

# INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS IN DAGESTAN: THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED SECURITY, INTERCULTURAL CONTACTS, AND MUTUAL ACCULTURATION

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37178/ca-c.21.1.07>

Victoria GALYAPINA

*Ph.D. (Psychol.), Associate Professor,  
Leading Research Fellow, Center for Sociocultural Research,  
Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Psychology,  
National Research University Higher School of Economics  
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Zarina LEPSHOKOVA

*Ph.D. (Psychol.), Associate Professor,  
Leading Research Fellow, Center for Sociocultural Research,  
Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Psychology,  
National Research University Higher School of Economics  
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

Irina MOLODIKOVA

*Ph.D.(Geogr.), Leader of the Project “Migration and Security  
in the Post-Soviet Space,” Central European University (Vienna-Budapest);  
Leading Researcher, Institute for Demographic Research—Branch of  
the Federal Center for Theoretical and Applied Sociology of  
the Russian Academy of Sciences  
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

## ABSTRACT

**D**agestan is the most multiethnic and multilingual republic within the Russian Federation. From the viewpoint of interethnic relations, Dagestan is a unique research platform: the model of ethnopsy-

chological compatibility of numerous peoples has been implemented here for centuries. It is essential for researchers to understand which factors contribute to and which hinder the establishment of effective inter-

*Research conducted with financial support from the Russian Science Foundation (project No. 19-18-00169 “Impact of Digitalization on Social Capital and Values of the Russian society”).*

*ethnic communication in modern Dagestan. This empirical study was conducted in the context of the acculturation theory introduced by the Canadian cross-cultural psychologist John Berry. This article presents the results of researching the impact of perceived security, friendly intercultural contacts, preference for supporting a multicultural ideology, ethnic tolerance, and mutual integration attitude on the psychological well-being of both individual ethnic groups and Dagestani population as a whole.*

*In the course of the study, the authors suggested that the higher the perceived security among ethnic groups in Dagestan, the greater the tendency towards maintaining a multicultural ideology, tolerance, and the preference for an integration strategy, and the lower the preference for a separation strategy (multiculturalism hypothesis). In addition, the authors hypothesized that the higher the intensity of friendly intercultural contacts between representatives of various ethnic groups in Dagestan, the higher their level of tolerance, preference for an integration strategy and the lower their preference for a separation strategy (contact hypothesis). The authors also suggested that the higher the preference for the integration strategy by representatives of various Dagestani ethnic groups, the higher their self-esteem and life satisfaction (integration hypothesis). The sample included Avars, Dargins, Russians and representatives of*

*other ethnic groups: Kumyks, Lezgins, Laks, Tabasarans, Nogais, etc. (total number of respondents N = 438).*

*The data were analyzed both for the total sample and for a sample of specific ethnic groups using a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach. MIRIPS questionnaire scales were used. The results demonstrated the contribution of perceived security to a preference for a multicultural ideology, tolerance, and mutual integration in the total sample. The results also demonstrated that the intensity of friendly intercultural contacts has no significant effect on tolerance or mutual integration in Dagestan. However, the preference for mutual integration contributes to life satisfaction and self-esteem among the inhabitants of Dagestan, which confirms the integration hypothesis. A separation preference was positively associated with perceived security, life satisfaction and negatively with friendly intercultural contacts among representatives of certain ethnic groups of Dagestan. The results obtained demonstrate the importance of solving the problem of perceived security for building effective intercultural relations in Dagestan. The formation of a national policy in matters of preserving the cultural identity of various ethnic groups must be adequate, since, as the study has shown, separation strategy only leads to life satisfaction, and integration strategy is associated with both life satisfaction and self-esteem of the inhabitants of Dagestan.*

**KEYWORDS:** *intercultural relations, perceived security, intercultural contacts, intercultural preference, attitudes, integration, separation, Dagestan.*

## *Introduction*

### **The Sociocultural Context of the Republic of Dagestan**

Dagestan is the most multiethnic republic of the Russian Federation. It is inhabited by representatives of 102 ethnic groups, the most numerous of them being Avars—29.4%, Dargins—17.0%,

Kumyks—14.9%, Lezgins—13.3%, Laks—5.6%, Azerbaijanis—4.5% Tabasarans—4.1%, Russians—3.6%.<sup>1</sup> According to the Constitution of the Republic of Dagestan, all ethnic groups in Dagestan have equal status.

