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Ethnic Identity and Social Adaptation in the Different Culture Spheres for the Different Ethnical Groups

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Abstract

This paper reports on research that measures the social adaptation of Russians in Latvia and of Latvians in Russia. It assesses the ethnic identity of Russians and Latvians in their own and each other's countries. Significant differences in the structure and levels of social adaptation Russians are found, and in the structure and levels of ethnic identity. The character of intercommunication along the scale of ethnic identity and the scale of social adaptation differs between Latvians from Russia and Russians from Latvia. The paper concludes that the direction of the development of ethnic tolerance of Russians from Latvia and of Latvians from Latvia and Russia is changing positively.

Introduction

The ecological and social crisis of the contemporary world prompted this investigation into developmental problems of ethnic communities and different aspects of their social cultural adaptation, with particular focus on 'Russians living in Latvia'.

The essence of the social cultural adaptation can be defined as a process of active adaptation of an ethnic group and its members to the external environment by different social and cultural possibilities. Adaptive factors are the instruments in the process of activity of these adaptive processes. In particular, anthropogenic factors are related to social factors as determined by changes in ethnic cultural relations formed and developed, mainly, in the process of co-operation and inter influence of ethnic and other social cultural groups.

Ethnic cultural relations are based on the estimation of objectively existent distinctions among groups and determine a level, character and result of co-operation of groups (Агеев, 1990).

This research points to two main aspects: ethnical identity and social adaptation in different cultural environments. Every person feels more precisely understandings that belong to a particular ethnical group. Moreover, every individual is influenced by other people, including relations between countries and nations. Therefore, this phenomenon must be looked more very specifically and deeply (Eriksons E., 1998; Витенберг Е., 1994; Плотка И. et al, 2006).

Psychologists point out to the following ethnical aspects: cognitive (one of the key elements of the identity); emotional; and the power of self-confidence. Sociologists put

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the main stress on social identity. Every individual possesses more than one identity (sex, family, profession, nationality etc.).

Ethnic identity is multi-dimensional, therefore, many authors points out that there is no one accepted definition that describes ethnic identity (Dimdins G., 2000; Eriksons E., 1998; Tajfel H., 1981; Стефаненко Т.Г., 2006). Many investigations show that positive ethnical identity creates the basis of tolerance toward other ethnic groups.

Ethnic relations within Latvia and problems connected with these relations, has become very important in recent years. This paper has as its focus a special ethnic group that we will name: '*Russians living in Latvia*'. They are people with plural ethnic belonging, self-identified in the main on the basis of language, culture, social interaction, and place of living. Within this study comparative note is also made of *Lithuanians from Russia*.

The Hypothesis of the research: The ethnic identity of the representatives of different ethnic groups in other cultural environment is related with their social adaptation in this cultural space.

The Task of the research is to investigate:

- how the level of ethnic identity of Russians living in Latvia differs from Russians living in Russia;
- how the level of ethnic identity of Latvians living in Russia differs from Latvians living in Latvia;
- how the level of ethnic identity of Russians living in Latvia differs from Russians living in Russia;
- how the level of ethnic identity of Latvians living in Russia differs from Latvians living in Latvia;
- How the level of social adaptation of Russians living in Latvia differs from Latvians living in Russia;
- How the level of social adaptation of Russians living in Latvia differs from Latvians living in Russia.

Method

Four hundred and eighty persons (in the age 18-60; 240 women; 240 men) participated in the investigation. They are:

- Latvians living in Russia for more than 5 years (constantly);
- Russians living in Latvia for more than 5 years (constantly);
- Latvians constantly living in Latvia;
- Russians constantly living in Russia.

The time of the research was from October 2006 until April 2007.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire consisted of two parts (Table 1).

Table 1. Questionnaires and Scales

	I. "Adaptation of personality to the new social cultural space" by Yankovsky L.	II. «Types of ethnic identity» by Soldatova, G.; Ryzhova, S.
Questionnaire	(Platonov, 2003); Six scales:	(Солдатова, 2003); Six scales:
	Adaptability Conformity Inter-activity Depression Nostalgia Estrangement	Ethnic nihilism Ethnic indifference Positive ethnic identity (norm) Ethnic egoism Ethnic isolationism Ethnic fanaticism

The Methods of Data Processing

Data were processed with the help of the computer program SPSS 11.5. The processing of data included:

- Descriptive statistics;
- The accordance of the distribution of data to the normal distribution was tested with following methods:
 - The comparison of indexes of Skewness and Kurtosis with their standard errors;
 - Kolmogorov-Smirnov's test in modifications of Lillifora,
 - Shapiro-Wilk's test;
 - The visual study of histograms with a normal curve and Boxplots.

