Xenophobia as a Challenge to Positive Peace in Russia:

Inter-group Relations Within The Academia

Master's Thesis in

Peace, Mediation and Conflict Research

Developmental Psychology

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of the study was to investigate positive attitudes towards integrating immigrant minorities, intense group identification, and psychological concomitants among Russian university students.

Method: A questionnaire was completed by 129 females, 48 males, and three respondents who reported "other" as sex. The mean age was 19.8 (SD 2.6) for females and 21.8 (SD 2.9) for males. The age difference was significant.

Results: Of females, 55.8 % and of males 66.7% reported that they knew some foreign student in person. Female students had a significantly more positive attitude towards integration immigrant minorities compared to male students. Male students scored slightly higher than female students on intense group identification. Respondents with low scores on positive attitudes towards integrating immigrants scored significantly higher on intense group identification. No significant differences were found for level of positive attitudes and anxiety and depression.

Conclusions: More than half of the students knew some foreign student in person. Positive attitudes towards integrating immigrant minorities were overall high. There was a negative association between positive attitudes towards integrating immigrants and high intense group identification

Key Words: Positive attitudes towards integrating immigrant minorities, intense group identification, psychological concomitants, Russia

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aim of the Study

This study investigates the phenomenon of ethnic intolerance and xenophobia at Russian universities. This quest for knowledge is driven by the motivation to strengthen positive peace in the country, and thus maintain the conditions required for human flourishing and sustainable development of a peaceful society.

1.2 Ethnic Intolerance in Russia

The murder of George Floyd ignited thousands of protests around the globe under the umbrella of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. The sentiment of solidarity with the movements against racism and police violence expanded the movement's geography enormously. People toppled statues of former slave owners in England, which was accompanied by Aboriginal rights demonstrations in Australia (Rutland & Kazantsev, 2020). Similar public reactions were evident in Finland, Kazakhstan and Lithuania (Julian-Varnon, 2020). In Russia, however, the issue of fighting racism invoked little to no public sympathy. Instead, the country's liberal opposition has developed its own "Russian Lives Matter" social media campaign, criticising police violence, but ultimately failing to address the issue of racism and ethnic intolerance (Julian-Varnon, 2020). As indicated by Rutland and Kazantsev, the phenomenon of the BLM movement's spreading has revealed a "surprisingly troubling attitude towards the politics of race" in Russian society (2020).

As of 2019, more than 11 million foreigners live in Russia as immigrants (Foltynova, 2020) making it the second largest migrant-receiving country after the United States. The major sources of migration to Russia are Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan (Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russian Federation, 2020). Considering the overall scale of the phenomenon, Russia experiences one of the most intensive interaction between different ethnicities and races in the world. Therefore, the lack of vivid problematisation of ethnic intolerance in Russian society is a particularly curious matter.

Despite the absence of a strong public narrative exposing racial inequality, a brief review of media reports immediately reveals personal experiences of individuals representing ethnic minorities in Russia. Thus, a 21-year-old Congolese man, Roy Ibonga, studying in Bryansk published a video of his encounter with a taxi driver (Zatari, 2020). The latter refused

the young man a ride, for not liking Ibonga's skin colour. When the student asked the driver directly if he was a racist, the man replied "Yes, of course". According to Ibonga, this was not a unique case; other African students face similar racist treatment in Russia. Apparently, the problem is evident in many regions of the country. Then, Isabel Kastilio, a half-Dominican young woman who grew up in the Russian Far East and has moved to St. Petersburg, encountered racism every day at school, at university, and on the streets (Zatari, 2020). Kastilio drew the BBC's attention to the evidence of racism being deeply integrated into the institution of real estate. According to her, in Moscow, it is almost impossible to rent an apartment, because all advertisements state "Slavs only". The landlords would not believe that she would be able to pay the rent after they heard Kastilio's foreign name (Zatari, 2020).

The circumstances of the above create a twofold situation. While the existing public discourse ignores the signs of systemic xenophobia and ethnic discrimination, the multiple stories of those who belong to minorities appear silenced. The story of Roy Ibonga stands out, for the young man managed to capture his encounter with racism on footage and published it on social media. The company, which the taxi driver in question worked for, acknowledged that his behaviour was inappropriate, fired the man and apologised to the student (Zatari, 2020). Worth noting is that public support for the driver on social media appeared so intense, that Ibonga had to close his social media account (Zatari, 2020). The public apology and subsequent action by the organisation which employed the driver seems a success. However, this success is rather exceptional. Aitkhozhina indicates that the existing practice of "going after the critics of the problem [of racism and xenophobia in Russia's society]" (2020). For instance, a biracial blogger from St. Petersburg, Mariya Tunkara, was accused of spreading extremist materials by the local prosecutor's office after she raised on social media the issue of racism in the country. Human Rights Watch investigated her case and found no signs of hate speech or anything inflammatory (Aitkhozhina, 2020).