Dagestan is a multilingual republic; its population speaks the languages of at least three language families. Thirty-six languages of the peoples of Dagestan were registered in the 2010 census.<sup>2</sup> According to the Constitution of the Republic of Dagestan, the state languages are Russian and the languages of the peoples of Dagestan.<sup>3</sup> The Russian language is not only the state language, but the language of intercultural communication.

The population of Dagestan professes three world religions (Islam—over 90% of the population, Christianity—5% and Judaism—under 1%), the Constitution of the Republic of Dagestan declared that Dagestan is a secular republic. However, researchers note that Islam plays an important role in the life of Dagestan's population.<sup>4</sup>

From the viewpoint of interethnic relations, Dagestan is a unique research platform, where the model of ethnopsychological compatibility of numerous peoples has been implemented for centuries.<sup>5</sup> This is largely possible due to the common Dagestan identity that is emerging. The concept of being a “Dagestani” occupies an important place in the self-consciousness of the inhabitants of Dagestan and is rooted in the experience of different ethnic groups living together within one administrative unit, in the sharing of the Russian language as the language of interethnic communication, and in a blend of Caucasian and general Russian cultural features.<sup>6</sup>

The unity of Dagestani ethnic groups is also facilitated by a common Muslim identity. The research highlights<sup>7</sup> that the importance of Muslim religious identity in Dagestan occupies a dominant position. However, regarding its significance researchers diverge widely in assessing its significance in different regions of the republic and among different age groups.

Interethnic relations in Dagestan are determined both by the intensity of expression of certain identities and by interethnic disputes.<sup>8</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of Dagestan provides for the

<sup>1</sup> See: *All-Russia Population Census 2010*, Statistical Collection / Rosstat, ISC “Statistics of Russia,” Moscow, 2011, 87 pp., available in Russian at [[http://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/population/demo/perepis2010/VPN\\_BR.pdf](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/population/demo/perepis2010/VPN_BR.pdf)], 10 March, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> See: “Skolko korennykh narodov prozhivaet v respublike Dagestan?” 2017, available at [<http://www.internet-jurnal-russia-online.com/natsionalnyj-vopros-/narody-rossii-/narody-dagestana-/>], 10 March, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> See: *The Constitution of the Republic of Dagestan* [<http://docs.cntd.ru/document/802018919>], 12 November, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> See: Z.M. Abdulagatov, *Osobennosti sotsializatsii sovremennoy molodezhi i sotsialnye deformatsii v molodezhnoy srede (na primere Respubliki Dagestan)*, IIAE, Makhachkala, 2011, 206 pp.; Z.B. Arslanbekova, “Religioznaia identichnost dagestantsev: traditsionalizm i vakhkhabizm,” 2012, available at [<http://www.gumilev-center.az/religioznaya-identichnost-dagestantcev/>], 11 March, 2018; *Demograficheskie i etnicheskie problemy Severnogo Kavkaza i puti ikh reshenia*, Foundation for Advanced Research “Bastion,” Moscow, 2012, 130 pp.; A. Buttaeva, “Islam in Polyconfessional Dagestan,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 13, Issue 1, 2012, available at [<https://www.ca-c.org/journal/2012-01-eng/05.shtml>], 3 June, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> See: A.G. Agaev, R.M. Magomedov, *Dagestanskoe edinstvo, istoria i sovremennost*, Daguchpedgiz, Makhachkala, 1995. 94 pp.

<sup>6</sup> See: A.A. Yarlykapov, “Sovremenny Dagestan: aktualnye etnopoliticheskie i etnokonfessionalnye problemy,” *Sotsiodinamika*, No. 3, 2012, pp. 130-153, available at [[http://e-notabene.ru/pr/article\\_257.html](http://e-notabene.ru/pr/article_257.html)], 8 August, 2017 [DOI: 10.7256/2306-0158.2012.3.257].

