

NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

As a manuscript

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**Socio-Psychological Predictors  
of Youths' Attitude Towards Entry into Intercultural Marriage  
(on the material of two regions of Russia)**

PhD Dissertation Summary  
for the purpose of obtaining academic degree  
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

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Moscow, 2024

## **General description of the dissertation**

**The relevance of the study** is due to a number of positions.

First of them is the increase in the number of intercultural marriages. One of the reasons for this is the increase in the flow of migrants around the world. For example, in 2019 the number of migrants amounted to 272 million people, which is 3.5% of the total world population (“Migration Research and Analysis: Growth, Reach and Recent Contributions,” 2019). The increase in migration leads to an increase in intercultural contact, which according to researchers (Markus & Kitayama, 1998; Fletcher et al., 2014), contributes to the increase in intercultural marriages.

Another reason is the increase in the intensity of intercultural exchange through media and Internet. This makes it easier for people to meet and to interact. These factors indicate the “blurring and weakening” of boundaries between states and nations, which in turn contributes to the development of a multicultural society and an increase in intercultural marriages (Tseng et al., 1977; Silva et al., 2012; Heikkilä & Rauhut, 2015).

The increase in intercultural marriages necessitates the need to study both the phenomenon itself and the factors that predict intercultural marriages.

The second position is related to the fact that in modern multicultural societies intercultural marriages are an important link in the formation of a social environment where different cultural groups can interact with each other. Such marriages contribute to the creation of multicultural societies with high social cohesion (Petrov, 2009; Barker, 2015; Mazzucato & Schans, 2011). If there are few interethnic marriages in a polyethnic state, we can say that the boundaries between groups are strong and weakly permeable. In such a society, people often exist in separate ethnic groups and rarely engage in cultural exchange. A large number of inter-ethnic marriages, on the contrary, indicates greater permeability of boundaries between groups and cultural exchange (Hohmann-Marriott & Amato, 2008). Currently, according to researchers (Alba & Nee, 2003), social distance between ethnic groups is decreasing. This means that people increasingly less perceive social and cultural differences as an obstacle to creating long-term family unions.

Also, intercultural marriages are an indicator of intercultural relationships in multicultural societies (Alba & Nee, 2003; Gritsenko, 1991; Susokolov, 1987). The

ability of people to meet, feel sympathy, fall in love and form families with people of another culture is one of the indicators of multiculturalism (Osanami Törngren, 2011; Yodanis et al., 2012), and also is the highest form of overcoming ethno-social distance, the presence of attitudes to tolerance (Sikevich & Possel, 2019).

Another position indicating the relevance of this study is that intercultural marriages represent models of intercultural relations at the micro level, at the small social group level (Alba & Nee, 2003; Berry, 2019). In case an individual constantly interacts with another culture in their family, it is this interaction that becomes determinant in the formation of outgroup attitudes (Huijnk et al., 2012). Therefore, the problem of studying attitudes towards intercultural marriages is relevant both at the level of society as a whole and at the level of an individual.

To summarize, we can say that the study of intercultural marriages is important for science and social practice. However, this phenomenon, as the analysis shows, remains little-studied.

### **The degree of scientific development of the problem**

In science, interethnic (Gritsenko, 1991; Tashcheva et al., 2016) or interreligious marriages are often studied (Hughes & Dickson, 2005). However, researchers note that it is important to simultaneously consider the role of both ethnicity and religion (Chebotareva & Volk, 2020). In this study, we fill this gap and focus on studying specifically intercultural marriages, defining them, following Osanami Törngren et al. (2016), as marriages between people with significant differences in cultural (ethnic, racial, religious, social, or national) background. In our study, intercultural marriages include interreligious and/or interethnic marriages.

Although considerable attention has been paid to the study of the intercultural marriage itself (Carol, 2013), little research has been devoted to the problem of an individual's attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage. Also, the socio-psychological factors predicting attitudes towards intercultural marriages have not been sufficiently analyzed.

The analysis showed that the choice of a spouse from another culture can be influenced by perceived cultural distance (Babiker et al., 1980; Galchenko & Van

de Vijver, 2007) (a person's perceived difference between the social and physical aspects of their own and another's cultural traditions). Cultural differences in marital practices, values, religion and other aspects can become problematic points in relationship of spouses from different cultures. We believe that this will help to explain how cultural differences alienate or, on the contrary, bring intercultural partners closer together.

Social identity, considered within the H. Tajfel's theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) is one of the factors influencing outgroup attitudes (Mcfadden & Moore, 2001). However, its significance for attitudes towards intercultural marriage in Russia remains little studied (Gorenburg, 2006). In this study, we focus on examining the effect of four types of social identity – two exclusive (ethnic and religious) and two inclusive (civic and place identity) on attitudes towards intercultural marriage. We assume that a deeper understanding of social identity in the context of intercultural marriage can help explain attitudes towards intercultural marriage.

A person's attitude to intercultural interaction (a special case of which is intercultural marriage) largely depends on such a predisposition as intercultural attitudes (e.g., ethnic tolerance, social equality) (Lebedeva, 2016; Bottaeva, 2009; Lebedeva & Tatarko, 2009). Attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage can be seen as a special case of intercultural attitudes. All this suggests that attitudes to ethnic tolerance and to social equality can predict attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage (Delova, 2001; Mal'kova, 2017).

There are also studies according to which perceived cultural threat (or its polar experience – perceived cultural security) is considered as a stressor for intergroup attitudes (Stephan et al., 2009; Nshom & Croucher, 2014; Lebedeva, 2016). Some studies have argued that an increasing number of intercultural marriages may contribute to an increase in perceived cultural threat to the dominant ethnocultural group (McDoom, 2019a). However, the role of perceived cultural threat in relation to intercultural marriage is ambiguous; some researchers indicate that in some cases perceived threat may contribute to a decrease in intercultural marriage, while in others it may have the opposite effect (Connolly, 2009). Therefore, it is relevant to investigate the role of perceived cultural security/threat in attitudes towards intercultural marriage.