1.3 Relation to Positive Peace

At this point, before proceeding further to the substance of this study, this paper should establish the link between its topic and the overall peace cause. The analysis conducted by this study is to be understood as a constitutive part of peace research. That being said, the need for bridging the gap between the issue of ethnic intolerance and peace appears evident.

The notion of peace lies at the core of this exploratory effort. In his essay, Galtung focuses on the ambiguity behind the term (1969). Therefore, a comprehensive conceptual

framework is required to define the paper's scope. In this regard, Galtung suggests distinguishing between two concepts (1969), *negative* and *positive* peace. Negative peace, according to him, comprises the absence of direct violence, whereas positive peace refers to the absence of structural violence (Galtung, 1969).

According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), the concept of positive peace encompasses factors that contribute to the emergence of peaceful and sustainable societies (2017). Together they create the environment required for human potential to flourish. Positive peace in a country can be assessed by eight proxies that include indicators empirically proven to be relevant to the concept. These proxies are the following: 1) well-functioning government; 2) equitable distribution of resources; 3) free flow of information; 4) good relations with neighbours; 5) high levels of human capital; 6) acceptance of the rights of others; 7) low levels of corruption; 8) sounds business environment (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2017).

In this regard, this paper assumes that systematic racial and ethnic discrimination would relate to some of the domains above, either directly or indirectly. The relationship that seems most obvious is the one with acceptance of the rights of others. With respect to it the IEP highlights the importance of informal social and cultural norms that relate to citizens' behaviour (2017). These norms, in turn, are indicative of the level of tolerance between different ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups that constitute a country's society.

In turn, xenophobia and discrimination can potentially undermine the equitable distribution of resources too. The above-mentioned story of Isabel Kastilio illustrates this problem. The "Slavs only" informal policy evidently deprives members of non-dominant groups from access to housing and accommodation. Similarly, it can affect the distribution of vacancies on the labour market. Respectively, the market would consequentially shape income distribution, largely to the advantage of the dominant ethnic group.

Lastly, structural discrimination against minorities could indirectly affect high levels of human capital. The IEP argues that citizens' education and encouragement to develop knowledge improves economic productivity, political participation, and social capital (2017). The above-described personal experiences of discrimination indicate that some encounter the issue at educational institutions, such as universities and schools. As it will be explained in later sections of this paper, tensions that arise from unequal inter-group interaction can easily cause stress, anxiety and psychological trauma. Therefore, this paper would assume that racism at educational facilities can undermine education, and thus prevent the improvement of human capital.

1.4   Cross-cultural Interaction, Acculturation and Adaptation

Worldwide migration has led to the cultural pluralisation of many societies (Berry, 1997). Individuals coming from distinct cultural backgrounds usually form subgroups. They are not equal in power in political and economic senses. This paper will refer to these subgroups as *cultural groups* and, consequentially, it will distinguish between *dominant* and *non-dominant* ones on the basis of their relative power.

The relationships that occur between dominant and non-dominant cultural groups when they encounter each other are complex. Thus, the first question to be dealt with is what are the key mechanisms that drive cross-cultural interaction. In his study on this matter, Berry identifies three major theoretical concepts as helpful to understanding the phenomenon (1997). These concepts are: *acculturation, psychological acculturation, adaptation*.

Acculturation refers to the cultural changes that occur when both the majority and minority groups encounter each other (Berry, 1997). Berry argues that the classical definition of the term implies that it "comprehends those phenomena which result when the groups of individuals having different cultures come intro continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture pattern of either or both groups" (1997). The author notes that despite the concept being, in theory, neutral, in practice it often turns out that one of the groups is subjected to a greater change than the other. Worth noting that acculturation is a group-level phenomenon for it affects the culture of the entire group.

In turn, the individual impact of cultural changes is referred to by Berry as *psychological acculturation* (1997). It comprises the psychological changes of individuals being exposed to the phenomenon of acculturation. The distinction is important, since the groups in question are not homogenous in their response to cross-cultural interaction. In addition, the two-level analysis makes it possible to examine the systemic relationships between individual and group sets of variables.