<sup>7</sup> See: Z.B. Arslanbekova, op. cit.; Z.S. Arukhov, *Religia i identichnost v Rossii: poiski etnicheskoy i religioznoy identichnosti v Dagestane*, Vostochnaia literatura, Moscow, 2003, pp. 177-191; S.I. Murtuzaliev, “Politika Rossii v Dagestane i na Severnom Kavkaze na rubezhe XX i XXI stoletiy glazami mestnykh zhiteley,” in: *Severny Kavkaz v natsionalnoy strategii Rossii*, Rosinformagrotekh, Moscow, 2008, pp. 116-128.

<sup>8</sup> See: R.I. Abakarov, “Mezhethnicheskie otnosheniya v Respublike Dagestan (po materialam sotsiologicheskikh issledovaniy 2013 g.),” *Bulletin of the Dagestan Scientific Center*, No. 51, 2013, pp. 135-138; M.M. Shakhbanova, “Mezhnatsionalnye otnosheniya v Respublike Dagestan: sostoianie i tendentsii,” *Bulletin of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography*, No. 3, 2017, pp. 152-163.

obligatory proportionate representation of all peoples of Dagestan in government bodies.<sup>9</sup> In this regard, a more significant and politically authoritative ethnic group has shown an interest in “joining” as many ethnic groups as possible to its ethnic group or language. Until recently, representatives of small ethnic groups did not resist to being “ethnically affiliated” with the ethnic group that is the most numerous (therefore, politically more significant) and the closest to them.<sup>10</sup> However, there is a current tendency among the members of small ethnic groups that are part of the largest Dagestan peoples to separate themselves from the larger group, acquire an independent ethnic status and develop their native language and culture.<sup>11</sup> This, of course, serves as the basis for interethnic contradictions in the republic.

Among the numerous social and political problems in the Republic of Dagestan, the constant outflow of the Russian-speaking population is topical. In 2002, 120,000 Russians lived in Dagestan, and in 2010 their number dropped to 104,000, decreasing by 13.9%.<sup>12</sup> Russians are citing fears arising from possible ethnic and religious conflicts and the liquidation of the industry in which they were employed as the main reasons for leaving Dagestan.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, interethnic relations in the Republic of Dagestan are characterized by a certain tension. This confirms the relevance of the study of intercultural relations in Dagestan.

## Theoretical Approaches

This study is based on John Berry’s acculturation theory,<sup>14</sup> which has been verified in numerous studies of intercultural relations. The *multiculturalism hypothesis* says that people can accept those who are different from them only when they are convinced that their identity is not in danger. Conversely, when people feel threatened, they develop prejudice and discriminatory attitudes towards the group that they perceive as a threat. This hypothesis was confirmed in a study of Russians in Estonia: the high level of perceived threat by Russians from Estonians hinders their successful adaptation in Estonia.<sup>15</sup> In Russia, researchers Nadezhda Lebedeva, Alexander Tatarko, and John Berry<sup>16</sup> studied the intercultural relations between migrants from the Caucasus and Muscovites. They found that perceived security predicts tolerance, integration, and social equality in both groups, but to a lesser extent among Muscovites.

The *contact hypothesis* suggests that the negative attitude of one group towards another is caused by a lack of knowledge about that group. When members of both groups make positive personal contact with each other, they get to know each other, which leads to decreased prejudice. Important conditions for this are: equal contact status with individuals or groups and support of contact

<sup>9</sup> See: The Constitution of the Republic of Dagestan of 26 July, 1994, available in Russian at [<http://docs.cntd.ru/document/748300070>], 15 March, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> N. Gadzhiakhmedov, “Mnogoiazychny Dagestan: problemy bez perspektiv,” *Dagestanskaia pravda*, 17 July, 2002; A. Mekhtikhanov, “Luchshe gor mogut byt tolko gortsy,” *Molodezh Dagestana*, No. 26, 2002, p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> See: N. Gadzhiakhmedov, op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> See: *Demograficheskie i etnicheskie problemy Severnogo Kavkaza i puti ikh reshenia*.

<sup>13</sup> See: M.M. Shakhbanova, Yu.M. Lysenko, R.M. Mamarayev, “Dagestanskije russkie o sostoianii mezhnatsionalnoy situatsii v Respublike Dagestan,” *Bulletin of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography*, No. 2, 2015, pp. 149-157.

<sup>14</sup> See: *Mutual Intercultural Relations*, ed. by J.W. Berry, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> See: J. Kruusvall, R. Vetik, J.W. Berry, “The Strategies of Inter-Ethnic Adaptation of Estonian Russians,” *Studies of Transition States and Societies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2009, pp. 3-24.

