

PSYCHOLOGY IN RUSSIA
STATE OF THE ART

Edited by
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MOSCOW
2008

BBC 88
P 96

Published under the Department of Psychology at the Lomonosov
Moscow State University Editorial advisory board decision

**P 96 Psychology in Russia: State of the Art / Ed. by Y. Zinchenko &
V. Petrenko. – Moscow: Department of Psychology MSU &
IG-SOCIN, 2008. – 388 p.**

ISBN 978-5-91070-026-4

This volume was prepared to the XXIX International Congress of Psychology (Berlin, Germany). Theoretical and philosophical psychology; cognitive, social, political, ethnic, clinical psychology; psychosemantics; behavioral genetics; industrial psychology and problem-solving psychology; creativity psychology; psychophysiology and the history of psychology topics are represented in the number of modern Russian psychologists' studies.

BBC 88

ISBN 978-5-91070-026-4

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Contents:

Introduction	5
Philosophy of Psychology	
Andrey V. Yurevich Cognitive Frames in Psychology: Demarcations and Ruptures	7
Vitaliy Y. Klochko Modern Psychology: Systems Meaning of a Paradigm Shift	25
Irina A. Mironenko On Some Difficulties in the Dialogue with Foreign Colleagues	41
Alexey M. Ulanovsky Phenomenology as a Style of Research and Practice	48
Historical Psychology	
Akop P. Nazaretyan Technology, Psychology, and Crises: Does World History Have a Psychological Dimension?	55
Social Psychology	
Yuri P. Zinchenko Psychology of Safety and Resistance to Terrorism	81
Nadezhda M. Lebedeva, Alexander N. Tatarko Ethnic Identity, Group Status and Type of Settlement as Predictors of Ethnic Intolerance	102
Cognitive Studies	
Vladimir A. Barabanshchikov The Systemicity Principle in Modern Psychology	120
Victor M. Allakhverdov Awareness as a Result of Choice	136
Diana B. Bogoyavlenskaya Two Paradigms – Two Vectors of Creating the New	153
Tatiana V. Kornilova Personality Regulation of Decision Making and Learning Efficacy	162
Anna B. Leonova Complex Strategy of Stress Management at the Workplace: Evaluation Model and Its Empirical Verification	182
Veronika V. Nourkova, Daniel M. Bernstein Imagination Inflation After a Change in Linguistic Context	197



ETHNIC IDENTITY, GROUP STATUS AND TYPE OF SETTLEMENT AS PREDICTORS OF ETHNIC INTOLERANCE*

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The results of the field research of intergroup attitudes in Southern Russia (N=723) demonstrated that the relationships of the valence and uncertainty of ethnic identity, perceived discrimination and the level of religious identity with intergroup attitudes depend on a group status (majority-minority) and the type of settlement (dense - sparse). The perceived discrimination predicts the intolerance of intergroup attitudes among the majority group members whereas, the valence and uncertainty of ethnic identity - among the minorities members. The salience of ethnic identity and high level of religious identity predict intolerant attitudes among migrants with the dense way of settlement, the valence of identity and perceived discrimination predict intolerant attitudes among the migrants with the sparse type of settlement. The willingness to distinguish between people by religion provides the maintenance of their group boundaries and identity in multicultural regions of Russia. The growth of uncertainty of ethnic identity, decrease of perceived discrimination and the level of religious identity as well as general ethnic tolerance provide better adaptation of migrants in multicultural regions of Russia.

Introduction

As we demonstrated in our previous researches such socio-psychological factors as the valence and salience of one's own ethnic identity, perceived discrimination and the level of religious identity predicted intolerant intergroup attitudes among members of different ethnic groups in Russia's multicultural regions. Specifically, positive ethnic identity was related positively, whereas negative one was related negatively with the tolerant intergroup attitudes. The uncertainty (or ambivalence) of ethnic identity, perceived discrimination and the high level of religious identity were related positively with ethnic intolerance (Lebedeva & Tatarko, 2003, 2004).

*The research has been supported by The Scientific Foundation of HSE (N 08-04-0007) and Russian Scientific Foundation (N 08-06-00702a).

We consider the valence of ethnic identity as a continuum between positive and negative attitudes toward one's own ethnicity. The positivity-negativity of ethnic autostereotypes and of the feelings associated with one's own ethnicity served as empirical indicators of this construct (Lebedeva, 1999). The meaning of this construct is very close to "confidence in one's own identity" which according to famous multicultural assumption is a basis for tolerance (Berry, 1984, Berry & Kalin, 2000).

The concept of "salience-uncertainty (or ambivalence) of group identity" has different meanings in different researches (Miller & Brewer, 1984; Gaertner, 1994; Brown, 2000; Taylor, 2002). In our previous research, the ambivalence of group identity was operationalized in terms of the feeling to be closer to other groups than to one's own group (Lebedeva & Tatarko, 2003, 2004). Consequently, the salience of group identity corresponds to the feeling of being closer to in-group than to out-groups. Previous studies revealed that the high salience of ethnic identity and distinctiveness of group boundaries relate negatively to intergroup outcomes (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Gaertner et al., 1993; Lebedeva, 1999). In our research the high subjective salience of ethnic identity was associated with positive whereas the subjective ambivalence was associated with negative intergroup attitudes (Lebedeva & Tatarko, 2003, 2004). A possible explanation of these results is that in an unstable society ethnic (cultural, religious) self-identification may reduce general uncertainty and serve as a tool for the process of self-awareness and self-definition.

According to Brown (2000), changing the salience of group identities in contact situations offers the promise of achieving generalized attitude change. Three different strategies exist in this case: *de-categorization*, in which all group identities are de-emphasized, *re-categorization* in which a superordinate identity become salient, thus subsuming problematic subgroup divisions, and *categorization* in which cooperation is established while retaining the distinctive identity of participating groups. Rupert Brown wrote that there may be some virtue in keeping the group identity at least minimally salient while simultaneously optimizing the various conditions for successful contact (Brown, 2000, p. 351). In some ways this seems a somewhat paradoxical strategy. In order to reduce prejudice towards an outgroup, we are suggesting that maintaining the psychological salience of an intergroup distinction can be advantageous (Miller & Brewer, 1984; Wilder, 1984; Scaberry et al., 1997; Desforges, 1991; Gaertner, 1994; Brown, 2000).

The problem of identity security is close to the threat for identity. Integrated threat theory asserts that four types of threat can lead to prejudice: **realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes**