Attitudes toward intercultural marriages may be conditioned by sociocultural context. The researchers (Buunk et al., 2009, Georgas, 2011; Hiew et al., 2015) note that some cultures have rigid norms and traditions of choosing a spouse, which are often related to historical, religious or social factors. For example, collectivist cultures place a high value on parental opinion in choosing a spouse (Buunk et al., 2009, Georgas, 2011; Hiew et al., 2015). In other cultures, on the contrary, such norms and traditions are less strict and the choice of spouse depends more on the individual's personal motives such as affection, character traits, and interests (Geary et al., 2004; Georgas, 2011; Hiew et al., 2015). Researchers have found that contemporary attitudes in "Eastern", traditional culture have undergone significant changes, but remain centered on social expectations, norms, and prescriptions, in contrast to attitudes in "Western" culture where personal freedom and individual preferences are more valued (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2018).

In this regard, it is important to analyze attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage taking into account the characteristic of the socio-cultural context. Our research was conducted in two multicultural regions of Russia – the Moscow region (Moscow and Moscow Oblast) and the Republic of Buryatia. The choice of these regions is due to the fact that they differ in terms of indicators that affect attitudes towards intercultural marriages (Malkova, 2017): the level of urbanization, the degree of heterogeneity and openness of the contacting peoples, their linguistic, cultural and religious proximity, and attitudes towards interethnic contacts.

The Republic of Buryatia is a national republic with 29.51% of the population being indigenous (Buryats). Russians make up 64.91% of the population, and the third largest ethnic group, Tatars, make up less than 1%. In the Moscow region, 86.74% of the population is Russian, with no other ethnic group represented by more than one and a half percent of the population. The percentage of Russians in the Moscow region exceeds the Russian average, which at the same time amounted to 81.1% (Federal State Statistics Service, 2010)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Here and in the dissertation, data from the 2010 All-Russian Population Census are used, while the most relevant data source should be the 2020 All-Russian Population Census. However, as noted in various sources (Andreev & Churilova, 2023; Tishkov, 2023), the organization of the 2020 Census in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent difficulties led to the fact that only data on the sex and date of birth of a significant part of the population (at least 16%) were

Russians are the numerical majority in both the Republic of Buryatia and the Moscow region, but while in the Moscow region the attitude of Russians to internal and external migrants (representatives of other ethnic groups) is predominantly negative (Mal'kova, 2017; Lourié, 2018; Tishkov, 2018 etc.), Buryatia is a more cohesive region where intercultural contacts are predominantly positive (Tishkov et al., 2004; Zhambalova, 2011; Manzanov, 2012; Holland, 2014, Zhalsanova, 2020 etc.). Russians in Buryatia have a complex status: on the one hand, they are a numerical majority, but on the other hand, living in a national republic oriented towards supporting the national Buryat culture (Boronova, 2019), they feel like a cultural minority.

The greatest relevance of this problem is for young people, because they are the age group for whom the problem of marriage is very significant. The youths' attitude to marriage changes from generation to generation. Previously, marriage was considered mainly as an inevitable stage of life's journey, as an almost obligatory stage in the life of every person. However, in recent decades there have been noticeable changes in this attitude. Researchers have noted that attitudes towards choosing a spouse are more responsible, and marriage is more likely to be a conscious choice of an individual, rather than an action performed under the influence of social pressure or generally accepted stereotypes (Blagojević, 1989; De Coninck et al., 2020). In addition, studying young people's attitudes towards intercultural marriages allows not only to analyse their marriage intentions but also to describe their attitudes towards intercultural interaction (McDonald-Doh, 2019).

Thus, we can say that earlier studies have hardly analyzed the role of such socio-psychological factors as perceived cultural distance, attitudes, social identity and perceived threat/safety in a person's attitude towards intercultural marriage and

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obtained from administrative sources. For a significant part of the population (11.3%), ethnicity data were not available at all, raising big questions about the applicability of 2020 Census data on ethnicity. In view of these problems with the 2020 Census data (especially the problems with ethnicity), it was decided to use the 2010 Census data.

According to the 2020 Census data, the ratio of ethnic groups of Russians, Buryats and others in the Republic of Buryatia has not changed significantly (64.91%, 29.51% and less than 1% respectively in 2010; 63.95%, 32.46% and less than 1% respectively in 2021), having no impact on interethnic interaction noted by researchers. In Moscow and the Moscow Oblast, the ratio of ethnic groups has also not changed in relation to the context of this study; the dominance of Russians remains unquestionable.

willingness to enter into such marriages. Hence, this study is relevant, especially for multicultural Russia, since the specifics of sociocultural contexts of Russian regions and ethnic groups can also influence attitudes towards intercultural marriage and mediate the role of socio-psychological factors in this process.

### **Research Problem**

Most often intercultural marriage is considered in sociological, ethnological and anthropological studies. Psychological studies have mainly studied attitudes towards intercultural marriage as a phenomenon, but not attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage as a personal choice. People's attitudes towards intercultural marriage have not been examined through the prism of making a personal decision.

Also, the analysis showed that most studies of socio-psychological predictors influencing attitudes towards intercultural marriage were conducted outside of Russia. In this regard, the question remains whether they will also affect the attitude to intercultural marriage among representatives of different ethnic groups within Russia, whether the region of residence and the status of the ethnic group will influence these processes.

There is a need to clarify the role of socio-psychological predictors – perceived cultural distance, social identity, intercultural attitudes, and perceived cultural security/threat – in a person's attitude towards intercultural marriage and willingness to enter into such a marriage.

Our study focuses on youths, or more precisely, on those who see their entry into marriage as a potentially possible behavior rather than an accomplished fact in the past. This study does not cover remarriage, as well as other forms of marriage and family relations (sham marriages, cohabitation, etc.).

