the development of a sound methodology for biographical interviews and a field work manual, which reflected upon the specific research objective of the ENRI-East project.

Despite the generally successful field work, we nevertheless have to acknowledge some difficulties encountered by the ENRI-BIO team, which must be taken into account by international researchers embarking on international comparative biographical studies. In order to maintain a high standard of quality over all collected interviews, we concluded that some of the interviews were of a much lower standard compared to the rest and had to be replaced. Following this decision, some of the interviews were replaced with new interviews conducted by the national teams and the fieldwork was successfully completed: a number of additional interviews, 8 in total, with ethnic Hungarians were conducted in Slovakia under the general supervision of the University of Aberdeen. The ENRI-task force team BIOG Team also proposed to recommence some biographical work in Kaliningradskaya Oblast in order to conduct four more biographical interviews. However, this proposal was not accepted by the Russian national team and only 8 interviews out of the planned 12 interviews were included in the ENRI-BIO database. The rest of the interviews remain in the possession of the Russian national team for further analysis.

Our general observation is that the consortium must allocate significantly more time to discuss the methodology of biographical studies and particularly those which involve a comparative dimension. The biographical method is a complex method of qualitative studies and in order to be implemented successfully it requires a significant period of discussion among the partners in order to clarify its scope and standards to the single detail. Unfortunately, such time was not available on this occasion. Setting of a biographical study Task force team by Coordinator was one of the contributing elements of successful implementation of the biographical study in 8 participating countries, but its work could only partially compensate for insufficient resources available for extended training.

Nonetheless, these difficulties presented only a minor issue when compared to the generally high quality of collected data.

4.2 Contribution to the ENRI-East study

Use of the biographical method in the ENRI-East qualitative module proved to be very successful. It contributed to the main study within the theoretical framework of the project and also produced a unique database for further analysis of the identities of ethnic minorities in the ENRI-East countries.

The ENRI-East biographical study was one of the 5 qualitative studies conducted among the 12 ethnic minority populations. It was designed to obtain further insights into the meaning systems of self-identified ethnic origin, nationality, citizenship and, in a broader sense, of belonging as reflected in the biographical accounts of the respondents from three generations of ethnic minority populations.

The method of the semi-structured biographical interview was designed to collect more in-depth information concerning the way respondents described and perceived their multiple-identities. The method was also designed to clarify what were some unusual findings from the quantitative surveys

conducted previously. This therefore enabled the researchers to reveal the multi-dimensional nature of the identities of ethnic minorities in Eastern European countries.

The following provides a summary of the findings that contributed to the ENRI-East study by providing a glimpse into how some Eastern European minorities perceived their own identities.

a. *European identity*

ENRI biographical study showed that there were significant disparities across the geographical research area.

In the case of ethnic minorities in Poland, Belarusians had a relatively well-developed sense of European identity, with 8 out of 11 informants declaring that they felt European in some way. In contrast, most Ukrainians in Poland did not seem to identify strongly with Europe or place any importance on being part of the EU. This pertained despite both Belarusian and Ukrainian interviewees seeming to mostly view Europe as equal to the European Union.

The research did however find that views within ethnic minorities were more varied in some countries, with Slovaks in Hungary being just one example of this. Among this group, some respondents stated that they felt distinctly European, others mentioned a Central European identity, and several rejected European identity completely. Views on the EU were also mixed: all agreed that it was beneficial for travel, but some were sceptical as to whether it had any other benefits.

Central to these considerations were the perceptions of how the informants classified 'Europe'. For example, taking the Belarusian minority in Lithuania whether respondents saw themselves as a resident of Europe as a geographical region as well as a citizen of Europe as a political entity was a strong indicator for whether they considered themselves 'European' generally. This could explain why the Ukrainian minority in Poland mentioned above has a weak European identity: for the majority, Europe was equated with the European Union.

In addition to this, many informants provided a definition of 'Europe' or 'European' that went well beyond the geographical and political considerations above. This, again taking the case of Belarusians in Lithuania, included Christianity, advanced technologies and science, and these added dimensions meant that the strength of some respondents' identification with Europe was influenced by a wide range of often counteracting factors. Across a number of minorities, the idea of Europe being defined in terms of common Christian values was very prominent. Further, taking again the case of the Belarusian minority in Poland, this complexity meant that the great majority of informants declared that they felt European in *some* way. Questions of European identity can therefore be considered complex and multifaceted in the manner that national and regional identity are, as discussed below.

b. *National identity – relationship to country of residence*

National identity was firstly addressed through analysing respondents' relationship to country of residence. Similarly to the aforementioned questions of European identity, the study found a variety of attitudes to country of residence expressed within many ethnic minority groups.