This revealed that distribution of most variables, significantly differs from the normal distribution. Therefore, all further research was conducted with the help of nonparametric methods of statistics:

- The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient for research of relationships;
- Mann-Whitney U-test for the comparison of levels of the variables;
- Fisher's ϕ^* -Test for the comparison of percents;
- Pearson's Chi-square test for comparison of distinctions in distributions.

Results

I. Social Adaptation

The data spited to the high, middle and low levels in obedience to Yankovskiy's method (Fig. 1).

The statistical significance of distinctions in distribution was checked using Pearson's Chi-square test. It was revealed that the distributions of respondents with high and with low levels on the scales of adaptation in the groups of Russians from Latvia and Latvians from Russia (Fig. 2) differ statistically significantly ($p \leq 0,001$).

36% of Russians from Latvia had the prevailing type of adaptation: adaptivity. 17% Lithuanians from Russia had a prevailing type of adaptation - adaptivity and 13% ones had inter-activity. The rest of respondents did not have a clear expressed type of adaptation. Statistical significance of distinctions in the stakes of percents was determined by Fisher's ϕ^* -Test. The stake of respondents with the prevailing type of adaptivity of Russians was statistically meaningfully to ($p \leq 0,01$).

The low level of adaptation observes on the scales of estrangement and nostalgia in both groups. Thus, the amount of Russians from Latvia with the low level of nostalgia (63%) exceeds the amount of Latvians from Russia with the low level of nostalgia (32%). For both groups, statistical difference with respect to respondents with the low levels of estrangement is non-significant. The difference is casual.

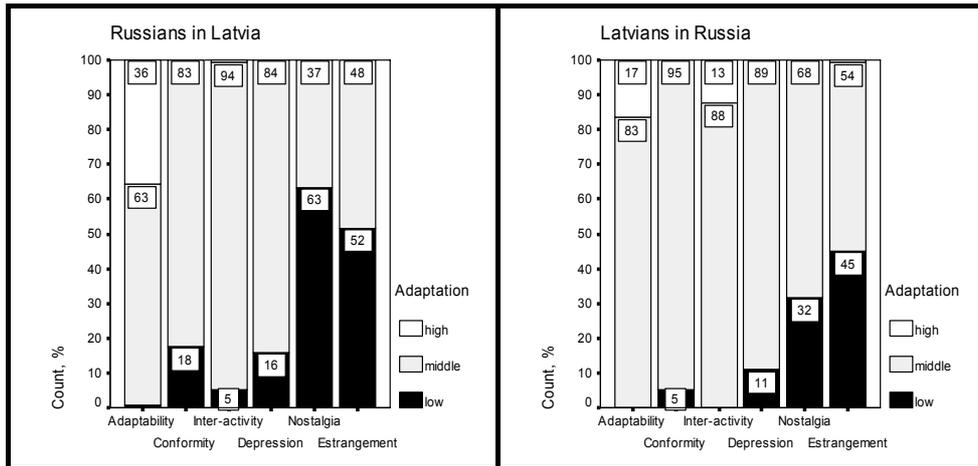


Fig. 1. Respondent's distribution with high, middle and low levels of the scales of adaptation in the groups of Russians from Latvia and Latvians from Russia

The statistical significance of distinctions in a structure (Fig. 3) was explored with a help of the Fisher's ϕ^* -Test. Statistically significant distinctions in the structure of social adaptation for Latvians from Russia and for Russians from Latvia are not found. The Figure 4 and the Table 2 shows Mann-Whitney U-Test's results.

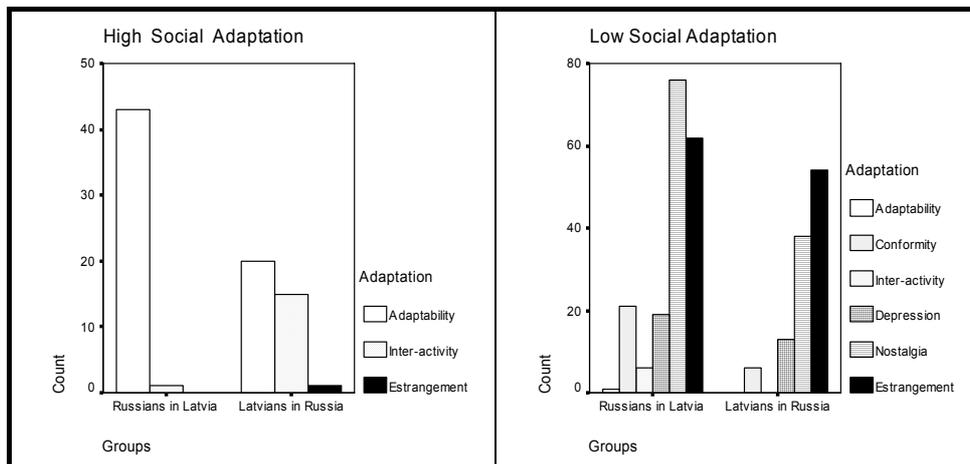


Fig. 2. Respondent's distribution with high and with low levels of the scales of adaptation in the groups of Russians from Latvia and Latvians from Russia

