

**МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ, ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ
И ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКОЕ БЛАГОПОЛУЧИЕ:
ПОСТСОВЕТСКИЙ ОПЫТ**
*INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS, IDENTITIES
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING:
POST-SOVIET EXPERIENCES*

**Intercultural relations, identities, psychological well-being:
post-communist experience**

Almost 30 years have passed since the dissolution of the USSR into 15 independent states in 1991. About 25 million Russians remained to live in former Soviet republics with different trajectories of post-Soviet development and different ideologies for managing cultural diversity. During these 30 years, a new generation of Russians and representatives of “titular” population of these states grew up and went through socialization. Today, more than 16 million Russians live in post-Soviet countries, outside of Russia. Due to the closedness of many countries and their political, cultural and social distancing from Russia, relatively little is known about the changes in social identities of Russians and “titular” residents belonging to Soviet and Post-Soviet generations.

The post-Soviet space is a semi-mythical culturally diverse field where a unique natural “experiment” was carried out for 70 years aimed to create a huge multicultural state (USSR), in which everyone had a single national identity (“Soviet”) while maintaining ethnic identity and developing ethnic culture. After the completion of this “experiment”, few attempts were made to scientifically generalize and empirically understand those sociocultural processes that continue to take place in the post-Soviet space. It remains unclear whether there still exists some kind of unity at the level of identities, attitudes, social capital among the citizens of the former USSR, and how is it manifested? How do independent post-Soviet states cope with the challenges of multiculturalism? What dominant ideologies prevail in different countries? How do they affect the identity, acculturation, and well-being of Russians living in these countries?

The aim of this thematic issue is to introduce the readers to the processes of mutual acculturation of Russians and “titular” residents in the changed sociocultural conditions of post-Soviet countries. How changes of status from ethnic majority to minority and vice versa are experienced? Whether interethnic boundaries are shifting and cultural distance with Russia and country of residence is changing? What intergroup ideologies are supported in these countries and how? How “bonding” (intra-ethnic) or “bridging” (interethnic) social capital is being formed? What are mutual intercultural attitudes of Russian and “titular” population of post-Soviet republics? What role does the perceived threat play in the psychological well-being of representatives of each generation? What is the role of Russian diaspora in post-Soviet space? What is common and unique in the trajectories of post-Soviet development of independent countries? What identification processes take place in post-communist countries, for example, Bulgaria? How do our former compatriots who emigrated to Israel feel? The answers to these questions are provided in the articles of the current issue written by international team of authors.

The thematic issue includes 11 articles. In the work **“Taxonomy of Intergroup ideologies”** *D.S. Grigoriev and J.W. Berry* present a general taxonomy of intergroup ideologies and the list of their indicators. These indicators allow to understand and describe intergroup ideologies associated with intercultural attitudes and intergroup relations in post-Soviet countries. The article **“Ethnic identity and psychological well-being of Russians in post-Soviet space: the role of diaspora”** (*N.M. Lebedeva*) shows that in Kyrgyzstan and Estonia participation of Russians in differ-