Contrary to the previously believed to exist association between acculturation and social or psychological problems, Berry argues that the outcomes are highly variable (1997). He identifies three levels of difficulty for an individual to go through the process of acculturation. For instance, this is accomplished with the most ease when psychological adaptations are perceived as mere learning of new behavioural customs. Such cultural learning demands the individual to abandon aspects of his or her former cultural habits which do not fit to the new environment (Berry, 1992). Some of the behaviours might be incompatible with each other, creating certain difficulties for the individual undergoing acculturation.

If there is a serious conflict between different culture groups' codes of behaviour and the individual struggles to change his or her habits, then acculturation is experienced as culture shock (Berry, 1997). Alternatively, Berry suggests describing such an experience as *acculturative stress* (1997). He suggests several reasons for this conceptual definition. First, it links the phenomenon to psychological models explaining the stressful experience of an individual as a response to external stressors (i.e. acculturation) (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984). Therefore, this approach has a more relevant theoretical foundation (Berry, 1997). A second reason why the "culture shock" framework seems inadequate is that the very term "shock" implies the presence of only negative experiences caused by cross-cultural interaction. In this regard, Berry indicates that difficulties experienced by an individual as a result of such exposure are usually moderate (1997). This is due to other psychological mechanisms available to soften individual acculturation, *e.g.* problem appraisal and various coping strategies.

When major difficulties occur during acculturation, it should be examined from the perspective of mental diseases and psychopathology (Berry, 1997). In such cases, Berry argues that the individual's capacity to cope cannot deal with cultural changes. For instance, the magnitude of these changes, their speed or other attributes lead to significant psychological disturbances. They can take the form of clinical depression or incapacitating anxiety (Berry & Kim, 1988).

Changes that occur in individuals or cultural groups in response to environmental demands constitute the concept of *adaptation* (Berry, 1997). According to Berry, those adaptive responses that occur almost immediately are often negative and disruptive (1997). Continuous exposure to acculturation, on the contrary, usually brings long-term positive adaptations. When adaptation is "successful" or *positive*, it strengthens the match between the acculturating person and the dominant cultural context. In other cases, however, adaptations result in separation and marginalisation of the non-dominant entity. Consequentially, as Berry argues, it settles the groups into a conflict, cultivating acculturative stress and psychopathology (1997).

Two types of adaptation can be identified in academic literature, psychological and sociocultural (Searle & Wards, 1990). Psychological adaptation describes internal psychological results of acculturation and can manifest itself in the form of stronger personal or cultural identity, good mental health, and sense of personal satisfaction in the new cultural environment (Berry, 1997). Sociocultural adaptation, in turn, refers to external psychological outcomes that link individuals to the new environment. For instance, it can relate to individuals' ability to deal with everyday issues at home, work or at school (Berry, 1997).

1.5 Proactive Attitudes towards Immigrant Minorities

It follows from the discussion above that the process of adaptation affects significantly both the groups and individuals subjected to acculturation. In addition to that, as pointed out by Phelps and others, integration to a new cultural environment takes mutual adaptation efforts from both the dominant and non-dominant groups (2011). Thus, in the first part of this research, this paper seeks to explore adaptation from the perspective of the cultural majority.

According to Phelps et. al. (2011), socio-psychological studies of intergroup relations often depart from the majority perspective and tend to analyse those factors that relate to the dominant-group's negative attitudes towards the non-dominant ones. The assumption is that better understanding of the factors driving these negative attitudes contributes to reduction of xenophobia and discrimination (Paluck & Green, 2009). However, an approach such as this appears too passive and insufficient for effective promotion of integration of minorities in question (Phelps et al., 2011).

Instead, Phelps et. al. suggest that the research's scope should encompass positive attitudes such as willingness to proactive include immigrant outgroups in the new commonly shared cultural environment (2011). In fact, proactive stance towards integration is indicative of individual's responsibility in this process (Grigaityte et al., 2019).

In order to investigate empirical evidence attitudes among Russian university students towards proactive integration, this paper employs the findings of Phelps et. al. (2011) and implements the *Majority Integration Effort* (MIE) scale in accordance with the latter. The scale was designed deliberately to measure the dominant-group members' attitudes towards proactive integration efforts. This, according to Phelps et. al. (2011), reflects their potential responsibility in the integration process.

Three categories of attitudes constitute the MIE scale. They are *cultural efforts*, *structural efforts* and *openness to diversity* (Phelps et al., 2011). The first group refers to attitudes that the dominant cultural group should change. For instance, it involves adjusting a majority's existing cultural practices in order to make more of an effort to learn the non-dominant group better. Similarly, it includes attitudes that the dominant group members should accept and promote minority cultural values, norms and traditional practices (Phelps et al., 2011). The category of structural efforts encompasses willingness to accommodate members of the non-dominant groups by adjusting social structure in such a way that it facilitates inclusion. It can mean support for corresponding welfare distribution, development of relevant legal initiatives and adapting public services (Phelps et al., 2011). The last group of items focuses on

openness to diversity. They reflect the respondents' evaluation of cultural diversity and representatives of the non-dominant cultural group. Although these items do not require any specific action, they imply certain orientation towards minorities (Phelps et al., 2011).