Table 2. Social adaptation: the difference between ethnic groups' levels

Social Adaptation	Latvians in Russia (LR) and Russians in Latvia (RL)
Adaptability	ns
Conformity	LR>RL (p≤0,001)
Inter-activity	LR>RL (p≤0,001)
Depression	LR>RL (p≤0,001)
Nostalgia	LR>RL (p≤0,001)
Estrangement	ns

Reductions and denotations in the Table 5:

"ns" - "Statistically significant distinctions are not found":

„LR>RL” - „Latvians indices' level, who lives in Russia, statistically significantly higher, than Russians' level, who lives in Latvia”

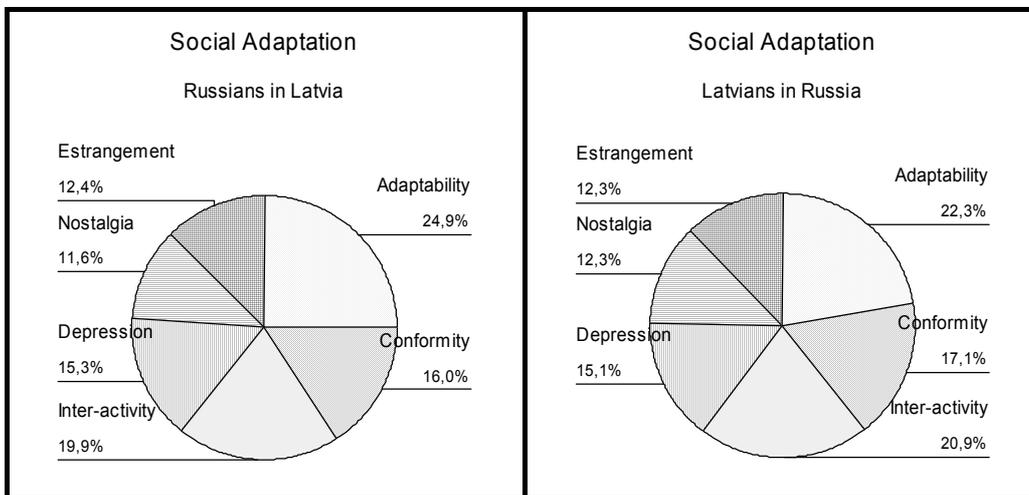


Fig. 3. The structures of social adaptation for Russians in Latvia and Latvians in Russia

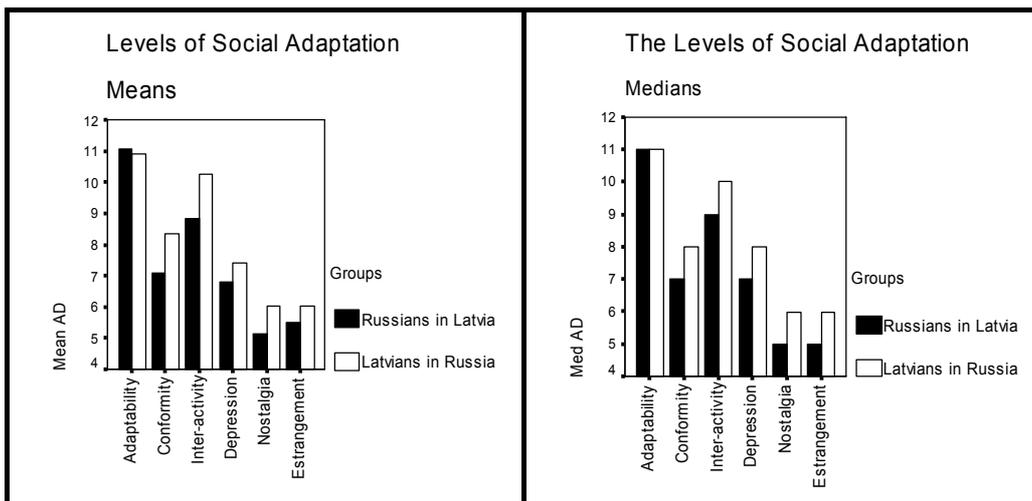


Fig. 4. The levels of Social Adaptation

II. Ethnic Identity

Statistical significances of distinctions in a structure was explored with the help of the Fisher's ϕ^* -Test (Fig. 5, Table 3).

