The Ethnic Identity and Social Adaptation of the Young People in the Different Culture Spheres

Irina Plotka and Mara Vidnere[1], and Nina Blumenau[2]
[1]*Daugavpils University (Latvia),* [2]*Transport and Telecommunication institute of Latvia (Latvia)*

Abstract

This paper concerns the developmental problems of ethnic communities and different aspects of their social cultural adaptation among young people aged 18-28 years old (Latvians from Russia - 69; Russians from Latvia -67; Latvians from Latvia – 62; Russians from Russia – 66). Methods: "Adaptation of personality to the new social cultural space"(scales: Adaptability, Conformity, Inter-activity, Depression, Nostalgia, Estrangement) and «Types of ethnic identity» (scales: Ethnic nihilism, Ethnic indifference, Positive ethnic identity, Ethnic egoism, Ethnic isolationism, Ethnic fanaticism). It has been stated that negative ethnic identity is forming during adaptation of Young people: Ethnic Identity of Russian Young people in Latvia is forming on the type of hypoidentity, Ethnic Identity of Latvian Young people in Russia - on the type of hyperidentity. In spite of the process of adaptation, there is no opportunity of complete socialization. Results of investigation give idea how to integrate in different cultures.

Introduction

Recent political, social and economic changes in the Baltic states have encouraged the shaping of a new actuality in ethnopolitics, social psychology, and culture. The social, ethnic, and culture identity of people and the ethnopolitical status of ethnic groups has also changed. The awareness of our own ethnic identity has intensified. Social and cultural adaptation is a process during which an ethnic group or several members of it adapt to an external environment, employing various social and cultural means. Learning to interact in a new cultural environment, brings necessity to transform one's social and ethnic identity. A human being who is not capable to adapt in a new environment can encounter a negative transformation: changes in psyche, health deterioration, collapse of social viewpoints. Transformation can lead to estrangement, ethnic nihilism, fanaticism and nationalism – outspokenly negative image of ethnos with corresponding behaviour. Psychological transformation of the ethnic identity is a complicated process that depends on multiple factors. In the given work mutual relationship between ethnical identity and social adaptation of the Russians in Latvia and Latvians in Russia are researched because these are two ethnic groups with similar history and culture.

One of the main discussion problems in ethnopsychology concerns the questions of identity. As Ashmore (Ashmore, 2004) indicates, in social psychology four main theories of identity exist: "Social identity theory"(SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), "Social categorization theory"(SCT) (Turner, 1987); "Identity theory" (Stryker, 1980) and "nigrescence model"- only self-categorization was a common element used in all current major theories (Cross, 1971).

In main theories of social psychology, identity is described as a social phenomenon stemming from one's group memberships and role-taking (McCall & Simmons, 1966/1978; Stryker, 1980, 1987). Aspects of personality are examined in the close relation to the integration of various roles, as well as with quest for authentic identities (Harter, 1997) and social dispositions in the process of adaptation and assimilation of social experience (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Identity as a social phenomenon that develops continuously, self-improves and educates, expanding the borders of own group, also Aune Valk (Valk, 2007; Valk & Karu, 2000) has remarked, simultaneously offering to research other qualities of identity as well – as ascribed identity and acquired identity, that develops in the process of socialization of the personality in certain environment and historical situation. Hence, in the field of modern social psychology the questions become significant regarding the process

of creation and development of "social embeddness of identity" that Ashmore with her colleagues denominated as elements of identity (Ashmore, 2004)

Berry and Phinney (Berry, 1990; Phinney, 1989) in their turn also draw attention to the difficulties of social identity formation in adaptation process, creating "U-shaped adaptation -curve". Actual adaptation of the identity and creation of new, multiple identities depends on features, age, level of education of the personality, support of various social groups, social pronenesses, inner attitude of the group, as well as socio-economic circumstances and strategies chosen for integration (acculturation) (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000).