In this study the definition of youth is not tied to the Russian legislative definition (as a group of 14–35 years old), because for people aged 14–18 years (and especially 14–16 years) the problem of choosing a spouse is almost completely hypothetical. Also, in the analytical review of scientific literature we use studies conducted in foreign countries, where the legal attribution of a person to the representatives of youth differs from the Russian one. For the purposes of our research we relied on Erik Erikson's periodization in his theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1996). E. Erikson distinguished 8

periods, among which he distinguished such age period as “youth” – from 19 to 35–39 years. Accordingly, for the purposes of our study, we selected unmarried respondents over 18 years of age. Respondents over 40 years old were not included in the study.

**The object of this study** is the youths’ attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage.

**The subject of the study** is socio-psychological predictors of attitude of youths living in the Republic of Buryatia and the Moscow region towards entry into intercultural marriage.

### **The aim and the objectives of the study**

The aim of the study: to identify the role of perceived cultural distance, social attitudes, social identities (inclusive and exclusive), and perceived cultural security/threat in youths’ attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage.

The objectives of this study are the following:

#### *Theoretical:*

- Conducting an analytical review of the literature on intercultural marriage and predictors of attitudes towards intercultural marriage.
- Analyzing the role of perceived cultural distance, attitudes towards intercultural marriage of social environment, intercultural attitudes, social identities, and perceived cultural security/threat in an individual’s attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage.
- Forming a theoretical model of predictors of attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage based on an analytical review of scientific literature.

#### *Empirical:*

- Identifying the relationship of perceived cultural distance with attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage;
- Identifying the relationship between attitudes towards intercultural marriage of the social environment and attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage;
- Identifying the relationship between intercultural attitudes (ethnic tolerance and attitudes to social equality) and attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage;



- Identifying the relationship of ethnic, civic, religious, and place identity with attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage;
- Identifying the moderating role of perceived security/threat in the relationship between social identities and attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage;
- Identifying the cross-cultural and cross-regional similarities and differences in the relationship of the described phenomena on the basis of the obtained results.

### **Hypotheses and research questions**

General theoretical hypothesis: socio-psychological predictors such as perceived cultural distance, social environment attitudes, attitudes toward ethnic tolerance and social equality, inclusive and exclusive social identities, and perceived cultural security have a significant effect on attitude of youths living in the Republic of Buryatia and the Moscow region towards entry into intercultural marriage.

Hypothesis 1. Perceived cultural distance predicts attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage: a person's low importance of cultural similarity (perceived cultural proximity) is positively related to attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage.

Hypothesis 2. Positive attitudes of the social environment towards intercultural marriage are positively correlated with a person's attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage.

Hypothesis 3. The attitudes to ethnic tolerance and social equality are positively correlated with a person's positive attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage.

Hypothesis 4. Exclusive identities (ethnic and religious), are negatively related to positive attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage.

Hypothesis 5. Inclusive identities (civic and place identities) are positively related to positive attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage.

Research Question 1: What is the role of certain aspects of perceived cultural similarities/differences in youths' attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage?

Research Question 2: Are there any cross-cultural and cross-regional similarities and differences in the relationship of perceived cultural distance, social environment attitudes towards intercultural marriage, attitudes to ethnic tolerance and social equality, and social identities with youths' attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage?

Research Question 3: Does perceived cultural security act as a condition (play a moderating role) of the interrelation of social identities and attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage among Russians in the Moscow region and Buryatia and Buryats of Buryatia?

### **Theoretical and methodological basis of the study**

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was formed by research works devoted to the study of marriage in general and intercultural marriage in particular:

– **motivation for marriage** (S. I. Golod, M. Kalmijn, A. I. Antonov, E. V. Volchenkova, Z. V. Sikevich, Yu. A. Possel, I. S. Ozdogan, V. A. Kirillova, E. N. Tkach, E. A. Trusova, M. A. Zhdanova, L. V. Trubitsyna),

– **theory of marriage partner choice based on status exchange** (R. K. Merton, G. Yancey, M. Emerson, K. Chai, O. S. McDoom, M. Rosenfeld),

- **psychology of intercultural marriages** (V. V. Gritsenko, V. N. Galyapina, N. Cohen, Z. I. Aigumova, V. R. Aigunov, S. Osanami Torngren, T. K. Rostovskaya, N. A. Rostovskaya, I. A. Makarova, Z. V. Sikevich, Yu. A. Possel, J. McFadden, J. L. Moore, D. Bhugra, P. de Silva, C. V. Fletcher, S. Ting-Toomey, L. A. Delova, D. Gorenburg, S. Z. Bin-Tahir, R. Bugis, R. Tasiana, T. M. Karmanova, A. I. Tashcheva, S. V. Gridneva, T. G. Stefanenko, O. A. Tikhomandritskaya).

Theories and studies examining factors that influence intercultural relationships, including at the micro level (family level):

– **acculturation theory** (J. Berry, M. Verkuyten, F. van de Vijver, N. M. Lebedeva, A. N. Tatarko, Z. H. Lepshokova (Bottaeva), L. K. Grigoryan, D. S. Grigoryev, etc.),

– **studies of intergroup attitudes** (I. Ajzen, L. Samovar, R. Porter, M. Verkuyten, N. M. Lebedeva, A. N. Tatarko, L. M. Drobizheva, Z. H. Lepshokova (Bottaeva), V. N. Galyapina, D. S. Grigoryev, A. A. Batkhina, D. I. Dubrov, O. E. Khukhlaev, S. V. Lurie),

– **studies of perceived cultural distance** (I. Babiker, J. Cox, P. Miller, I. Suanet (Galchenko), F. van de Vijver, N. M. Lebedeva, A. N. Tatarko, O. S. McDoom, R. Alba, V. Nee),

- **theory and research of social identity** (A. Tajfel, J. Turner, V. A. Yadov, N. L. Ivanova, E. P. Belinskaya, M. A. Zhigunova, E. A. Koptyaeva, V. I. Antonov, N. M. Lebedeva, L. K. Grigoryan, V. N. Galyapina, Z. H. Lepshokova (Bottaeva), M. Verkuyten, O. Droseltis, V. Vignoles),
- **theory of intergroup threat** (W. G. Stephan, N. M. Lebedeva, A. N. Tatarko, B. Riek, E. Mania, S. Gaertner).