Statistically significant differences in the structure of ethnic identity for Russians from Latvia, for Latvians from Russia and for Latvians from Latvia are not found.

For Russians from Latvia, for Latvians from Russia and for Latvians from Latvia positive ethnic identity is the basic position. It is a combination of positive attitude toward their own people with the positive attitude towards other people

The Table 3 shows the other places' distribution.

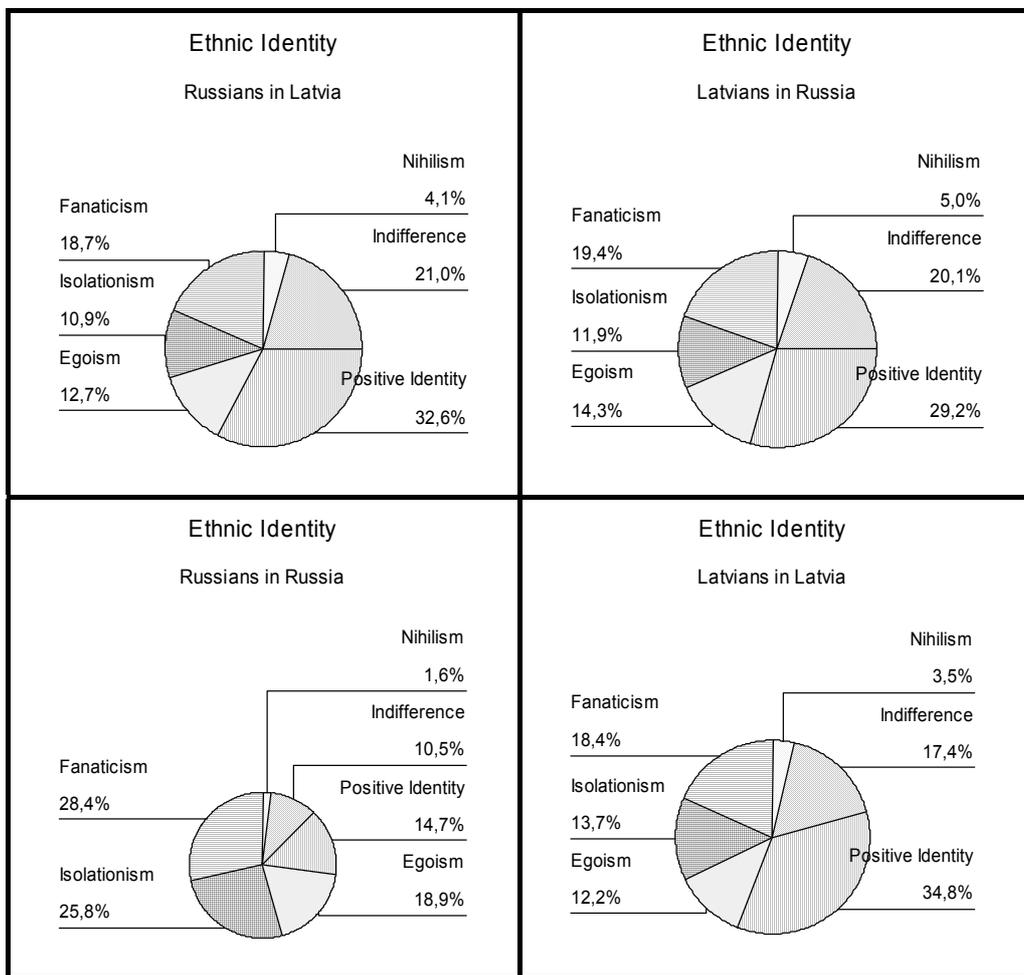


Fig. 5. The structures of Ethnic Identity for: Russians living in Latvia; Latvians- in Russia; Russians- in Russia and Latvians -in Latvia

Table 3. Ethnic Identity: the structure's stakes distribution

	Russians from Latvia; Latvians from Latvia; Latvians from Russia	Russians from Russia
1	Positive ethnic identity (32.6%; 34.8%; 29.2%)	Ethnic fanaticism (28.4%)
2	Ethnic indifference (21.0%; 17.4%; 20.1%); Ethnic fanaticism (18.7%; 18.4%; 19.4%)	Ethnic isolation (25.8%)
3	Ethnic egoism (12.7%; 12.2%; 14.3%); Ethnic isolation (10.9%; 13.7%; 11.9%)	Ethnic egoism (18.9%)
4	Ethnic nihilism (4.1%; 3.5%; 5%)	Positive ethnic identity (14.7%)
5		Ethnic indifference (10.5%)
6		Ethnic nihilism (1.6%)

There are distinctions between the structures of ethnic identity for the Russians, who live in Russia and for the other ethnic groups.