The analysis has revealed, that the new measuring tool based on the MIE scale displays significant relationship to psychological dispositions such as right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation and global identity (Phelps et al., 2011). In addition, the scale has been proven relevant to the concepts of prejudice and intergroup relations.

1.6 Intense Group Identification

Group identification refers to an individual's identification with an interacting group (Gryigaityte, 2019). Scholars identify three major sources of it. They are social categorization, interpersonal attraction and interdependence (Hinkle et al., 1989; Tajfel, 1978). This basic principle of such identification can be associated with the social identity theory, formulated by Brown (2000). According to it, it is in humans' nature to employ patterns to distinguish between different entities. With regard to social interaction, this tendency to look for patterns has resulted in categorisation of people in two groups: those, who are "like us" and those, who are "unlike us" (Cuhadar & Dayton, 2011). Consequentially, this groups are not perceived equal. In an ethnically diverse society, social distance facilitates formation of hierarchies of ethnic groups in individuals' perception (Grygaityte, 2019). The omnipresence of such hierarchies and inequalities associated with them, according to Grygaityte et. al., is to be explained by the social dominance theory (2019).

The theory focuses on individual and structural factors that lead to group-based oppression (Sidanius et al., 2004, p. 846). Manifestations of the latter are seen as specific cases of an overarching human tendency to create and maintain group-based hierarchies. They exist due to combination of various factors, such as propensities for group prejudice, social roles, cultural ideologies, and discriminatory behaviours (Pratto et al., 2000). Individual predisposition to form and support group hierarchy is referred to as *social dominance orientation* (SDO). Consequentially, people with high SDO are considered to be more prone to believe that distinct social groups differ in value, whereas people with low SDO would support group equality and fight group differentiation (Pratto et al., 2000). Therefore, it indicates what sort of relations one prefers, hierarchical or equal. Following from this, SDO is thought to predict individual tendencies for racism or xenophobic behaviour (Grygaityte, 2019; Pratto et al., 2000).

As noted by Pratto et al (2000), individuals who display strong support for social dominance of one group over the other seek to obtain positions in the society that enable them to maintain the mentioned above social hierarchy. This, in turn, leads to the occurrence of systematic institutionalised discrimination. The latter grants advantage to the dominant social group over its inferior counterparts. This discrimination can take the form of systematic violence and abuse perpetrated by the members of the majority against the minorities through legal means and those beyond the law (Pratto et al., 2000). Another way to secure social groups hierarchy relates to ideology. In this regard, the scholars (Pratto et al., 2000) highlight the role of social-psychological processes, such as false consensus biases, empowered by ideology evidently serve as driving forces of social dominance. Respectively, individuals with high SDO are more eager to support ideologies that legitimise group inequality.

1.7. Scapegoating Hypothesis and Mental Health

Excessive evidence on the relationship between xenophobia and dominant group members' anxiety and frustration exists. For instance, in South Africa the high levels of poverty, insecurity and unemployment have led to the phenomenon of scapegoating of the minorities (Alarape, 2008; Coetzee, 2012). The poor socio-economic conditions create anxiety among the population serving as stressors. Consequentially, the majority experiencing the difficulties start attributing the blame to the immigrants and members of other non-dominant groups. The unequal distribution of goods and services creates competition between the groups, thus strengthening individuals group identification.

This paper assumes that similar mechanisms hypothetically apply to the educational sector as well. The influx of foreign students hypothetically inhibits competition for places at universities, and for scholarships and grants. Moreover, foreign specialists might increase competitiveness on the labour market, challenging the soon to be graduates. All these factors have the potential to increase students' stress or anxiety. Following the premises of the scapegoating hypothesis, these psychological conditions can be associated with blame attribution and subsequent hostility towards immigrants and members of the non-dominant ethnic or cultural groups.