### **Research Methods**

*Characteristics of the sample:* The study involved 461 people from different regions of Russia, among whom 25 ethnic groups were identified. The sample was then cleared of representatives of ethnic and regional groups unrelated to the topic of this study. The respondent's ethnicity was determined from the respondent's words. In the same way, information on marital status was obtained, and the study further involved unmarried respondents. As a result, the sample included representatives of 3 ethno-regional groups: Russians living in the Moscow region (n = 189), Russians living in Buryatia (n = 111), Buryats living in Buryatia (n = 102), the total number of respondents amounted to 402 people.

#### *Research Instrumentation.*

The significance of *cultural distance/proximity* was measured using Galchenko & Van de Vijver's (2007) cultural distance scale.

*Social environment attitudes towards intercultural marriages* were measured using three statements. For example, "When choosing a spouse of another culture, how important to you is the acceptance of multi-ethnic marriages by your family and friends?"

To investigate *intercultural attitudes* (ethnic tolerance and attitudes towards social equality), scales from the Mutual Intercultural Relations In Plural Societies (MIRIPS) project (Berry, 2017; Lebedeva, Tatarko, 2009) were used.

Scales from the Mutual Intercultural Relations In Plural Societies (MIRIPS) project (Berry, 2017; Lebedeva, Tatarko, 2009) were used to investigate *ethnic and civic identities, perceived cultural security/threat, ethnic tolerance and attitudes towards social equality*. *Religious identity* was assessed according to the scale of M. Verkuyten (Verkuyten, 2007; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007), *place identity* was measured according to

the scale of O. Droseltis and V. Vignoles (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010), adapted into Russian by T. A. Ryabichenko, N. M. Lebedeva, and I. D. Plotka (Ryabichenko, 2019).

*Attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage* were measured by two questions formulated by the authors of the study: “How positive / comfortable would you feel if your future spouse was of a different nationality?”, “How positive / comfortable would you feel if your future spouse was of a different religion?”.

*Mathematical and statistical processing of data.* The statistical software package SPSS 22.0 with the application AMOS 22.0 and PROCESS was used for data processing. The following methods were used: descriptive statistics, reliability index Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficient, regression analysis (hierarchical regression), multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), moderation analysis using PROCESS add-on module (Model 3), structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS application.

*Research Procedure.* The study was conducted in December 2019 – February 2020 using a socio-psychological survey. The online platforms lka.si and “Anketolog” were used for the research. Also, the link to the questionnaire was distributed using the “snowball” method. Respondents who participated in the survey on the Anketolog platform received a reward of 30 rubles for completing the survey. Respondents could refuse to take the survey at any time.

### **Scientific novelty**

This paper is the first in Russian science to consider intercultural marriage, which allows us to take into account the differences of potential marriage partners both in their ethnicity and religion.

For the first time, the problem of a person’s attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage was examined through the prism of cross-cultural (Russian and Buryat ethnic groups were analyzed) and cross-regional (two multicultural regions – the Republic of Buryatia and the Moscow region – were analyzed) features, which made it possible to identify universal and specific socio-psychological predictors of attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage.

Based on the analysis, a theoretical model of socio-psychological predictors that determine a person’s attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage was developed. It

included factors related to culture and regional community (perceived cultural proximity/distance, societal attitudes towards intercultural marriage), factors related to the immediate environment (social environment attitudes towards intercultural marriage), and personal-level factors (intercultural attitudes, social identities, and perceived security). This model was empirically tested in the study.

### **Theoretical and practical significance of the study**

#### *Theoretical significance*

The application of the theory of perceived cultural distance I. E. Babiker, J. L. Cox, and P. M. Miller (1980) regarding its influence on attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage in different ethnocultural groups was expanded. Both general trends and significant intergroup differences in the importance of certain aspects of cultural distance are demonstrated.

The social identity theory of H. Tajfel and J. Turner (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) was also developed in this study. It was found that exclusive and inclusive social identities differently determine attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage in different ethnocultural groups.

Also, the results of the study extend the application of W. G. Stephan's theory of intergroup threat (Stephan et al., 2009), as it proves that perceived cultural security acts as a condition for the relationship of ethnic identity and place identity with intercultural marriage attitudes, and this moderating role depends on the sociocultural context and ethnic status of the group.

#### *Practical relevance*

The results of the study can be useful for multicultural societies, as they can be used in the development of programs to form tolerant attitudes towards intercultural marriages and increase the level of ethnocultural tolerance in society. This can contribute to sociocultural integration and the creation of a more harmonious society.

In addition, the results of the study may be useful in developing practical interventions to support and protect intercultural marriages and families, as well as developing education and outreach programs to enhance the effectiveness of intercultural

relationships. The results of this study may contribute to increasing awareness and understanding in this area, as well as lead to new insights and ideas in the future.

Also, the research can significantly expand the understanding of the status and cultural identity of ethnic minorities in regions where they are numerically a minority. For example, in the Republic of Buryatia, Russians have a unique experience of social identity formation, as Buryat culture is currently experiencing a relative rise and is dominant in the region, despite the fact that Russians are the numerical majority. The results of the study can be used to develop public policies and programs aimed at promoting the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities, as well as ensuring their representation in political, social and cultural institutions. In addition, analyzing the experiences of ethnic minorities can enrich the cultural life of multicultural regions and promote closer interaction between different cultures.