Russians from Russia have smaller specific gravity of ethnic indifference than Latvians from Russia ($p \leq 0,05$), and than Russians from Latvia ($p \leq 0,01$).

Russians from Russia have smaller specific gravity of positive ethnic identity than the representatives of other groups ($p \leq 0,01$) and larger specific gravity of ethnic isolationism ($p \leq 0,01$) and ethnic fanaticism ($p \leq 0,05$) (Fig. 5).

The Mann-Whitney U-test shows the statistically significant distinctions in the levels of ethnic identity (Table 4, Fig. 6).

Table 4. Ethnic identity: the difference between ethnic groups' levels

Ethnic Identity	LR - RL	RL - LL	RL - RR
Nihilism	ns	ns	LR>RR ($p \leq 0,001$)
Indifference	ns	RL>LL ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR>RR ($p \leq 0,001$)
Positive identity	RL>LR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LL>RL ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR>RR ($p \leq 0,001$)
Egoism	LR>RL ($p \leq 0,05$)	ns	LR<RR ($p \leq 0,001$)
Isolationism	ns	LL>RL ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR<RR ($p \leq 0,001$)
Fanaticism	ns	ns	LR<RR ($p \leq 0,001$)
Ethnic Identity	LL - RR	RR-LR	LR - LL
Nihilism	LL>RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR>RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	ns
Indifference	LL>RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR>RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR>LL ($p \leq 0,001$)
Positive identity	LL>RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR>RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR<LL ($p \leq 0,001$)
Egoism	LL<RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR<RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR>LL ($p \leq 0,05$)
Isolationism	LL<RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR<RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR<LL ($p \leq 0,001$)
Fanaticism	LL<RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	LR<RR ($p \leq 0,001$)	ns

Reductions: Latvians in Russia (LR); Russians in Latvia (RL); Latvians in Latvia (LL); Russians in Russia (RR)

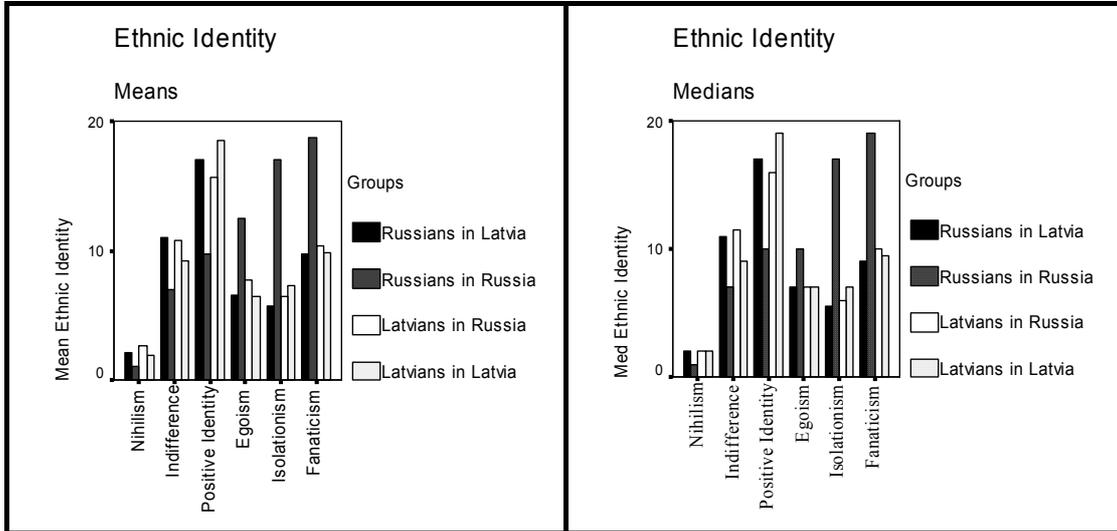


Fig. 6. The levels of Ethnic Identity

III. The Analysis of Correlation

Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient was used for the analysis of relationships (Table 5). On Figures 7 and 8 meaningful connections are shown statistically between scales by social adaptation and to the ethnic identity for Russians from Latvia (N=120) and Latvians from Russia (N=120). In the group of Russians from Latvia, as compared to the group of Latvians from Russia, more statistically meaningful intercommunications were found (Fig. 7) (Fig. 8).