1.8 Gender and Attitudes towards Immigrants

The existing academic research fails to come to an agreement with respect to the role of gender in shaping the attitudes towards immigrants. In fact, the explanation of gender patterns in public

attitudes varies greatly over time. For instance, some literature argues that men are supposed to demonstrate more negative attitudes than women due to males' more, allegedly, authoritarian personalities (Adorno et al., 2019). Ceobanu and Escandell have observed some positive male effect on the negative attitudes, although in such a case gender could hardly be isolated from other independent variables (2008, p. 1159). The findings observed by Gorodzeisky and Semyonov indicate that likelihood of becoming a racial exclusionist is 1.15 times higher for men than for women (2009, p. 411). Later, a study conducted by Paas and Halapuu (2012) found no statistically significant relation between gender and the respondents' attitudes towards immigration. A meta-analysis of prejudice against Muslim minorities in 30 countries (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008, pp. 279-280) identified overall a smaller female effect on the phenomenon, which is consistent with some of the observations of the above.

Despite the empirical evidence of the gender effect on the attitudes towards immigrants being either inconclusive, or indicating that males are more prone to prejudice and xenophobia, some literature hypothesises a change in this trend (Farris, 2017; Ponce, 2017). Farris (2017) argues that right-wing nationalism addresses the Muslim culture through the lenses of the gender equality narrative. Muslim men are portrayed as perpetrators of female rights. According to Farris, the Western women's organisations and top-ranking female politicians and bureaucrats denounce the Muslim minority as 'exceptionally sexist' and contrast them to the 'superior' Western countries which promote gender egalitarianism (2017, p. 2). In this regard, it can be assumed that over time the female effect on the attitudes in question can become greater, reshaping the previously existing, although barely evident, gender pattern.

With regard to the possible shift in the role of gender in the perception of immigrants, Ponce assumes that the rise of the gender-egalitarian has led to backlash against this minority among women (2017, p. 3). The perceived incompatibility of the value systems theoretically can create tensions between the dominant and the dominated cultural groups. As an indicator of a group membership the salient gender egalitarianism facilitates what Ponce refers to as *symbolic boundary*, which draws the line between the groups (2017, p. 3). The non-egalitarian treatment of women in the Muslim community can strengthen the symbolic boundary and thus inhibit prejudice and negative attitudes among native Western women.

Respectively, the findings of Ponce's study of the attitudes towards Muslim immigrants in Europe indicate that females are consistently more likely to exhibit prejudice against this particular minority than male respondents (2017, p. 8). The author highlights that the results of his research reflect a significant reversal of the previously observed gender pattern. This shift derives from the juxtaposition of European gender politics and traditional immigrant cultures,

which are perceived as illiberal. The difference in gender-ideologies essentially crystallises the symbolic boundary between the dominant European cultural group and the "other". In relation to this, Ponce argues that native women begin to view Muslim immigrants as a threat to gender equality and, therefore, to themselves (2017, p. 9).

1.9 Research Questions

The following research questions were investigated.

(a) How many percent of the participants in the study did know any foreign student in person.

(b) Sex differences regarding positive attitude towards integration immigrant minorities

(c) Sex differences regarding intense group identification.

(d) The relationship between positive attitudes towards integrating immigrants and intense group identification.

(e) The relationship between positive attitudes towards integrating immigrants and intense group identification and anxiety and depression

2. Method

2.1 Sample

A questionnaire was completed by 129 females, 48 males, and three respondents who reported "other" as sex. The mean age was 19.8 (*SD* 2.6) for females and 21.8 (*SD* 2.9) for males. The age difference was significant [$t_{(175)}$ = 4.34, p < .001]. The respondents were originally from the following countries: Azerbaijan (1), Belarus (1), Georgia (1), Kazakhstan (1), Lithuania (1), Moldova (6), Russia (162), Ukraine (5), and Uzbekistan (2). The nationalities of the respondents were: Georgia (1), Israel (1), Kazakhstan (1), Moldova (5), Russia (167), UK (1), Ukraine (3), and Uzbekistan (1). The levels of their current studies were: Bachelor (121), Doctoral (2), Master (28), and other (29). All respondents were studying at universities in Russia.

2.2 Instrument

A questionnaire was constructed for measuring positive attitudes towards integrating immigrant minorities, intense group identification, anxiety, and depression.

Positive attitudes towards integrating immigrant minorities was measured with seven items: (a) If we are going to take integration seriously, we should accept that the Russian culture changes, (b) Ethnic Russians should demand that their own traditions and practices are dominant in comparison with immigrant culture *), (c) Russians should not let their own culture be influenced by immigrants in Russia *), (d) Russians should go out of their way to accept immigrant traditions, (e) As a nation, we should be more open and welcoming toward the customs of minorities with another cultural background, (f) Russians should do more to get to know immigrants, and (g) Russians should accept that immigrants use their culturally typical clothes when they are at work (adapted after Phelps, Eilertsen, Türken, & Ommundsen, 2011). Items with an asterisk were recoded. Response alternatives were on a five-point scale (0 = strongly disagree, 1 = slightly disagree, 2 = neutral, 3 = agree somewhat, 4 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .84.