### **Basic ideas of the dissertation to be defended**

According to the results of the conducted research, the following provisions for defense were formulated.

1. Perceived cultural distance is a significant predictor of attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage: the less important cultural similarities are for a person, the more positive his or her attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage. At the same time, different characteristics of perceived cultural distance have different effects on attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage of representatives of different ethno-cultural groups.

2. Among Buryats, who belong to a more traditional collectivist culture for which prescriptions and compliance with cultural norms and rules are important, positive attitudes of the social environment towards intercultural marriage are an important predictor in a person's positive attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage. Among Russians of the Moscow region, who belong to a more modernized cultural group, a person's positive attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage is predicted by intercultural attitudes to ethnic tolerance and social equality.

3. Place identity (inclusive identity) predicts positive attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage for all groups regardless of ethnicity, status, and region. The role

of ethnic and civic identity varies by cultural background and region. Among Buryats from Buryatia (the titular group in the national republic), ethnic (exclusive) identity predicted negative attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage, while civic identity (inclusive) predicted positive attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage. Among Russians of the Moscow region, civic identity had a negative relationship with attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage (acting as exclusive).

4. Perceived cultural security/threat is a condition for the interrelation of ethnic and place identity with attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage, and this moderating role depends on the sociocultural context and the ethnic status of the group.

### **Approbation of the results of the study**

The results obtained during the work on studying the role of socio-psychological predictors in the structure of attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage were presented in the following publications and scientific conferences:

#### **1. Publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals:**

1) Alaguev, M. V. (2021). Entry into intercultural marriage: factors of spouse choice. *National Psychological Journal*, 41(1), 63–75. <https://doi.org/10.11621/npj.2021.0106>

2) Alaguev, M. V., & Galyapina, V. (2022). Social Identities and Attitudes towards Intercultural Marriages in Russia's Multicultural Regions: The Role of Perceived Security. *The World of Psychology*, 1, 93–105. [https://doi.org/10.51944/20738528\\_2022\\_1\\_93](https://doi.org/10.51944/20738528_2022_1_93)

3) Alaguev, M. V., & Galyapina, V. (2022). The Role of Social Identities in the Choice of a spouse from Another Culture: A Cross-Regional Analysis. *Psychology. Journal of the Higher School of Economics*, 19(2), 259–277. <https://doi.org/10.17323/1813-8918-2022-2-259-277>

#### **2. Conferences:**

1) All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference with international participation “Practical psychology: challenges and risks of modern society”, Banzarov Buryat State University, September 25, 2020, presentation, publication of abstracts: “Intercultural marriage in modern multi-ethnic society: motives, values, risks”.

2) International Scientific and Practical Online Conference “Personality in the Modern World: Education, Development, Self-realization”, Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, November 20, 2020, presentation on the topic: “Multicultural education as a resource for preventive work in the education system”.

3) Scientific and Practical Conference of Young Scientists "Actual Issues of Ethnology and Anthropology", Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, November 17, 2020, presentation on “Interdisciplinary approach to the study of intercultural marriages”.

4) V International Scientific Conference “Ethnos and Culture in the Age of Globalization”, Kuban State Technological University, July 1, 2021, publication of theses: “Motives for marriage and their relationship with attitudes to intercultural marriage: cross-cultural analysis”.

5) VIII International Scientific Conference “Culture in Society, Between Groups and Across Generations”, National Research University Higher School of Economics, November 15, 2021, presentation on “Perceived cultural security as a moderator of the relationship between social identity and attitudes towards intercultural marriage: cross-regional analysis”.

### **The structure of the dissertation**

The dissertation consists of an introduction, the main part (including theoretical and empirical chapters), conclusion and list of used literature (248 sources, including 106 in Russian, 142 in English) and 3 appendices. The work includes 18 tables and 6 figures. The total volume of the thesis text is 185 pages.

The work was carried out at the Center for Sociocultural Research of the National Research University Higher School of Economics. The text of the dissertation, research designs, carrying out the research and presenting the results were carried out personally by the author of the dissertation. The personal contribution of the author amounted to 2 author’s sheets.



### **Main content of the dissertation**

The **Introduction** substantiates the relevance and problem of the study, defines the aim and objectives of the work, object and subject of the study, hypotheses and research questions are put forward. Then the theoretical and methodological basis of the study, the sample, the methods used, the empirical base of the study are described. The theoretical and practical significance of the work is designated, the basic ideas for defense are formulated. Information about the approbation of the research results is given.

**Chapter 1** presents the theoretical part of the thesis, consisting of 7 paragraphs.

**Paragraph 1.1** consists of two sub-paragraphs describing intercultural marriage as an object of study of social sciences.

In **subparagraph 1.1.1** the key characteristics of intercultural marriage were considered. Intercultural marriage is considered as a marriage between people who have significant differences in cultural (ethnic, racial, religious, social or national) background. Thus, in this study, this concept includes interreligious and/or interethnic marriages. These unions are of interest to researchers because they can serve as a model of intercultural relations at the micro level and are an indicator of multiculturalism. The subparagraph emphasizes the peculiarities of intercultural marriages: a different course of conflicts between spouses, increased willingness for intercultural dialogue among spouses, as well as a greater number of controversial issues that turn into conflicts compared to monocultural families, especially with regard to the upbringing of children (norms of education, naming, identity of children, etc.).

**Subparagraph 1.1.2** describes the phenomenon of marriage motivation, and leads to the fact that the motivation to entry into intercultural marriage has a more complex motivation structure because a person takes into account a larger number of variables. Factors a person takes into account include cultural group status. The heterogeneity of the concept of “attitude towards entry into marriage” is noted. The author defines the concept of “attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage” as a social attitude describing the predisposition of the individual to marry a person who has significant differences in cultural (ethnic, racial, religious, social or national) origin.

**Paragraph 1.2** consists of two sub-paragraphs describing the factors that influence the choice of a cross-cultural spouse.