<sup>16</sup> See: N.M. Lebedeva, A.N. Tatarko, J.W. Berry, “Sotsialno-psikhologicheskie osnovy multikulturalizma: proverka gipotez o mezhkulturnom vzaimodeystvii v rossiyskom kontekste,” *Psikhologicheskii zhurnal*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2016, pp. 92-104.

by the authorities.<sup>17</sup> This assumption made by the theory of acculturation has been tested in numerous studies.<sup>18</sup> Intercultural contacts were found to improve the attitudes towards migrants, interethnic friendship contributes to the psychological well-being of children and youth in a multiethnic context.<sup>19</sup>

The *integration hypothesis* suggests that when people “participate” in both cultures (their own culture and the culture of the host society), they reach a higher level of adaptation and well-being than when they “participate” only in one culture. The study, including a meta-analysis of 83 studies and over 20,000 respondents,<sup>20</sup> showed that integration has a positive relationship with both psychological adaptation (life satisfaction, positive emotions, self-esteem) and sociocultural adaptation (academic achievement, career success, social skills).

In addition, we presumed that in Dagestan, which is a multiethnic, multilingual and multiconfessional republic with a complicated ethnic composition and a convoluted history of interethnic relations, the separation strategy in intercultural relations may play a significant role. Studies demonstrate<sup>21</sup> that the choice of a separation strategy can predict a positive or a negative outcome of acculturation. The context of mutual acculturation of ethnic groups plays the greatest role in this process. The authors have formulated an additional hypothesis about the relationship between separation and indicators of psychological well-being with regard to the peculiarities of the sociocultural context of Dagestan.

In keeping with the acculturation theory,<sup>22</sup> and with regard to Dagestan’s sociocultural context, the authors formulated the following *hypotheses*:

1. *Multiculturalism hypothesis*: the higher the perceived security among the Dagestani ethnic groups, the higher the support for multicultural ideology, tolerance, the preference for the integration strategy, and the lower the preference for the separation strategy.
2. *Contact hypothesis*: the higher the intensity of friendly intercultural contacts between members of Dagestani ethnic groups, the higher the level of their tolerance, preference for the integration strategy, and the lower the preference for the separation strategy.
3. *Integration hypothesis*: the higher the preference for the integration strategy by the members of the ethnic groups, the higher their self-esteem and life satisfaction.
4. *Additional hypothesis*: the higher the preference for the separation strategy among the Dagestani ethnic groups, the higher their self-esteem and life satisfaction.

<sup>17</sup> See: G.W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA, 1954; T.F. Pettigrew, “Generalized Intergroup Contact Effects on Prejudice,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 23, 1997, pp. 173-185.

<sup>18</sup> See: B.P.H. Hui, S.X. Chen, C.M. Leung, J.W. Berry, “Facilitating Adaptation and Intercultural Contact: The Role of Integration and Multicultural Ideology in Dominant and Nondominant Group,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 45, 2015, pp. 70-84, available at [DOI: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.01.002]; T.F. Pettigrew, L.R. Tropp, *When Groups Meet. The Dynamics of Intergroup Contact*, Psychology Press, New York, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> See: S.C. Bagci, A. Rutland, M. Kumashiro, P.K. Smith, H. Blumberg, “Are Minority Status Children’s Cross-Ethnic Friendships Beneficial in a Multiethnic Context?” *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 32, 2014, pp. 107-115, available at [DOI: 10.1111/bjdp.12028].

<sup>20</sup> See: A.-M. D. Nguyen, V. Benet-Martinez, “Biculturalism and Adjustment: A Meta-Analysis,” *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Vol. 44, 2013, pp. 122-159.

<sup>21</sup> See: I. Jasinskaja-Lahti, G. Horenczyk, T. Kinunen, “Time and Context in the Relationship Between Acculturation Attitudes and Adaptation among Russian-Speaking Immigrants in Finland and Israel,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 9, 2011, pp. 1423-1440; L. Kus-Harbord, C. Ward, “Ethnic Russians in Post-Soviet Estonia: Perceived Devaluation, Acculturation, Well-Being, and Ethnic Attitudes,” *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2015, pp. 66-81.