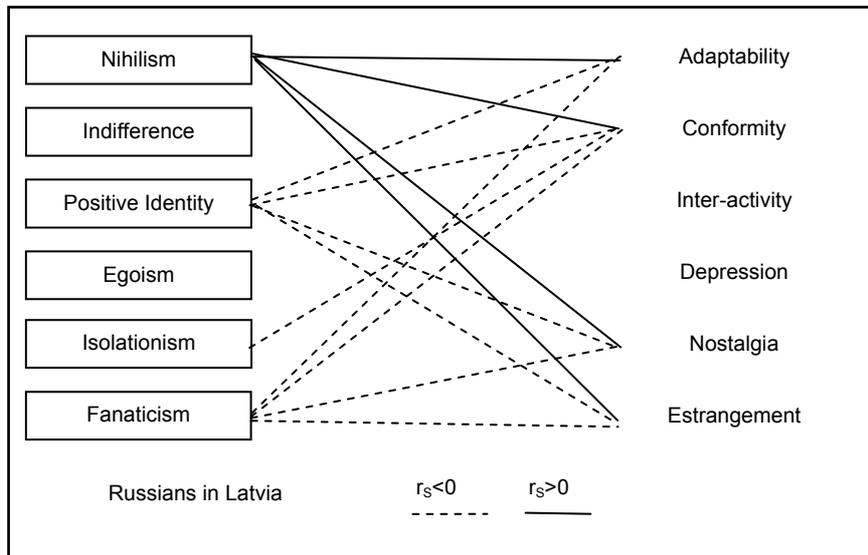


Fig. 7. The relationships for the Russians in Latvia (N=120)

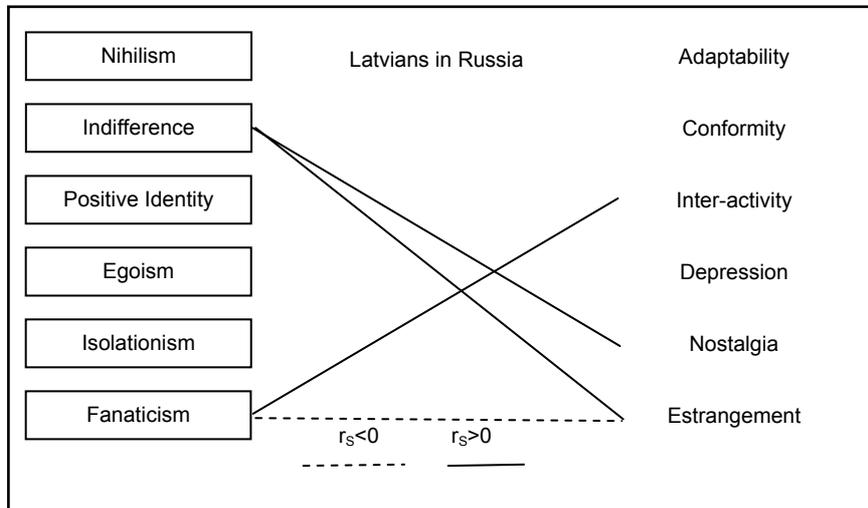


Fig. 8. The relationships for Latvians in Russia (N=120)

Table 4. The Spearman's correlation coefficients and significances for all groups. Statistically significant relationships

	Group	Spearman, r	Nihilism	Indifference	Positive Identity	Isolationism	Fanaticism
Ad.	R-L	r	0,500	p,050	-0,370	0,050	-0,640
		Sig.	0,000	0,582	0,000	0,583	0,000
Con.	R-L	r	0,290	0,090	-0,260	-0,190	-0,450
		Sig.	0,002	0,314	0,004	0,050	0,000
Int.	L-R	r	0,150	-0,120	-0,110	0,190	-0,120
		Sig.	0,093	0,183	0,238	0,035	0,201
Nos.	R-L	r	0,520	-0,050	-0,310	-0,100	-0,600
		Sig.	0,000	0,575	0,001	0,278	0,000
	L-R	r	0,050	0,360	0,020	0,040	-0,020
		Sig.	0,619	0,000	0,801	0,699	0,828
Est.	R-L	r	0,560	0,060	-0,290	-0,010	-0,630
		Sig.	0,000	0,532	0,001	0,950	0,000
	L-R	r	-0,050	0,420	0,150	-0,380	-0,060
		Sig.	0,557	0,000	0,114	0,000	0,537