Analysis of the publications indicated that ethnic problems are researched both with implicit and explicit methods. On the bases of the explicit methods are self-report procedures of the research subjects. Psychologists of Latvia employed them in order to research various problems of ethnic psychology. (Ruzha, 2000; Dimdiņš, 2002; Skuskovnika, 2004; Kolesovs, 2005 et al.). Here the researches must be mentioned that are devoted to various aspects of the ethnic identity and social adaptation in diverse cultural environments (Plotka, Vidnere, Sokol, 2006; Vidnere, Plotka, Igonin, 2006, 2007; Plotka, Blumenau, Vidnere, 2008; Blumenau, Plotka, 2008; et al.). In numerous theories devoted to ethnic problems it has been demonstrated that humans often do not realize their own attitude to different ethnic groups. Recently implicit methods for researching subconscious social occurrences are intensively being developed. In Latvia researches of ethnic attitudes are devoted to this problem, researches were carried out within the framework of the subconscious paradigm of emotional priming (Plotka, Igonin, Blumenau, 2008). The perspective could be the conducting research of social occurrences, by means of combining explicit and implicit methods.

In Latvia, there is the special ethnic group that we will name: 'Russians living in Latvia'. They are people that have plural ethnic belonging, self-identified in language use and place of living.

Research presented in this paper is part of on-going research that continues the study of ethnical identities of young adults and their social adaptation in diverse cultural environments, employing explicit methods.

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

Research questions:
1. How does the ethnical identity of 'Russians that live in Latvia' differ from 'Russians that live in Russia', and 'Latvians that live in Russia' and 'Latvians that live in Latvia'?
2. How the social adaptation of 'Russians that live in Latvia' differs from 'Latvians that live in Russia'?

Method

Sum of participants: 264, 18-28 years old:
- Latvians that live or have moved to permanent residence in Russia and live in Russia more than 5 years already (69) – (L-R);
- Russians that live or have moved to permanent residence in Latvia and live in Latvia more than 5 years already (67) (R-L);
- Latvians, that live in Latvia permanently (62) – (L-L);
- Russians, that live in Russia permanently (66) – (R-R).

Questionnaires:
  ➢ "Adaptation of personality to the new social cultural space"
    by Jankovsky (*Платонов*, 2003, 374-379).
    Scales:
    Adaptability (AD), Conformity (C), Interactivity (IA), Depression (D), Nostalgia (N), Estrangement (E).
  ➢ "Types of ethnic identity"
    by Soldatova (*Солдатова*, 1998, 189-193).
    Scales:
    Ethnonihilism (EN), Ethnic indifference (EI), Positive ethnic identity (PEI), Ethnoegoism (EE), Ethnoisolation (EI), Ethnofanaticism (EF).

Results

I. *Social Adaptation*

The data is related to the high, middle and low levels in obedience of Yankovskiy's method. It reveals 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.1) differ statistically significantly (p≤0.001).

Only in three scales pronounced indicators were observed: adaptivity, conformity and interactivity. Pronounced adaptability testifies: personal satisfaction, positive attitude towards surrounding people and acceptance of them, feeling of social and physical security, sense of belonging to the given society, desire for self-actualization, high level of activity. The adaptability of Russian young adults in Latvia and Latvian young adults in Russia is almost identical: 55% - high level and 45% - average.

Pronounced conformity testifies to the desire to maintain good relationships with people from other ethic groups, orientation to recognition, relatively strong dependence on the group, the necessity of attachment and emotional relationships with people, the value of the given surroundings and acceptance of the behavioural norms. Pronounced conformity was observed in quite small part of Latvian young adults in Russia (6%). Low conformity was observed mainly among Russian young adults in Latvia (16%). In both groups respondents predominantly had average levels of conformity (84% of Russians in Latvia and 91% of Latvians in Russia).

Characteristic features for people with pronounced interactivity are active familiarization with environments; desire to broaden links; confidence in oneself; critical attitude regarding own behaviour; taking into account social norms; viewpoints of the society; willingness to change oneself; orientation toward collaboration with other people; and, purposefulness.