<sup>22</sup> See: *Mutual Intercultural Relations*, ed. by J.W. Berry.

## Methods

### Study Sample

The study sample included representatives of the following ethnic groups of Dagestan: Avars, Dargins, Russians, Lezgins, Kumyks, Laks, Tabasarans, Nogais, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Rutuls, Aguls, Andians, Jews. Since the representation of each ethnic group in the total sample varied, we singled out the groups that comprised  $\geq 100$  respondents, and the remaining ethnic groups were combined into an integrated group, which allowed us to subsequently conduct a comparative analysis of the selected groups. Table 1 shows the main characteristics of the sample.

Table 1

**Gender and Age Characteristics of the Study Sample**

Ethnic Groups	N	Gender Characteristics		Age Characteristics			
		M (N, %)	F (N, %)	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Avars	100	30 (30)	70 (70)	14	68	28.02	14.40
Dargins	116	41 (35.3)	75 (64.7)	13	65	25.02	14.41
Russians	101	19 (18.8)	82 (81.2)	13	62	34.50	12.62
Sample that includes other ethnic groups in Dagestan	121	37 (30.6)	84 (69.4)	13	66	26.87	14.51
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>127 (29.1)</b>	<b>311 (71.0)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>28.44</b>	<b>14.43</b>

*Note:* N—total sample size; Min.—minimum age; Max.—maximum age; M—average value; SD—standard deviation.

### Research Methods

MIRIPS questionnaire scales, adapted for the Russian sample, were used in this study.<sup>23</sup>

*Perceived security.* The scale included 3 questions, i.e., “There is a place for a variety of languages and cultures in Dagestan (all  $\alpha \geq .49$ ).

*Friendly intercultural contacts.* The scale included 2 questions: “How many close friends of other nationalities do you have (list the nationalities)?” and “How often do you meet with friends of other nationalities” (all  $\alpha \geq .87$ ).

*Multicultural ideology.* The scale included 4 questions, i.e., “We should recognize that cultural diversity is a fundamental characteristic of Dagestan” (all  $\alpha \geq .63$ ).

*Ethnic tolerance.* The scale consisted of 3 questions, i.e., “We should strive for equality of all groups, regardless of racial or ethnic origin” (all  $\alpha \geq .52$ ).

*Acculturation strategies: integration* included 3 questions, for example, “I believe that representatives of my people living in Dagestan should both maintain their own cultural traditions and assimilate other peoples” (all  $\alpha \geq .64$ ); *separation* also included 3 questions, i.e., “I prefer to participate in events that include only members of my ethnic group” (all  $\alpha \geq .51$ ).

<sup>23</sup> For more details, see: N.M. Lebedeva, A.N. Tatarko, *Strategii mezhkulturnogo vzaimodeystvia migrantov i primimaiushchego naselenia Rossii*, RUDN, Moscow, 2009.

*Self-esteem.* The Rosenberg scale was used,<sup>24</sup> it included 3 questions, i.e., “I can do many things as well as most other people” (all  $\alpha \geq .84$ ).

*Life satisfaction.* The scale included 3 questions, i.e., “I have everything I need in my life” (all  $\alpha \geq .82$ ).<sup>25</sup>

*Sociodemographic characteristics.* Gender, age, education, ethnic and religious affiliation of the respondents were also recorded.

*Data analysis.* To test the research hypotheses, a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach using SPSS 22.00 and AMOS 19.00 was applied.<sup>26</sup> Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was utilized to identify the differences between scale indicators in the three groups. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  was used to test the one-dimensionality of the scales.

## Research Procedure

A socio-psychological survey was conducted in 2016-2017 among residents of four cities in the Republic of Dagestan: Makhachkala, Kizlyar, Izbirbash, Derbent. A snowball sampling procedure was used.

## Results

### Results Obtained from the Total Sample

An analysis of average values presented in Table 2 shows that the residents of Dagestan have a highest value of ethnic tolerance and preference for social equality, as well as a high level of self-esteem. Perceived security, life satisfaction, and separation attitudes are the least pronounced.