Intense group identification was measured with six items: (a) The moral values of my culture are the best for me, (b) A person from another cultural group can never understand me as well as someone from my own group, (c) It is difficult to interact with people from another cultural group, (d) People from different cultural groups should not mix too much, (e) One can never trust a person from another cultural group as well as one from one's own group, (f) I

would not like my children to marry a person from another culture, (Grigaitytė, Österman, & Björkqvist, 2019). The response alternatives were on a five-point scale (0 = strongly disagree, 1 = slightly disagree, 2 = neutral, 3 = agree somewhat, 4 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the scale was α = .79.

Anxiety and depression were measured with six items each from the Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogatis & Melisaratos, 1983). Response alternatives were on a five-point scale (0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = moderately, 3 = much, 4 = extremely much). Cronbach's alpha was .88 for anxiety and .87 for depression.

One single item measured whether the respondents did know any foreign student in person. The response alternatives were yes or no.

2.3 Procedure

The data collection was conducted with an online questionnaire. The link was shared by the administrator of the study. Respondents who took part in the survey were asked to share the link further in a snowball manner. All responses were gathered anonymously. The survey was active from the October 1 till November 30, 2020.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

The study is consistent with the principles concerning human research ethics of the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013), as well as it follows the guidelines for the responsible conduct of research of The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012).

3. Results

3.1 Correlations between the Scales in the Study

Positive attitudes towards integrating immigrant minorities and intense group identification correlated significantly and highly negatively for both females and males (Table1). Anxiety and depression correlated significantly and highly positively with each other for both females and males.

Table 1

Correlations between the Scales in the Study, Females below the Diagonal (N =129), and Males above (N = 48)

	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Positive attitudes towards integrating immigrant minorities	-	-.64 ***	.16 *ns*	.07 *ns*
2. Intense group identification	-.55 ***	-	-.16 *ns*	-.11 *ns*
3. Anxiety	.00 *ns*	-.11 *ns*	-	.83 ***
4. Depression	-.02 *ns*	-.13 *ns*	.65 ***	-

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p < .005$; * $p < .01$

3.2 Sex Differences

Female students (2.57) had a significantly more positive attitude towards integration of immigrant minorities compared to male students (1.85) [$t_{(175)} = 5.21, p < .001$]. A tendency was found for a significant sex difference for intense group identification. Male students (1.56) scored slightly higher than female students (1.28) on intense group identification [$t_{(175)} = 1.90, p = .059$].

3.3 Respondents Who Knew a Foreign Student in Person

Of females, 55.8 % and of males 66.7% reported that they knew some foreign student in person. The mean value on positive attitudes towards integrating immigrants for students who knew a foreign student and for students who did not know any was the same (2.40). The mean value on intense group identification for students who knew a foreign student was 1.30, and for students who did not know any it was 1.42. The difference was not significant.

3.4 Differences between Students Scoring High or Low on Positive Attitudes towards Integrating Immigrant Minorities

A new variable was constructed based on *z*-scores of positive attitudes towards integrating immigrant minorities. Respondents with values below or equal to the mean were assigned to the group with less positive attitudes (low), and respondents with values above the mean were assigned to the group with more positive attitudes (high).

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with positive attitudes towards integrating immigrant minorities (high/low) as independent variable and intense group identification, anxiety, and depression as dependent variables.

The multivariate test was significant. The univariate tests showed that respondents with low scores on positive attitudes towards integrating immigrants scored significantly higher on intense group identification. No significant differences between the groups were found for anxiety and depression (Table 2).

Table 2

Results of a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Positive Attitudes towards Integrating Immigrant Minorities (High/Low) as Independent Variable and Intense Group Identification, Anxiety, and Depression as Dependent Variables (N = 180)