The stake of 'Latvian young adults in Russia' with pronounced interactivity statistically significantly exceeds the stake of 'Russian young adults in Latvia' with pronounced interactivity (correspondingly 35% and 7%, p≤0.01). Low interactivity was observed in small part of Russian respondents in Latvia (6%). In both groups the largest number of the respondents had an average level of interactivity. The stake of Latvian young adults average interactivity statistically significantly exceeds the stake of Russian young adults in Latvia with average interactivity (correspondingly 85% and 65%, p≤0.01).
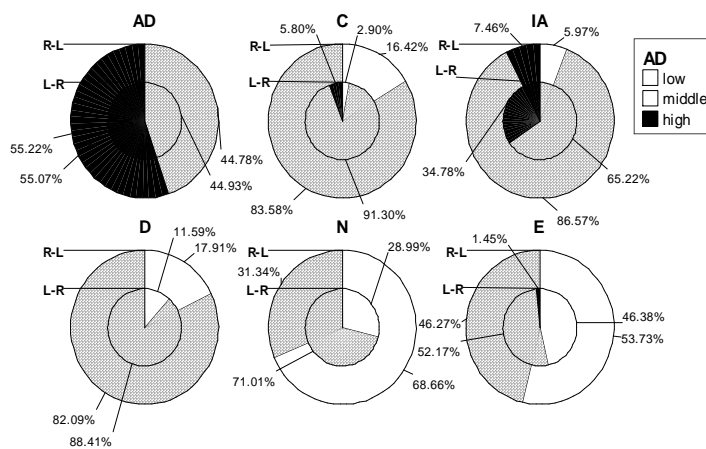

Fig.1. Respondent's distribution with high (black), middle and low (white) levels of the scales of adaptation in the groups of Russians from Latvia and Latvians from Russia

In both groups the level was low on the scales of estrangement and nostalgia. Moreover, the number of Russians in Latvia with low level of nostalgia (69%) exceeds the number of Latvians in Russia (29%), (p≤0.01). The stake of respondents with low level of estrangement in both groups has not significant differences.

Low level pursuant to the scale of nostalgia testifies to the fact that the link with own culture was not lost, that there does not exist inner unrest and perplexity due to the separation from traditional values, that there exists hope to gain new values, that there does not exist uncalled hopes, sadness and sense of emptiness. There are more Russian young adults in Latvia with such characterization than Latvian young adults in Russia.

Low level pursuant to the scale of estrangement testifies to acceptance of the new social context with sufficiently high self-esteem, correspondence of wishes and actual potentialities, the belief in own capabilities. There are no feelings of panic, helplessness and desolation.

The comparison of adaptation levels pursuant to the scales (Fig.2, Tab.1):

- statistically significant differences were not discovered between the levels for Latvians in the Russia and Russians in the Latvia pursuant to the scales of adaptability and estrangement;
- For Latvians living in Russia pursuant to scales of conformity, interactivity, state of depression and nostalgia the levels are higher that for Russians living in Latvia ($p \leq 0.001$, state of depression - $p \leq 0.027$);
- Median of parameters pursuant to all scales in both groups is not higher than the norm is. Median of parameters pursuant to scales "nostalgia" and "estrangement" for Russians in Latvia is slightly below the norm.

Therefore the social adaptation of young adults in cultural environment in both groups is comparatively normal and without specific differences between the groups.
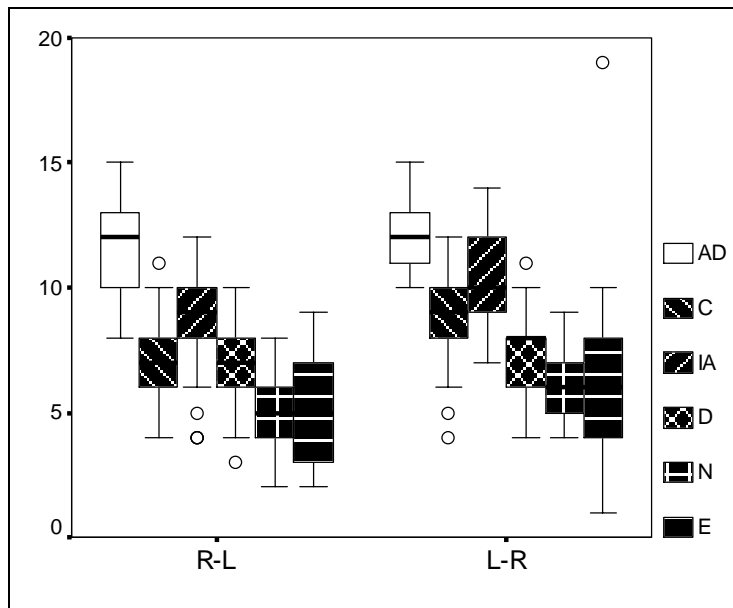