Reductions: Ad. - Adaptability; Con.- Conformity; Int. - Inter-activity; Nos.- Nostalgia; Est. – Estrangement

Discussion

I. Social Adaptation

36% Russians from Latvia and 17% Latvians from Russia have the prevailing type of social adaptation: adaptability. The expressed adaptability proves the personal satisfaction, positive attitude toward surrounding and their acceptance, about the sense of social and physical protection, the sense of belonging to this society and complicity with it, aspiring self-realization, and a high level of activity. The stake of respondents with the prevailing type of the adaptability of Russians from Latvia is statistically meaningfully more than for Latvians from Russia ($p \leq 0,01$). This is the only expressed type of adaptation of Russians from Latvia.

13% Latvians from Russia have another expressed type of adaptation – interactivity. With high interactivity the active contents are the attitude on the expansion of connections; confidence in alternative possibilities; criticism of own conduct in relation to the social norms of, and options within the society; readiness to self-transform; orientation towards collaboration with the other; and orientation towards purposeful goals.

On the other scales there are not respondents with the expressed type of adaptation. A low level in both groups is observed on the scales of estrangement and nostalgia. Thus, the amount of Russians from Latvia with the low level of nostalgia (63%) exceeds the amount of Latvians from Russia (32%) with the low level of nostalgia. There are no statistically significant distinctions between the stakes of respondents with the low levels of estrangement in both groups.

A low level on the scale of nostalgia shows that the connection with culture is not lost, that internal disorder and confusion from any sense of disconnectedness is not with traditional values, and there is hope for the acquisition of new values. The number of Russians from Latvia with such descriptions exceeds the number of Latvians from Russia.

The low level of adaptation on the scale of estrangement shows the acceptance of new social space, rather high self-appraisal, co-ordination of claims and real possibilities, faith in own efforts. There isn't panic, helplessness, feeling of sense of solitude.

Among Latvians from Russia and Russians from Latvia, there are no statistically meaningful distinctions in the structure of social adaptation. A basic structure places adaptability with the highest percentage (22.3% and 24.9% accordingly), then interactivity (20.9% and 19.9%), followed by conformism (17.1% and 16.0%), estrangement (12.3% and 12.4%), and nostalgia (12.3% and 11.6%).

The levels of Latvians in Russia and Russians' in Latvia on the scales of adaptability and estrangement do not differ statistically significantly.

The levels of Latvians living in Russia on the scales of conformity, inter-activity, depression and nostalgia are higher than of Russians living in Latvia ($p \leq 0,001$).

We note a higher level on the scale of conformity of Latvians living in Russia with high aspiration, that suggests support for relationships with people; higher orientation towards approval; dependence on a group; the necessity for emotional relationships with people; and adopting the values and codes of conduct of this environment.

The Latvians in Russia have sufficiently high level of depression. It means larger expressed disharmony of personality, the world is seen in gloomy tones with a deprived sense of values. It combines doubts and alarm in the relation to a social identity, with senses of depression and devastation.

Thus, social adaptation in another cultural space flows normally in both groups and without the special distinctions between groups.

II. Ethnic Identity

The distinctions among Russians of Latvia from Latvians of Russia and Latvians from Latvia are not revealing in the structure of ethnic identity (Fig. 5). There are distinctions in the structure of ethnic identity of Russians from Russia and of all other groups.

The research of the distinction in levels confirms the following conclusions:

1. Ethnic egoism, ethnic isolation and ethnic fanaticism of Russians from Russia statistically significantly exceeds ethnic isolation and ethnic fanaticism of all other groups accordingly ($p \leq 0,001$).
2. Positive ethnic identity, ethnic indifference, ethnic nihilism of Russians from Russia, are statistically significantly less, in comparison with the positive ethnic identity, ethnic indifference, and ethnic nihilism of all the other groups ($p \leq 0,001$).
3. Distinction of ethnic indifference of Russians from Latvia and Latvians from Russia is not exposed. Its level statistically significantly exceeds the level of ethnic indifference of Latvians from Latvia ($p \leq 0,001$), which statistically significantly exceeds the level of ethnic indifference of Russians from Russia.
4. The positive ethnic identity of Latvians from Latvia is the largest ($p \leq 0,001$). The positive ethnic identity of Russians from Latvia is more than for Latvians from Russia ($p \leq 0,001$).