Considering again the case of Poland, the study made some interesting findings that contributed to the wider work of the ENRI-East project: among Belarusians in Poland, attitudes towards national identity ranged from a Polish nationality enriched by Belarusian origins to outright rejection of identification as Polish. Ukrainians in Poland, however, were more united in their feelings on the matter; all interviewees identified themselves as Ukrainian but still viewed Poland as their homeland. The relationship to the country of residence was clear for most Ukrainian respondents in Poland: they felt connected to Poland and its tradition and treated their responsibilities as Polish citizens very seriously. Some respondents in the study even felt that they were better Polish citizens than native

Poles. It seems, then, that in this case Polish roots are generally less important but can coexist with Ukrainian roots.

In the opposite case of the Polish minority in Ukraine: although the minority has evidently assimilated quite extensively, the Polish identity is considered a fixed rather than temporal phenomenon. Despite assimilation, the Polish identity remains very strong. What this indicates that a highly positive relationship to the country of residence – shows by the respondents affirming their happiness with living in the country – does not entail impacts ethnic self-identification within that group.

However, it should be noted that the findings among ethnic minority groups in Poland did not indicate wider regional trends. This is demonstrated in the Slovak minority in Hungary. Within this group most identified themselves as Slovaks living in Hungary, with only one respondent of the 12 identifying themselves as Hungarian. Yet despite this, none of the respondents actually wanted to live in Slovakia. What can be concluded, therefore, is that relationships in the region between ethnic minorities and their countries of residence are highly complex.

The Lithuanian minority in Kaliningrad also provided a counterexample to the trend that had seemed to emerge. Within this group some respondents considered themselves to be Russian in the fullest sense, questioning how it could be otherwise given the extent of cultural and linguistic assimilation that had taken place and the lack of a direct personal connection to Lithuania.

What should be noted is that identification with the country of residence was much stronger in cases where facets of national identity were considered to overlap with other key areas such as religion. For example, among the Polish minority in Lithuania, the strength of the group's regional and particularly Catholic identity created a strong relationship to the country of residence because of the strong connection considered to hold between Catholicism and the Lithuanian nation.

c. National identity – relationship to country of origin

National identity was also analysed through the relationships ethnic minority groups had with their “mother” country.

In Poland, both Belarusian and Ukrainian minority groups pointed to their orthodox faith and their language as being the key defining features of their national identities. No respondents from either group viewed their mother country as a homeland or expressed any wish to live there.

Interestingly, some respondents from both groups mentioned difficulties in actually identifying with their mother country. In the case of the Belarusians in Poland this was due to the image of Belarus as being an authoritarian regime. For the Ukrainians the primary reason was that Ukraine is relatively poor and underdeveloped compared to Poland. This lack of connection to the kin-nation pertained among the Hungarian minority in Ukraine, where due to the complex historical development of that minority, they consider themselves the people of Transcarpathia³, rather than of Hungary.

A significant component of national identity for both groups was music from the country of origin, indicated by the fact that many respondents mentioned their involvement in folk dancing and singing.

The research found that Slovaks in Hungary should not be considered isolated from the country of origin because the overwhelming majority regularly return to Slovakia. However, the frequency of return is not a strong indicator for the strength of relationship with the country of origin, shown by the

³ The name “Transcarpathia” is still in the focus of political discourse in Slovakia and Hungary and the use of this term caused a lot of debates in the ENRI-East consortium. The name of the region was mentioned by the informants in the biographical narratives and therefore had to be acknowledged on the analysis.

fact that many respondents said they felt like outsiders when they returned to Slovakia. Furthermore, several informants mentioned that they had heard of Hungarians experiencing discrimination in Slovakia, and one respondent avoided returning to the country for this reason. The weakness of this connection was also demonstrated by the Russian minority in Latvia. Some informants in this group identified strongly with Russia despite never having been there.

This complex relationship is demonstrated in the opposite case of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. The informants in this group interestingly made a distinction between the Hungarian identity of a Hungarian national, and their own Hungarian identity, noting that the latter was not separate from Slovakia, but instead, residing in Slovakia has made their Hungarian identity distinct. Considering the case of the Polish minority in Belarus, the relationship to the country of origin also played an intermediate role in the engendering of a European identity. This ethnic minority group considered Poland to be part of Europe, and all respondents in the group considered themselves to be very much Polish, they considered themselves European despite the lack of what could be considered a direct connection to what they considered Europe to be. That their considerations of Polish identity contained elements of language, religion and general mentality demonstrates the complex interplay between a number of different factors influencing ethnic self-identification.

d. Regional Identity

The biographical research did not only address the supranational and national levels of identity, but also analysed regional identity. The findings showed that in some cases, regional and community attachments played an important role in developing respondents' attitudes towards their identity.