Fig.2. Levels of Social Adaptation

It must be emphasized that higher level in conformity scale that is characteristic for Latvians in the Russia signifies higher desire to maintain relationships with people in any circumstances, higher orientation to recognition, stronger dependence on the group, the necessity of attachment and emotional relationships with people, the value of the given surroundings and acceptance of the behavioural norms.

Latvians in the Russia have higher level in the scale of state of depression and it signifies that disharmony of the personality, perceiving the world in gloomy mood, without value and significance is more pronounced. It is related to the concern and unrest regarding social identity, with sense of depression

II. *Ethnic Identity*

The significance of each scale (*Солдатова*, 1998, 189-193):

- Ethno-nihilism – one of the forms of hypo-identity. Departure from own ethnic group and quests for stable socially psychological niches, that are not related to ethnic criteria.
- Ethnic indifference – blurry ethnic identity, that is characterized by indeterminate ethnical affiliation, ethnic aspect is not relevant.
- Positive ethnic identity – positive attitude regarding own nation is correlated with positive attitudes regarding other nations. It creates optimal equilibrium of toleration between own ethnic group and other ethnic groups, it is conditions of independence and stable existence of ethnic group, as well as it determines peaceful interaction among cultures in a poly-ethnic world.
- Ethno-egoism – tension and irritation in interaction with different ethnic groups, recognizing the rights of own nation only to solve problems on the account of "others".
- Ethno-isolation – conviction about the superiority of own nation, appeal to "purify" national culture, negative attitude regarding interethnic marriages, xenophobia.

- Ethno-fanaticism – alacrity to perform any actions in the name of ethnic interests that are comprehended somehow or other, justification of any sacrifices in the struggle about prosperity of own nation.
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Pursuant to scales of ethnic identity, differences among Russian young adults in Latvia, Latvian young adults in Russia and Latvian young adults in Latvia were not established (Fig.3). In the first place, there is positive ethnic identity, and it the last place there is Ethno-nihilism. Among the above mentioned groups, judging the apportionment of grades pursuant to all six ethnic identity scales, statistically significant differences were not discovered.

Notwithstanding for Russian young adults in Russia, the apportionment of grades pursuant to ethnic identity scales differs from all other groups (Fig.3): in the first places are grades pursuant to grades of hyper-identity: Ethno-fanaticism (28.7%), Ethno-isolation (25.6%), Ethno-egoism (19.3%). Positive ethnic identity follows – 14.7% and in the last places grades pursuant to the scales of hypo-identity: ethnical indifference (9.9%) and ethno-nihilism (1.7%).