The Analysis of Correlations

Russians living in Latvia

Ethnic nihilism

Russians from Latvia going away from their own ethnic group are steadily searching for socially psychological niches based not on an ethnic criterion:

- They have higher personal satisfaction; better attitude towards surroundings, and acceptance them; feeling of social and physical protection; a sense of belonging to the society and complicity with it; higher aspiration to self-realization and a higher level of activity. And *vice versa* (positive relationship with adaptability).
- They have higher aspirations to support relationships with people from other ethnic groups; orientation towards approval, dependence on a group, a necessity in attachment

and in emotional relationships with people, and adopting the values and codes of conduct of this environment. And *vice versa* (positive relationship with conformity)

- They have a higher loss of their connection with a their culture, internal disorder and confusion from sense of disconnectedness with traditional values, coupled with strengthening of reverie, melancholy, and devastation. And *vice versa* (positive relationship with nostalgia);

- They have higher claim of norms, options and values of this society, higher non-acceptance of new social space, lower self-appraisal, higher inconsistency of claims and real possibilities, higher concern for identity and status, diminishing faith in their powers, strengthening of panic, helplessness, and a sense of solitude and impatience. And *vice versa* (positive relationship with estrangement).

Positive ethnic identity (norm)

What it is more expressed by Russians from Latvia is the combination of positive attitude towards native people with the positive attitude towards other people:

- They have lower aspirations to support relationships with people from other ethnic groups; lower levels of orientation on approval, dependence on a group, on a necessity in attachment and in emotional relationships with people, on adopting values and codes of conduct of this environment. And *vice versa* (Negative relationship with Conformity);

- Lower levels of loss of their connection with a culture, internal disorder and confusion from sense of disconnected with traditional values, reverie, melancholy, devastation. And *vice versa*. (Negative relationship with Nostalgia);

- Lower levels of claim of norms, options and values of this society, non-acceptance of new social space, higher self-appraisal, lower inconsistency of claims and real possibilities, concern with identity and status, a multiplying levels of faith in the forces, a diminishing of panic, helplessness, and sense of impatience.(Negative connection with Estrangement).

Ethnic isolationism

Russians from Latvia have conviction in notions of superiority and more negative attitude towards inter-ethnic marriage;

- They have lower levels of personal satisfaction, less voice, lower levels of feeling socially and physically protected, of belonging to the society and complicity with it, with low levels in aspiring to self-realization and of activity. And *vice versa* (Negative relationship with Adaptivity).

Ethnic fanaticism

Russians from Latvia have larger willingness to perform any action, to understand ethnic interests, to increase prosperity of the people:

- They have lower levels of personal satisfaction, voice, feelings of being social and physically protected, sense of belonging to this society and complicity with it, lower levels in aspiring to self-realization and lower levels of activity. And *vice versa* (Negative relationship with Adaptivity).

- They have lower levels of aspiration to support relationships with people from other ethnic groups, lower orientation on approval, proponent dependence on a group, on a

necessity for emotional relationships with people, to adopting values and codes of accepting this environment. And *vice versa* (Negative relationship with Conformity);

- Lower levels of loss of their connection with culture, internal disorder and confusion from sense of disconnected with traditional values, reverie, melancholy and devastation. And *vice versa*. (Negative relationship with Nostalgia);
- Lower levels of claim of norms, options and values of this society; lower levels of non-acceptance of new social space; higher self-appraisal, inconsistency of claims and real possibilities, concern by the identity and status, multiplying levels of faith in the forces, diminishing of panic, helplessness, the sense of solitude and impatience. (Negative connection with Estrangement).

Latvians in Russia

Ethnic indifference

Latvians from Latvia show a vagueness in ethnic belonging, irrelevance of ethnic identity. They have:

- Higher loss of their connections with culture, internal disorder and confusion from the sense of disconnection with traditional values, a strengthening of reverie, melancholy and devastation. And *vice versa*. (Positive relationship with Nostalgia);
- Higher levels of claim of norms, options and values of this society, higher non-acceptance of new social space, lower levels of self-appraisal, higher inconsistency of claims and real possibilities, higher concern of the identity and status, diminishing of faith in the forces, strengthening of panic, helplessness, sense of solitude and impatience. (Positive relationship with Estrangement).

Ethnic isolation

They are more actively adjusted to the expansion of connections, more sure in the possibilities, more critical of their own acceptance of social norms and options of this society, more ready to self-transform, more directed on a collaboration with others (Positive connection with Inter-activity);

They have lower levels of claim of norms, options and values of this society, lower levels of non-acceptance of new social space, higher levels of self-appraisal, lower levels of inconsistency of claims and real possibilities, concern of the identity and status, and show multiplying levels of faith in the forces, diminishing panic, helplessness, and sense of solitude and impatience. (Negative connection with Estrangement).

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