For both Belarusians and Ukrainians in Poland, the older generation typically had a strong sense of attachment to their local community. This attitude was still present in the younger generations, although less common. One Belarusian respondent commented that particularly in the case of the older Belarusian generation, regional identity included Ukrainian components, which is clear evidence of the importance of regional and community dynamics. Interestingly, some Belarusian dialects are in fact a mixture of Belarusian, Ukrainian and Polish expressions.

The local focus of regional identity was reiterated by the Polish minority in Lithuania, who collectively demonstrated a very strong regional identity. Many of the respondents from this minority group saw the city of Vilnius and the wider region – rather than Poland or Lithuania – as their homeland. The key reasons provided for this were that the community and family networks develop extensive emotional bonds to the local region that are not matched at the national or supranational levels.

Almost all Slovaks in Hungary mentioned some level of regional identity arising from living in a region highly populated with Slovaks. Importantly, however, this was considered separate from their Slovak identity. This point was keenly demonstrated by the responses from residents of Tótkomlos (Hungary) noting that the food they prepared, referred to as being traditionally Slovak food don't even exist in Slovakia. Another kind of regional identity frequently seen among the Slovaks in Hungary was of being a Central European, constituting a pan-national identity.

Among some ethnic minorities, notions of regional identity were particularly complex, as respondents identified with different regions. This was the case among the Russian minority in Lithuania, among which regional identification included references to Russia, Belorussia, other territories inhabited by Slavs (such as Ukraine and Poland) and even Europe. This range of regions with which this minority group identified made analysis of the strength of that group's collective regional identity highly problematic.

4.3 Policy implications

The biographical interviews revealed some practical insights into notions of both pan-European and intra-country social cohesion which, at the policy level, are particularly relevant to the EU's mandate on social cohesion. These findings were a product of the micro-level/bottom up approach in that they arose from semi-structured biographical conversations and could not be ascertained from macro-level surveys or purely quantitative analysis. Nonetheless, the findings from the bottom-up approach can certainly be applied to a much larger context and analysed on a greater scale.

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ANNEX: PROJECT'S EMPIRICAL DATA BASES AND RULES OF ACCESS

1. Overview of empirical data sets produced within the frameworks of ENRI-East

Description of exploitable foreground	Confidential	Foreseen embargo date	Exploitable product(s) or measure(s)	Timetable, commercial or any other use	Patents or other IPR exploitation	Owner & Other Beneficiary(s) involved
Values and Identity Survey (ENRI-VIS)	Yes	Till October 2015	Survey manual, sampling tables, SPSS data file, Code & reference book; technical report	Starting from 2012	Access to database only in cooperation with project partners	Project consortium (all beneficiaries)
Biographical Interviews (ENRI-BIO)	Yes		Methodology and survey tools; survey manual; transcripts of interviews in original languages; accompanying information and files; summaries or translations in English; technical report			
Expert interviews (ENRI-EXI)	yes					

2. General rules of access to and exploitation of ENRI-East empirical data bases

The exploitable foreground of the project consists of different data bases:

- ENRI-VIS: quantitative data base, 6800 respondents of the ethnic minority groups
- ENRI-BIO: 144 qualitative, biographical interviews with members of the ethnic minority groups
- ENRI-EXI: 40 qualitative expert interviews with representatives of NGOs, mass media and governmental officials

The data is exclusively held for the use of the ENRI-East consortium for three years after the end date of the project after which time they will be made generally available to a wider public to conditions explained below.

ENRI qualitative interviews (expert interviews and biographical interviews) are stored on a password secured online storage platform (interview transcripts, technical reports, related documents and graphic files) until three years after the end of the project. Every project team leader has access to this platform. The co-ordinating team will then transfer the data set to an appropriate institution for scientific data bases.

The quantitative data base will be available for all consortium members after the closure of the project as before. Access is guaranteed through the ENRI-East website in the member section until three years after

the project. The co-ordinating team will then transfer the data set to an appropriate institution for scientific data bases.

Access rights may be granted to third parties royalty-free or to fair and reasonable conditions. All requests for access rights shall be made in writing to the co-ordinator, who will then initiate further actions. The granting of access rights to third parties is conditional on the acceptance of co-authorship of at least one party of the ENRI-East consortium, including ensuring that data will be used only for the intended purpose and that appropriate confidentiality obligations are in place.

Within the next years and beyond the foreground will mainly be exploited in form of publications in academic journals. First analyses and interpretations are included in the ENRI-East reports on every minority and available in the ENRI-East Working Paper Series on the project website (<http://www.enri-east.net/project-results>).

The project ENRI-East, a cross-national study of trans-boundary social and ethnic groups in Europe did not create any foreground which leads to patents, trademarks, registered designs or the like, except the acknowledged publications in peer-reviewed journals and a variety of other media sources.