According to Soldatova's methodology it is possible to determine the transformation of ethnic self-confidence. The types of identities are distributed pursuant to the scale of ethnocentrism: from the "denial" of ethnic identity to the national fanaticism. Scales: ethno-egoism, ethno-isolation, ethno-fanaticism – characterize transformation of the ethnic self-confidence pursuant to the type of hyper-identity (Hyper-I), whereas scales – ethno-nihilism and ethnic indifference – are pursuant to the type of hypo-identity (Hypo-I). Ethnical toleration can be assessed pursuant to the scale of positive ethnic identity, but the level of intolerance can be assessed pursuant to all other scales.
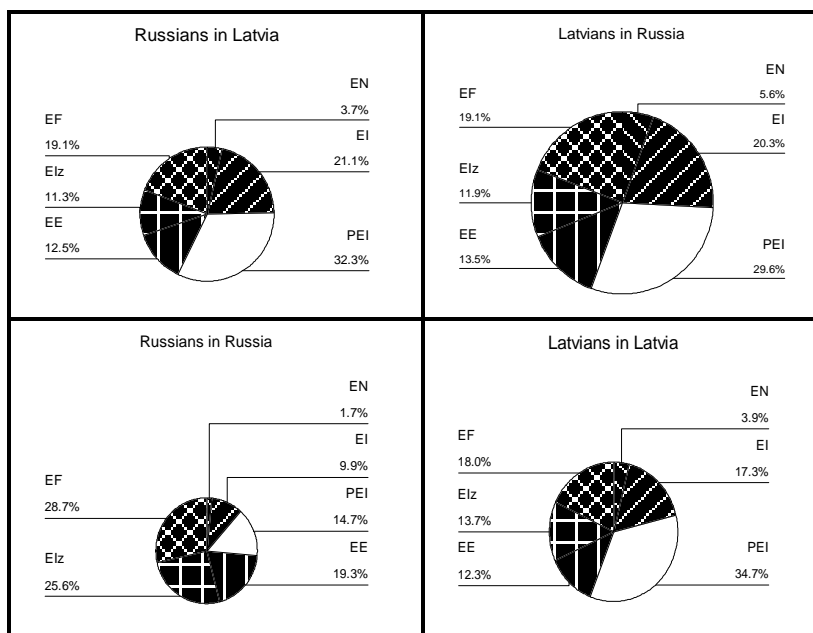
Fig.3. Structures of Ethnic Identity - I
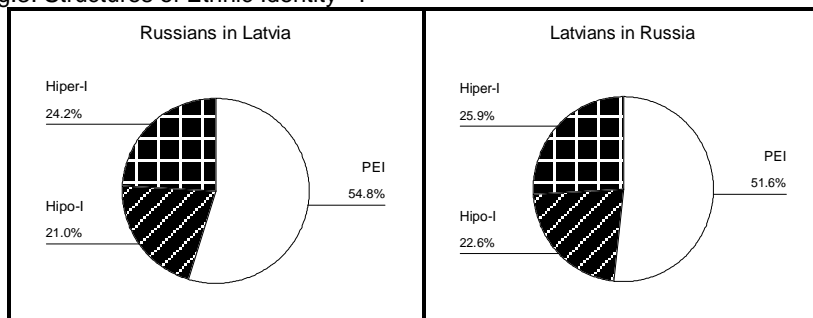
Fig.4. Structures of Ethnic Identity - II
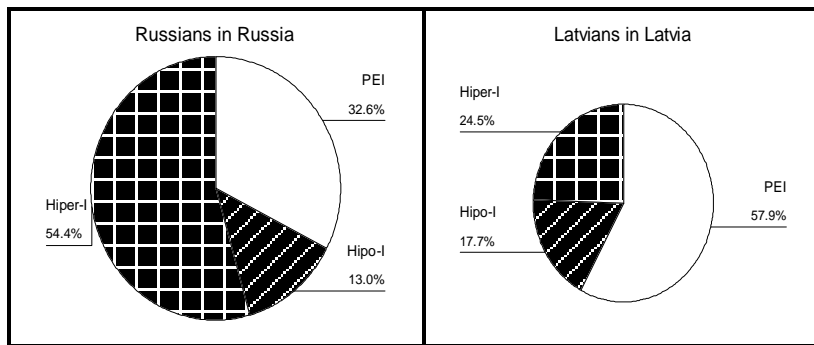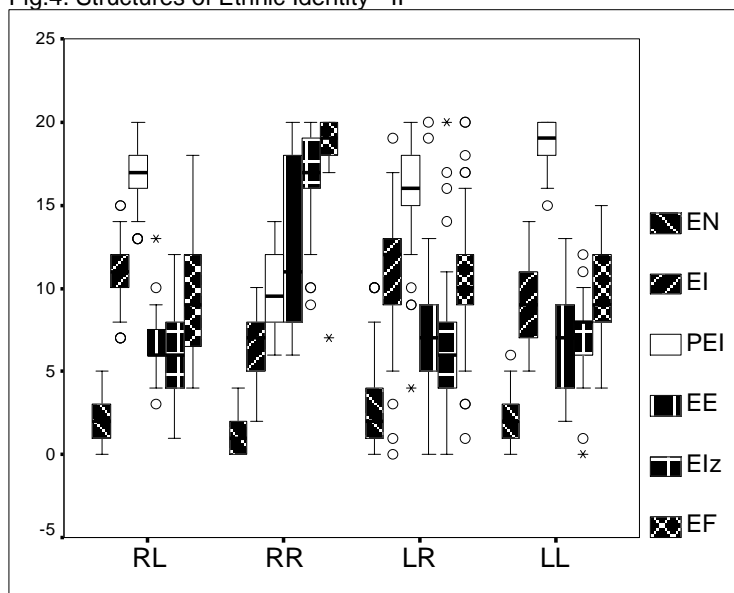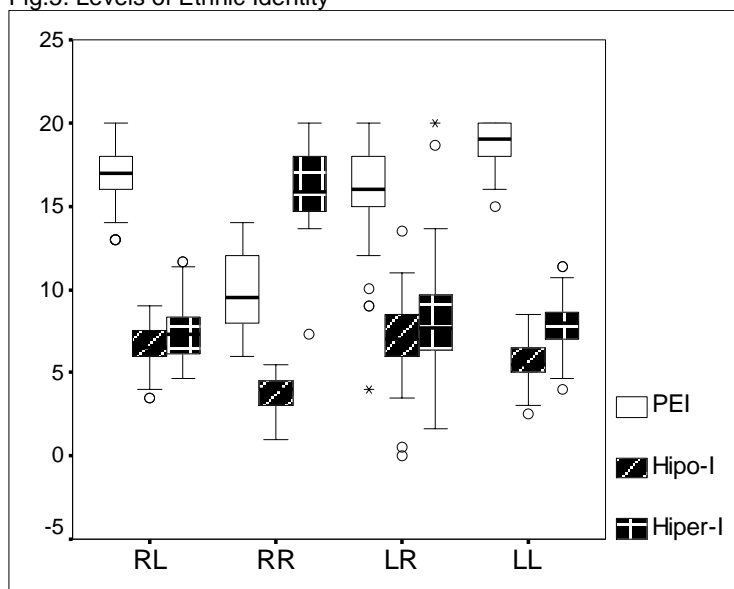