**Subparagraph 1.2.1** describes the extent to which perceived cultural distance – a person’s perceived difference between the social and physical aspects of the cultural traditions of different groups – influences attitudes towards intercultural marriage. This is because attitudes towards different outgroups vary widely across cultural groups. If differences in different characteristics of a cultural group (e.g., gender roles, language, and parenting) are perceived as significant, attitudes towards that group may be negative.

**Subparagraph 1.2.2** describes how positive interethnic attitudes in society, tolerance, generally favorable social climate – “zeitgeist”, – influence the acceptance of intercultural marriages. Also, depending on cultural characteristics, the attitudes and beliefs of the family and parents in choosing a spouse can be of great importance. Intercultural attitudes reflecting interethnic tolerance and orientation towards social equality are important socio-psychological predictors of acceptance of intercultural marriages and positive attitude towards them.

**Paragraph 1.3** explores the role of social identity and perceived cultural security in attitudes towards intercultural marriage. **Subparagraph 1.3.1** discusses the role of social identity in attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage. Social identity, as part of a person’s self-image based on the perception of belonging to a relevant social group, mediates an individual’s social behavior, and can influence an individual’s interaction with society in various ways, either by uniting them with others or by emphasizing their uniqueness. Exclusive (separating a person from other groups – e.g. ethnic and religious) and inclusive (uniting representatives of different groups – e.g. civic and place identities) identities will have different effects on a person’s attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage, according to their content. **Subparagraph 1.3.2** discusses the concept of perceived cultural threat/security and its impact on intergroup relations, including attitudes towards intercultural marriage. Perceived cultural threat – the perception of threat, loss of cultural values, traditions, norms, morals, language or other ethno-cultural characteristics due to the influx of foreign cultural ‘outsiders’ – has an effect on the formation of out-group attitudes. However, the role of perceived cultural threat/security

in attitudes towards intercultural marriage is ambiguous. Derived from W. G. Stephan's theory of intergroup threat and H. Tajfel's theory of social identity, it is hypothesized that perceived security may act as a condition that increases/decreases the influence of social identity on attitudes towards intercultural marriage.

**Paragraph 1.4** considers the socio-cultural context of the research. The Republic of Buryatia and the Moscow region are multicultural regions, and are distinguished by their traditionalism and modernization, respectively. In general, in the territory of Buryatia intercultural marriages do not cause stable negative reactions in society, and their level remains almost unchanged for a long time. At the same time, in the Moscow region, where a large number of migrants live, the situation with interethnic marriages is tense and is related more to the pressure of external and internal migration than to the long-term coexistence of several ethnic groups. Despite the fact that in both regions interethnic marriages are represented approximately equally, the different historical context of multicultural coexistence (three-century neighborhood of two dominant ethnic groups in the Republic of Buryatia and the pressure of external and internal migration in the Moscow region) can influence the formation of outgroup attitudes (a subset of which is the attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage). The mechanisms of the impact of group status on the choice of spouse are not completely clear, however, it is suggested that cultural and social factors associated with this status have a certain influence on the formation of attitudes towards mixed marriages. Taking into account the fact that Russians in the Moscow region are by far the dominant ethno-cultural group (ethnic majority), and in the Republic of Buryatia Russians, although numerically superior to Buryats, represent an ethnic minority, it can be assumed that Russians with different statuses will have different attitudes towards intercultural marriages.

Conclusions to Chapter 1 are presented in **paragraph 1.5**. Further, in **paragraph 1.6**, the author's model of socio-psychological predictors that condition attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage is described.