*Table 2*

**Results of Average Values of All Scales for the Total Sample (N = 438)**

Variables	M(SD)
Perceived security	3.79 (.83)
Friendly intercultural contacts	3.39 (.83)
Preference for support of multicultural ideology	4.23 (.72)
Preference for ethnic tolerance and social equality	4.46 (.72)
Acculturation preference for mutual integration	4.34 (.83)
Acculturation preference for separation	2.33(1.00)
Self-esteem	4.45 (.66)
Life satisfaction	3.89 (.87)

*Note:* N—total sample size; M—average value; SD—standard deviation.

<sup>24</sup> See: M. Rosenberg, *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1965.

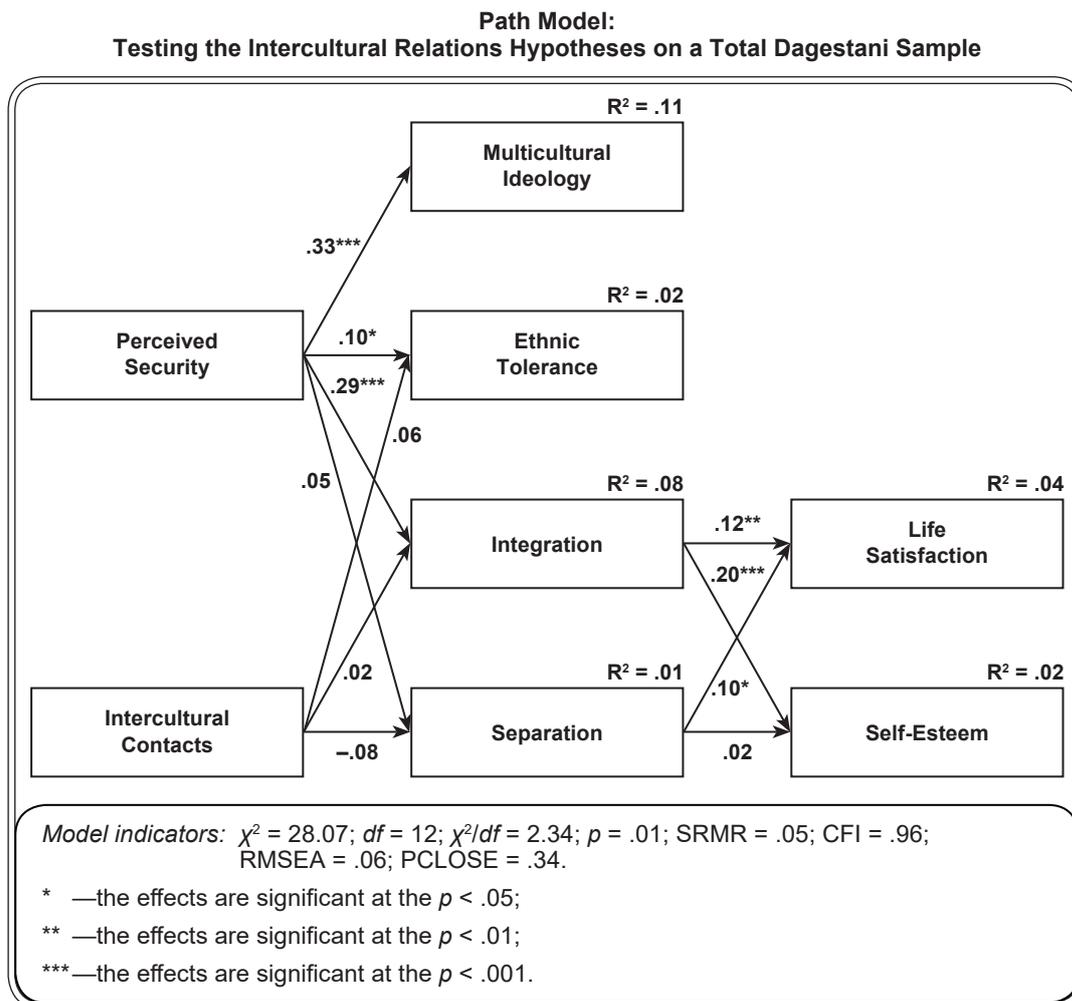
<sup>25</sup> See: E. Diener, R.A. Emmons, R.J. Larson, S. Griffin, “The Satisfaction with Life Scale,” *Journal of Personality Assessment*, Vol. 49, No. 1, 1985, pp. 71-75.