Fig.5. Levels of Ethnic Identity

Fig.6. Levels of Ethnic Identity

For Russians in Russia positive ethnic identity is the least significant pursuant to the apportionment of grades pursuant to transformation of ethnical awareness. The destructiveness pursuant to the type of hypo-identity is in the last place for Russians in Russia, but destructiveness pursuant to the type of hyper-

identity is in the first place for Russians in Russia. Apportionment of grades pursuant to transformation of ethnical awareness for Russians in Russia differs statistically significantly from other ethnic groups ($p \leq 0.01$) (Fig.4).

Tab.1. Mann-Whitney U-Test's results

		Ethnic Identity	U	p				Ethnic Identity	U	p	
Hipo-I	EN	LR>LL	1777.5	0.091	ns	Hipo-I		LR-RL	1866	0.051	ns
		LL=RL	2006.5	0.735	ns			LR>LL	1107	0.000	
		LL>RR	1363	0.001				RL>LL	1237	0.000	
		RL>RR	1548	0.002				LL>RR	500	0.000	
	EI	LR>RL	2218.5	0.683	ns	Hiper-I		RR>LL	42.5	0.000	
		LR>LL	1332.5	0.000				LL>LR	2055	0.698	ns
		RL>LL	1128.5	0.000				LL>RL	1656.5	0.047	
		LL>RR	733.5	0.000				LR>RL	2002.5	0.178	ns
Hiper-I	EE	RR>LR=RL=LL	843	0.000		PEI		LL>RL	993.5	0.000	
		LR=LL=RL	1954	0.391	ns			RL>LR	1935.5	0.098	ns
		LR>RL	2024.5	0.205	ns			RL>RR	9	0.000	
		LL>RL	2032.5	0.832	ns			LR>RR	213.5	0.000	
	Ez	RR>LL	19.5	0.000		**Social Adaptation:**					
		LL>LR=RL	1494	0.003		AD	RL=LR	2280.5	0.891	ns	
		LL>RL=LR	1303	0.000		C	RL<LR	1041.5	0.000		
		LR=RL	2183	0.573	ns	IA	RL<LR	1349.5	0.000		
	EF	RR>LR=RL	177.5	0.000		D	RL<LR	1813.5	0.027		
		LR=RL	2077.5	0.306	ns	N	RL<LR	1204	0.000		
		LR=LL	1863	0.201	ns	E	RL=LR	2001.5	0.174	ns	
		LL=RL	2065.5	0.957	ns						