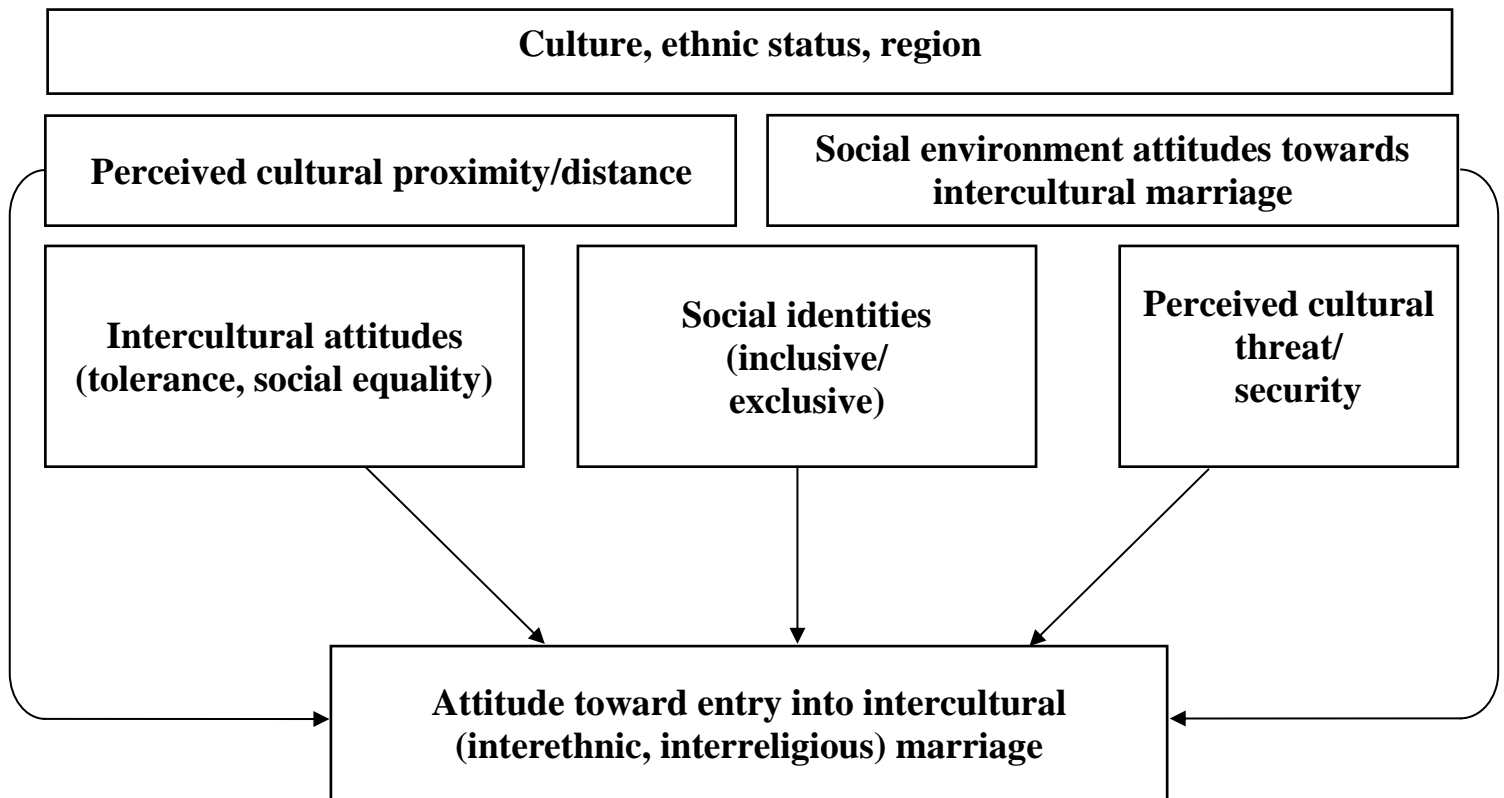


Figure 1. Author's theoretical model of socio-psychological predictors, determining attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage

Chapter 1 concludes with the formulation of the hypotheses and research questions described in **paragraph 1.7**.

The empirical part of the dissertation is presented in **Chapter 2**, “An Empirical Study of Socio-Psychological Predictors of Attitudes Towards Entry into Intercultural Marriage,” which consists of six paragraphs and three sub-paragraphs.

The first paragraph in chapter two, **paragraph 2.1**, is devoted to the description of the research methodology, describing the research sample, the instruments used and the research procedure.

Consisting of three sub-paragraphs, **paragraph 2.2** describes the results of the research on the relationship between cultural distance and attitudes towards choosing a spouse and attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage.

**Subparagraph 2.2.1** contains the results of the research on the relationship between perceived cultural distance and attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage.

To test our hypothesis about the relationship between cultural distance and attitudes towards intercultural marriage and to answer the research question, we conducted a regression analysis, at the first step we controlled for socio-demographic characteristics. Initially we analyzed the relationship between perceived cultural distance in general and attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage in different ethno-regional groups, then we made an analysis of its relationship with individual indicators of cultural distance. Based on the results of hierarchical regression analysis, we concluded that perceived cultural distance is significantly negatively related to positive attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage (both interethnic and interreligious) in all three groups. In other words, the greater the importance of similarities between one's own culture and the culture of a potential marriage partner, the more negative the attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage. Thus, *hypothesis 1* was confirmed.

However, as noted earlier, because cultures have many individual aspects of similarities/differences, we conducted a more detailed analysis of the effect of each characteristic of cultural distance on attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage. This more in-depth analysis reveals a detailed structure of attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage that may differ among members of the three groups.

In the first step, we controlled for socio-demographic characteristics; in the second step, we tested the role of each individual taken characteristic of perceived cultural distance.

The results of hierarchical regression analysis showed that the effect of socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender and education) was not significant. Such characteristics of perceived cultural distance as absence of language barrier, proximity of traditions of ethnic, cultural and racial identity of future children and proximity of traditions of cooking and meal organization were not significant in the attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage in all three groups studied. However, when analyzing

those characteristics of perceived cultural distance that effect the formation of attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage, intergroup differences become apparent.

Absence of language barrier, proximity of traditions of ethnic, cultural and racial identity of future children and proximity of traditions of cooking and organizing meals did not show their significance for any ethno-regional group. The proximity of behavioral norms, values; proximity of religious beliefs; proximity of traditions of naming children; proximity of forms of relations between parents and children, styles of parental upbringing; similar expectations of gender role and division of household labor; similar roles, expectations and features of communication with close relatives, acquaintances showed significance in the formation of a person's attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage. This provided answers to *research question 1*.

The characteristics of perceived cultural distance have a different impact on the formation of attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage in different ethno-cultural groups. In Russians from Buryatia, the only characteristic of cultural distance that influenced the formation of attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage was the proximity of religious views – its high personal significance worsened attitude towards entry into interreligious marriage. This influence is characteristic of all three ethno-regional groups. The other significant characteristics differed for Russians living in the Moscow region and Buryats living in Buryatia. The Buryat Buryatians are more influenced by the characteristics of cultural distance, reflecting the greater traditionality and collectivism of Buryat culture. Thus, *research question 2, regarding perceived cultural distance, has been* answered.

**Subparagraph 2.2.2** describes the results of the study of the relationship between attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage of the social environment and attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage. To test our hypothesis and answer research question 2 (as it relates to cross-cultural and cross-regional similarities and differences in the relationship between social environment attitudes towards intercultural marriage and youths' attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage), we conducted regression analyses for each group; hierarchical regression was used. In the first step we controlled for socio-demographic characteristics, in the second step we tested the relationship of