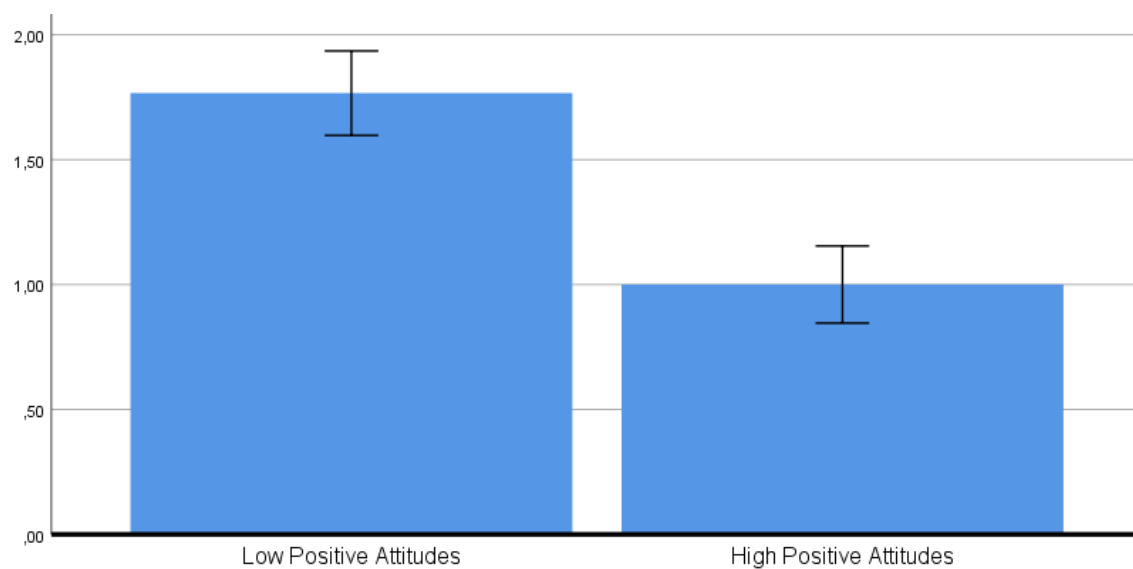|	*F*	*df*	$p \leq$	η_p^2	Group with higher mean
Effect of Positive Attitudes (High/Low)					
Multivariate Analysis	14.88	3, 176	.001	.202	
Univariate Analyses					
Intense group identification	43.63	1, 178	.001	.197	Low Pos. Att.
Anxiety	1.09	"	*ns*	.006	-
Depression	0.03	"	ns	.000	-

Fig. 1. Mean values *on intense group identification* for respondents with high and low scores on positive attitudes on integration of immigrants ($N = 180$).

4. Discussion

4.1 Summary of the Findings

The present study was carried out to extend the body of knowledge on the issues of xenophobia, cultural and racial exclusionism, and acculturation among students of Russian universities. It provided quantitative date on the role of previous exposure to cross-cultural relationship within the academic environment, gender patterns, positive attitudes towards integrating immigrant minorities, intense group identification, and anxiety and depression.

The previous academic studies suggest that the gender pattern of attitudes towards immigrant minorities changes dramatically over time, with male and female effects prevailing over different years (Adorno et al., 2019; Ceobanu & Escandell, 2008; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2009; Paas & Halapuu, 2012; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008; Farris, 2017; Ponce, 2017). In particular, Ponce's (2017) findings suggest that in the second decade of the 21st century the trend has reversed towards the greater female effect due to the incompatibility of gender ideologies of the dominant and dominated cultural groups. However, the findings of this paper are inconsistent with Ponce's thesis. Female students in Russia have much more positive attitudes towards integration of immigrant minorities when compared to males. In relation to the intense group identification, the gender pattern is vivid as well, with a strong male effect. Therefore, women at Russian universities appear to be more tolerant to the dominated cultures, and the men are more prone to exhibit exclusionist behavior towards the immigrant minorities. The likely explanation for this deviation from the expected results could relates to the gender ideology of the dominant culture. The study of Ponce was conducted in Europe, where he highlighted the salience of gender egalitarianism. Consequentially, he explained the strong female effect as women's response to the perceived threat to the existing gender rights security. The lack of strong gender-egalitarian ideology in Russia, therefore, can result in the less vivid symbolic boundaries. Since, according to Ponce (2017), these boundaries are essential inhibitors of group identification, the absence of such would explain the discrepancies in the empirical findings.

The paper has revealed strong negative correlation between positive attitudes towards integration of immigrants and intense group identification for all respondents. The high score on the positive attitudes towards integration scale corresponded to lower values of intense group identification, and vice versa. This relation was expected due to the conceptual similarities of both variables. The scale employed by this study for measuring proactive attitudes towards integration of minorities has been proven by earlier research (Phelps et al., 2011) to be relevant

to psychological dispositions associated with prejudice against minority groups, which include social dominance orientation. The same concept lies at the core of operationalisation of intense group identification: it is an individual's predisposition to form and support group hierarchy (Pratto et al., 2000). Phelps et al., (2011) associate positive attitudes towards integration with three key elements: cultural efforts, structural efforts and openness to diversity. All of them define the individual's readiness to maintain equal inter-group relations, rather than hierarchical. Therefore, conceptually, the two variables are opposite to each other on the spectrum of individual attitudes. The empirical findings observed in this study have proven this relationship.