Reductions:
U – Mann-Whitney test's U-Statistics; p – probability;
"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";
"LR=RL" - „Between Latvians, who lives in Russia and Russians, who lives in Latvia indices' levels statistically significant distinctions are not found".
In the Fig.5-6 outcomes of the comparison are represented pursuant to the scale levels of ethnic identity. Mann-Whitney U-test test discovered the statistically significant distinctions in the levels of ethnic identity (Tab.1).

▪ For Russians in Latvia and Latvians in Russia the levels of hypo-identity are alike, the levels of hyper-identity are alike and the levels of positive ethnic identity are alike.
▪ If compared to the Russians in the Russia and Latvians in the Latvia, they have the most expressive level of hypo-identity and the less expressive level of hyper-identity. The level of positive ethnic identity is situated in between.
▪ Russians in the Russia have the less expressed levels of hypo-identity and positive ethnic identity, but they have extremely expressed level of hyper-identity.

Latvians in Latvia have the most expressed level of positive ethnic identity, but the levels of hypo-identity and hyper-identity are situated in between.

III *Analysis of Correlations*
In Fig.7-8 statistically significant relationships are depicted between social adaptation and ethnical identity in the groups Russians in Latvia and Latvians in Russia. Direct line indicates positive monotonous relationship between variables, dotted line - negative.
In the group of Russians in Latvia more statistically significant mutual relationships are discovered than in the group of Latvians in Russia. In both groups there are none mutual relationship in the environment of the same variables.
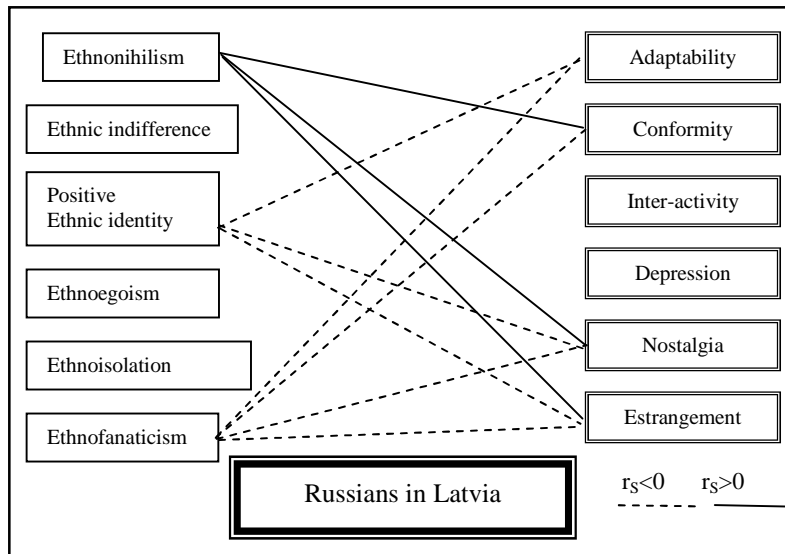
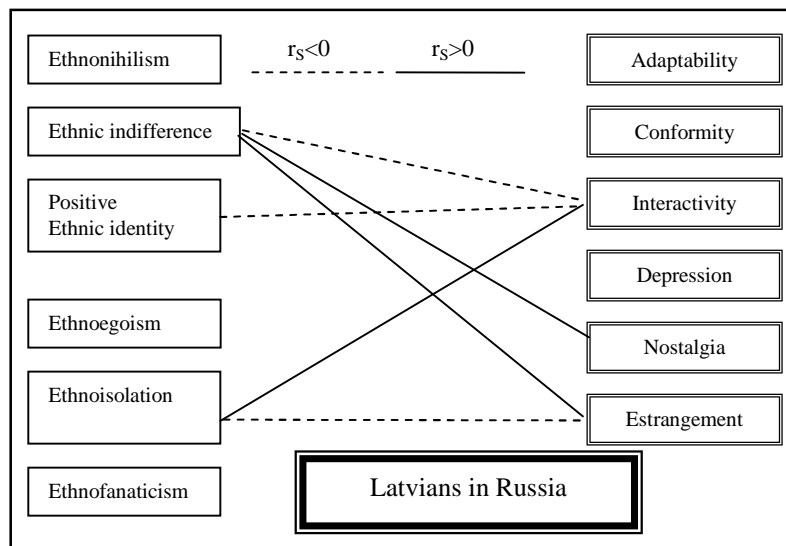Fig.7. Relationships for the Russians in Latvia (N=67)