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ent types of diaspora activity mediates the relationship between their ethnic identity and psychological well-being: in Kyrgyzstan the key activities are collective historical memory maintenance and participation in public actions, while in Estonia — activity aimed at maintenance of Russian language and culture. The article by *Z.Kh. Lepshokova* **“Perceived inclusiveness of the context, identities and acculturation of Russians in Kyrgyzstan and Estonia”** focuses on perceived inclusiveness of the contemporary sociocultural context of Kyrgyzstan and Estonia and its role in identification and acculturation of Russians in these countries. *V.N. Galyapina*’s article **“Acculturation attitudes and psychological well-being of Russians in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: the moderating role of perceived security”** shows that the sociocultural context determines the preference for the acculturation strategy that provides Russians with life satisfaction in a secure situation: in Tajikistan this strategy is assimilation, and in Kyrgyzstan — integration. The work **“Role of local identity and perceived context in psychological well-being of Russians in Estonia”** (*A.V. Trifonova*) analyzes the relationship between local identity and psychological well-being of Russians in Estonia. The results show that local identity of Estonian Russians is significantly positively associated with life satisfaction and perceived inclusiveness of the sociocultural context, while indicators of perceived inclusiveness of context mediate the relationship between local identity and psychological well-being. The article **“The role of Soviet identity in the relationship between multiculturalism and boundaries permeability for Russians in Armenia”** (*M.A. Bultseva, E.V. Bushina, A.S. Berberian, E.A. Kodja*) considers support of multicultural ideology by ethnic majority as a factor of context inclusiveness for ethnocultural minorities. The study shows that support for multicultural ideology by Armenians is positively associated with the permeability of social boundaries for Russians only if Soviet identity is highly important for Armenians. The authors make a conclusion about the importance of recategorization for building the most inclusive context and harmonizing intercultural relations. The work **“The relationship between multiple identities and social capital in the post-Soviet space: an intergenerational analysis”** (*A.N. Tartarko, N.V. Chuikina*) aims at identifying relationships between multiple identities (ethnic, national, religious, Soviet, civilizational) and two types of social capital (bonding and bridging) in two post-Soviet republics — Estonia and Kyrgyzstan. The article **“The relationship between social capital and acculturation expectations of Estonians in Estonia: perceived threat as a mediator”** (*G. Ya. Rodionov*) shows that among Estonians the increase in perceived physical threat is associated with the decrease in preference for “multiculturalism”. The perceived economic threat increases the likelihood of preference for “segregation” of Russians among the host population. The mediative role of cultural threat was not confirmed in this study. The article **“Social cohesion, ethnicity and well-being: results from an intervention study in Kyrgyzstan”** (*Mandi M. Larsen, Klaus Boehnke, Damir Esenaliev, Tilman Brück*) presents the results of a panel survey of 5,207 adults living in 30 rural areas of Kyrgyzstan which show that a higher level of social cohesion in a community minimizes differences among ethnic groups in changes in life satisfaction. Thus, social cohesion may be considered as one of the explanatory elements in the complex picture of ethnic differences in life satisfaction. The work **“Profiles of multiple social identification and attitude to representatives of other nations in Russians and Bulgarians: a cross-cultural analysis”** (*K. Velkova*) examines latent profiles of social identification and attitudes towards representatives of other nations in the cultural contexts of Russia and Bulgaria using a personality-oriented approach. Latent profile analysis allowed to identify four latent profiles in Russia (Internationalists, Individualists, Europeans, Nationalists) and three latent profiles in Bulgaria (Individualists, Europeans, Nationalists). Noteworthy, the content of the profiles and the characteristics of the respondents included into the profiles turned out to be similar in Russia and Bulgaria. In the article **“Fifty Shades of Gray in Satisfaction with Life Among Immigrants: A Case of Jewish Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union to Israel”** *Eugene Tartakovskiy* analyses the life satisfaction (subjective well-being) of first-generation immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Israel and Jews who remained in Russia. The results show that immigration is mixed positive for the studied group of immigrants, beneficial in some aspects and burdensome in others.

Our research has shown that inevitability of mutual adaptation — sometimes painful and accompanied by sharp changes in statuses, ideologies and cultural context, mass migration, local conflicts, voluntary or forced assimilation and separation / segregation — is nevertheless evident. Those Russians who stayed in post-Soviet republics after the collapse of USSR, consider these countries their home and, in general, have accepted the rules of life introduced by ethnic majorities. Ethnic majorities during these years also demonstrated a certain dynamic, change of ideologies from complete rejection and expulsion of Russians to the search for a sounder balance of mutual interests and expectations.

It should be noted that the tasks of mutual adaptation for the ethnic majority and ethnic minority are different. For the minorities, it is extremely important to maintain their language and culture, to have equal rights with the host population and access to important socio-economic resources. For the majorities, it is important to maintain peace and order and achieve the unity of society on the conditions of dominance of the titular nation, strengthening

its values, language and culture. It should not be forgotten that the current ethnic majorities were ethnic minorities in the former USSR with their own grievances and wounded ethnic identity due to periods of “Russification” and “Sovietization”. Therefore, one should not be surprised at the inevitable distortions and difficulties of nation-building in the newly independent states – the former republics of USSR.

Acceptance of cultural diversity as an advantage for society and resource for its development and competitiveness is a rather difficult task for any country. Responsibility for interethnic peace and harmony, as well as maintenance of cultures of ethnic minorities requires great maturity and the art of balancing and mutual concessions.

The relevance of such studies lies in the fact that changes in the identities of Russians in the post-Soviet space, their acculturation and its predictors in cross-cultural and intergenerational comparison have not been sufficiently studied, although Russian ethnic minorities, as carriers of Russian culture, can be considered as a link between Russia and other post-Soviet countries. For Russian Federation relations with the post-Soviet states-neighbors are of great strategic importance, and the struggle for influence in the post-Soviet space has recently become noticeably aggravated. Accordingly, the study of attitudes, perceptions, and moods of Russians and representatives of the ethnic majority in these countries is extremely important and relevant from both scientific and social points of view.

Our research is humble attempt to probe the processes that are taking place in the post-Soviet space using small samples and limited methodological tools, but we hope to increase precision of our conclusions and strengthen their explanatory and predictive power in future.

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