The 'scapegoating hypothesis' assumed that poor socio-economic conditions in the country can create certain psychological stressors manifested in the form of anxiety, frustration and depression. Consequentially, the dominant group experiencing such difficulties start attributing the blame to the minorities, thus increasing the inter-group tensions (Alarape, 2008; Coetzee, 2012). In this regard, the psychological stressors appear as a mediator between the dominant group's grievances and its hostility towards immigrants. In order to test this assumption, the study examined the empirical associations between respondents psychological well-being and their attitudes towards integration of the immigrants. The findings have revealed no significant difference between 'low' and 'high' positive attitudes subgroups of respondents and their indicators of anxiety and depression. Therefore, there are no reasons to assume that psychological stressors somehow predetermined lower positive attitudes towards integration of the immigrants and higher intense group identification respectively via attribution of blame to the members of non-dominant cultural, ethnic, or racial groups. This particular aspect of the study, however, is subjected to significant limitations which will be covered later on in the corresponding section of this chapter.

The previous exposure to the minorities within the academic environment seems to have no effect on the students' positive attitudes towards integrating immigrants. In fact, the mean value of the variable related to these attitudes was the same for both groups respondents: students who knew a foreign student and those who did not. A similar finding was observed in relation to the intense group identification variable. Although those respondents who were not previously exposed to foreigners in the university scored slightly higher on the intense group identification scale than their counterparts, the difference was not statistically significant.

4.2 Limitations of the Study

The study renders findings that add to the current understanding of inter-group relations and the problem of acculturation in Russia. However, the data obtained from this study is subjected to a few limitations. Therefore, it is essential to address them critically. One of the key limitations relates to the sampling. The respondents were randomly selected among students enrolled at Russian universities in a snow-ball fashion. The study did not control for the respondents' university affiliation. Therefore, a sampling bias could have occurred in the form of insufficient diversity in representation of Russian universities. Furthermore, the research did not control for the respondents' belonging to a particular cultural group: either the dominant majority or a dominated minority. Following from the theory of acculturation explained in the first chapter of the paper, the two types of groups are situated in radically different predispositions in relation to the inter-group dynamics. Hence, their responses on the positive attitudes towards integrating immigrants could easily deviate from the attitudes of the native dominant group. Hypothetically, it could have compromised the data as well.

Another limitation concerns the 'scapegoating hypothesis' and the data related to it. The theory implies that members of the native group associate psychological stressors with the immigrant minorities. For instance, poor socio-economic conditions can translate into scapegoating, due to the perceived association between the minority groups and the causes of the psychological stress. However, it is unclear whether all possible causes of depression and anxiety can be associated with the minorities. If the stress is caused by a personal trauma, the blame for which cannot be attributed to the immigrants due to the lack of any seemingly possible connection, the scapegoating effect might not occur.

4.3 Implications of the Study

The findings related to the gender pattern clearly indicate that the reversal trend observed by Ponce (2017) in Europe is not evident in Russian universities. A more thorough qualitative investigation is required in order to explain the lack of the female effect on the attitudes towards immigrants. The preliminary assumption is that the gender value systems in the dominant native cultural group and the dominated minority groups are not incompatible or distinct enough to inhibit the perception of the symbolic boundary. Since the development of positive peace in the country includes improvement in the domain of rights equality, the subsequent promotion of gender equality can hypothetically backfire in the deterioration of positive attitudes towards immigrants (and, on contrary, increase of intense group identification) among native women.

Therefore, a further deep research on the gender effect in Russia is essential, in order to render a path towards a peaceful and harmonised society.

The observed association between intense group identification and positive attitudes towards integration of immigrants provides research for additional insight on what the major problems associated with acculturation and adaptation of immigrants in Russia could be. Consequentially, a further search for effective tactics to combat intense group identification should be conducted, in order to pursue the goal of positive peace development in the country. On addition, given that the process of adaptation can have a strong impact on the non-dominant group's member's psychological well-being (Berry, 1997), the problem of intense group identification can be identified as a serious threat to individual well-being.

Although the paper has found no association between psychological well-being indicators and the respondents' attitudes towards integrating immigrants and intense group identification, the scapegoating effect should not be disregarded. The current study was subjected to a number of limitation, which presumably have affected the results relevant to this particular object of investigation. At the same time, the literature emphasises consistently the conceptual connection between psychological stressors of both dominant and non-dominant groups' members and the process of acculturation (Berry, 1997; Alarape, 2008; Coetzee, 2012). Perhaps, another study dedicated specifically to this puzzle is required in order to shed light on this phenomenon in contemporary Russia.

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