Fig.8. Relationships for the Latvians in Russia (N=69)

Russians in Latvia

Ethno-nihilism with positive relationship is connected to adaptability, conformity, nostalgia and estrangement. Positive ethnic identity with negative relationship is connected to adaptability, conformity, nostalgia and estrangement. Ethno-isolation with conformity is connected to negative relationship. Ethno-fanaticism with negative relationship is connected to adaptability, conformity, nostalgia and estrangement.

Latvians in Russia

Ethic indifference with positive relationship is connected to nostalgia and estrangement. Ethno-isolation with positive relationship is mutually connected with interactivity, but estrangement is connected with negative relationship.

Discussion

In Russian young adults in Russia can be observed as having negative tendencies of ethnical identity pursuant to the type of hyper-identity. According to the judgements of Russian psychologists, the upsurge of ethnical self-confidence and nationalism is correlated to the crisis of values. Communistic values and beliefs of the eldest generation were destroyed, that created the necessity to substitute them, what was often carried out by employing nationalism (*Милославская,* 2003).

Ethnic identity for Russian young adults in Latvia is correlated to social adaptation in greatest degree than for Latvian young adults in Russia. A negative link is ascertained between adaptability and positive ethnic identity.

Beyond doubt, the negative correlation between positive ethnic identity and adaptivity for Russian young adults in Latvia causes interest. It can be characterized in the environment of unhealthy adaptation processes, as a means of self-preservation in unstable circumstances of continuous social changes. Other links of correlation in the group of Russian young adults in Latvia testify this tendency.
It is obviously connected to the fact that when negative identity is accepted, individual can react diversely regarding negative judgements about own ethnos. Wherewithal – also to react to own negative image, that is created in the opinion of the representatives of dominant group. In this case, they have possibility to overcome the sense of inferiority and maintain high self-esteem. Individual can attribute negative judgements to other members of his ethnic group, not only to himself, thereby creating psychological border between group and himself. There exists tendency to negative ethnic identity pursuant to the type of hypo-identity.

Latvian young adults in Russia have conspicuous tendency, where positive ethnic identity have negative link with interactivity, as well as interactivity is correlated negatively with ethnic indifference.
Hence it is proven that in the process of adaptation of young adults negative ethnic identity is created: for Russian young adults in Latvia – pursuant to the type of hypo-identity, whereas Latvian young adults in Russia - pursuant to the type of hyper-identity. Despite such adaptation process, notwithstanding the possibility does not develops to socialise completely in a new cultural environment.

The results of the research provides information that can be employed in order to select correct method of integration in various cultures. Described results are obtained in the first stage of research and they shall be defined more exactly in further researches.

Acquired results correspond to the results of the work (Plotka, 2008) that were acquired in the sampling of various age groups of individuals.

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