social environment attitudes towards intercultural marriage with the respondent's choice of a partner from another culture. From the results of the analysis, it was seen that acceptance of the idea of intercultural marriage by the respondent's family and friends did not predict attitudes towards intercultural marriage in any of the groups, but acceptance of intercultural marriage by the family and friends of the potential marriage partner and positive attitudes in the society towards intercultural marriage were found to be significant in attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage. This connection was revealed only among Buryats of Buryatia. At the same time, this influence was negative; that is, the significance for Buryats of the social environment's attitudes towards intercultural marriage predicts a negative attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage. It can be said that if a person depends on the opinion of his relatives, especially it is important to him how his partner's environment treats such a marriage, i.e. it is important for him to be accepted by this environment, then his attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage will be negative. These results partially confirm *hypothesis 2* (in the group of Buryats of Buryatia). Also, in view of the fact that for Buryats the positive attitude of society in general to intercultural marriages was significant, we can say that if Buryats "look back" at the public opinion regarding intercultural marriages, their own attitude towards such marriages is negative. We can say that these data also support *hypothesis 2* regarding the group of Buryats from Buryatia. These data also allowed us to answer our *research question 2* about ethno-regional differences. It turned out that for Russians, regardless of the region, the opinion of their own and their partner's immediate environment, as well as the attitudes towards intercultural marriage in society, do not matter in their own attitudes towards intercultural marriage.

The next stage of our research in **subparagraph 2.2.3** was to test the hypothesis that there is a relationship between intercultural attitudes and attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage.

To test the hypothesis and answer the research question, we conducted regression analysis (hierarchical regression was used). In the first step we controlled for socio-demographic characteristics, in the second step we tested the relationship of ethnic

tolerance, and in the third step we tested the relationship of attitudes towards social equality with attitudes towards entering into intercultural marriage.

As can be seen from the results of the regression analysis, there are both universal and specific trends for ethno-regional groups. First, in all ethno-regional groups socio-demographic characteristics are not a predictor of attitudes towards intercultural marriage. Second, ethnic tolerance is significantly correlated with attitudes towards intercultural (both interethnic and interreligious) marriage in all three ethno-regional groups. Third, only among Russians in the Moscow region, attitudes towards social equality predict positive attitude towards interethnic marriage.

Thus, *hypothesis 3 is* partially confirmed, with regard to ethnic tolerance in the sample of all three groups, with regard to attitudes towards social equality – only among Russians in the Moscow region. It can be said that the more tolerant the representatives of all three groups are in general towards other groups, the more positive their attitude towards intercultural marriages. The more pronounced the attitudes to social equality, the more positive was the attitude towards entry into interethnic marriage, but this conclusion is true only for Russians in the Moscow region. These data allow us to answer our *research question 2*, as they show a universal trend and specific features related to the respondents' ethnic and regional affiliation.

In the next step, in **paragraph 2.3**, we tested our 4 and 5 hypotheses about the role of social identities in attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage. Structural equation modeling was used as a method of analysis.

Initially, we compared the mean values of all study variables in the three groups. A MANOVA with ethnicity and region as the independent variable, and ethnic, civic, religious identities, place identity, attitudes towards marrying a member of another ethnic and religious group as dependent variables showed that there were significant differences in the three groups. Differences on individual measures obtained by ANOVA also had significant differences. To control for gender and age, we also conducted a MANOVA. The results showed that there were no significant differences between male and female data.



Next, using structural equation modeling, we performed a multigroup analysis. The results showed an absence of invariance (all  $\Delta$  CFI > 0.01). Based on this, we performed further analysis separately for each group. This approach also allowed us to find an answer to our *research question 2* about cross-cultural and cross-regional similarities and differences in the role of social identities in Russian citizens' attitudes towards entry into intercultural marriage. The indicators of the 3 models (for each ethno-regional group that participated in the study) correspond to the recommended ones.

According to the results of modeling by structural equations we can say that *hypothesis 4* was confirmed only partially on the sample of Buryat Buryatia, in them ethnic identity does have a significant negative effect on the attitude towards entry into interethnic marriage. In Russians of the Moscow region and Russians of Buryatia the effect was also negative, but statistically not significant. With regard to religious identity, hypothesis 4 was not confirmed in any of the samples.

*Hypothesis 5* regarding civic identity was confirmed among Buryats: the more pronounced this identity is, the more positive Buryats are towards entry into interreligious marriage. For Russians in the Moscow region, we obtained the opposite result: the higher the civic identity, the less positively Russians treat interethnic marriage.

Regarding place identity, our fifth hypothesis was also partially confirmed only in the samples of Russians from the Moscow region and Russians from Buryatia: the data showed that the more Russians identify themselves with their small homeland, with their region, the more positive they are towards intercultural marriage.

Overall, these data also show similarities and differences in the patterns of interrelationships among the three groups and answer *research question 2*.

**Paragraph 2.4** of the study investigated the moderating role of perceived security in the relationship between attitude towards entry into intercultural marriage and social identities.

Initially, we compared the mean values of perceived security of the three groups. One-way analysis of variance showed that perceived cultural security did not differ significantly between the ethno-regional groups.

To answer our research question, we conducted a moderation analysis. A moderated moderator model was used to analyze whether the moderating effect of perceived cultural security varies by group affiliation: social identities (ethnic, religious, and civic identities and place identity) (X) was the predictor, attitudes towards intercultural (interethnic/interreligious) marriage (Y) was the outcome, perceived cultural security (W) was the moderator, and group affiliation (Z) was the moderator of the moderator.

The dissertation only presents the results of significant models.

Overall, the results of the moderating analysis concluded that perceived cultural security is a moderator of the relationship of ethnic and place identity with intercultural marriage attitudes. However, its role depends on the sociocultural context and ethnic status of the group. This allows us to answer *research question 3*.

**Paragraph 2.5** is devoted to the discussion of the findings. This study was devoted to analyzing the factors that condition the attitude of representatives of different ethnic groups living in two regions of Russia (the Moscow region and the Republic of Buryatia) to marriage with a representative of another ethnic group and another confession.

The empirical part of the thesis concludes with the Conclusions to Chapter 2 (**paragraph 2.6**), which briefly summarizes the main findings of this study.

The **Conclusion** summarizes the main results of the work done, describes the limitations of the study, as well as the prospects for further study of this topic and possible directions for future research.

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