<sup>26</sup> See: J.L. Arbuckle, “IBM SPSS Amos 19 User’s Guide,” Amos Development Corporation, Crawfordville, FL, 2010.

Path analysis was used to test our hypotheses on the total sample. Fig. 1 presents the results.

The results demonstrate that for the residents of Dagestan, perceived security has a significant positive correlation with multicultural ideology, tolerance and integration, and has no significant correlation with separation. These data confirm our first hypothesis and indicate that the safer the residents of Dagestan consider the situation in the republic, the more they support the multicultural ideology, the more pronounced their tolerance and attitudes towards social equality are, and the more they prefer integration in intercultural relations (i.e., strive both to maintain their own ethnic culture and to adopt the cultures of other ethnic groups).

Figure 1



Friendly intercultural contacts have no significant correlation with ethnic tolerance or integration and separation acculturation strategies. These data indicate that our contact hypothesis was not confirmed.

The results demonstrate that the integration strategy shows a significant positive correlation with life satisfaction and self-esteem. This fully confirms the integration hypothesis: integration attitudes predict psychological well-being (self-esteem and life satisfaction).

In addition, we found out in this research that a preference for separation (that is, for maintaining only one's own ethnic culture) was shown to have a significant positive correlation with life satisfaction and to have no significant correlation with self-esteem. This partially confirms our additional hypothesis: the more the inhabitants of Dagestan are oriented towards separation, the more satisfied they are with their lives.

The relationship between perceived security and intercultural friendships was also investigated; this relationship was found to be insignificant ( $r = -.02$ ;  $p = .359$ ).

In general, we can say that the multiculturalism hypothesis was partially confirmed, the integration hypothesis was fully confirmed, the additional hypothesis about the relationship between the separation strategy and psychological well-being was partially confirmed. The only hypothesis that was not confirmed on the total sample is the contact hypothesis.

### ***Results Obtained in Specific Ethnic Group Samples***

Our hypotheses were subsequently tested on groups, whose population in our sample was over 100 people, namely, Avars, Dargins, and Russians.

MANOVA was used to compare the average values, where perceived security, intercultural contacts, multicultural ideology, ethnic tolerance, integration strategy, separation strategy, self-esteem, life satisfaction were the dependent variables, while ethnicity was the independent variable. The results showed that the groups differ significantly among themselves according to the following variables: Wilks'  $\Lambda = .887$ ,  $F(16, 947) = 1.98$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .039$ . ANOVA for individual variables also showed significant differences in intercultural contacts (more intensive among Russians in comparison to Dargins), multicultural ideology (significantly higher among Avars in comparison to Dargins) and tolerance (significantly higher among Russians and Avars in comparison to Dargins) (see Table 3).

*Table 3*

**Comparison of Variables' Average Values in the Four Groups (max. 5 points)**

Variables	Avars (N = 100)	Dargins (N = 116)	Russians (N = 101)	F (4, 313)	Partial $\eta^2$
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)		
Perceived security	3.98 (.73) <sub>a</sub>	3.84 (.83) <sub>a</sub>	3.71 (.86) <sub>a</sub>	2.81*	.021
Friendly intercultural contacts	3.36 (.79) <sub>ab</sub>	3.19 (.98) <sub>a</sub>	3.61 (.65) <sub>b</sub>	4.13***	.030
Multicultural ideology	4.40 (.73) <sub>a</sub>	4.12 (.80) <sub>b</sub>	4.23 (.75) <sub>ab</sub>	2.04*	.015
Tolerance	4.57 (.57) <sub>a</sub>	4.28 (.87) <sub>b</sub>	4.61 (.60) <sub>a</sub>	3.71**	.027
Integration strategy	4.47 (.71) <sub>a</sub>	4.27 (.94) <sub>a</sub>	4.33 (.80) <sub>a</sub>	.81	.006
Separation strategy	2.26 (.94) <sub>a</sub>	2.45 (1.00) <sub>a</sub>	2.15 (.92) <sub>a</sub>	1.58	.012
Self-esteem	3.92 (.82) <sub>a</sub>	3.96 (.95) <sub>a</sub>	3.91 (.97) <sub>a</sub>	2.05	.015
Life satisfaction	4.38 (.78) <sub>a</sub>	4.51 (.79) <sub>a</sub>	4.56 (.63) <sub>a</sub>	1.01	.008

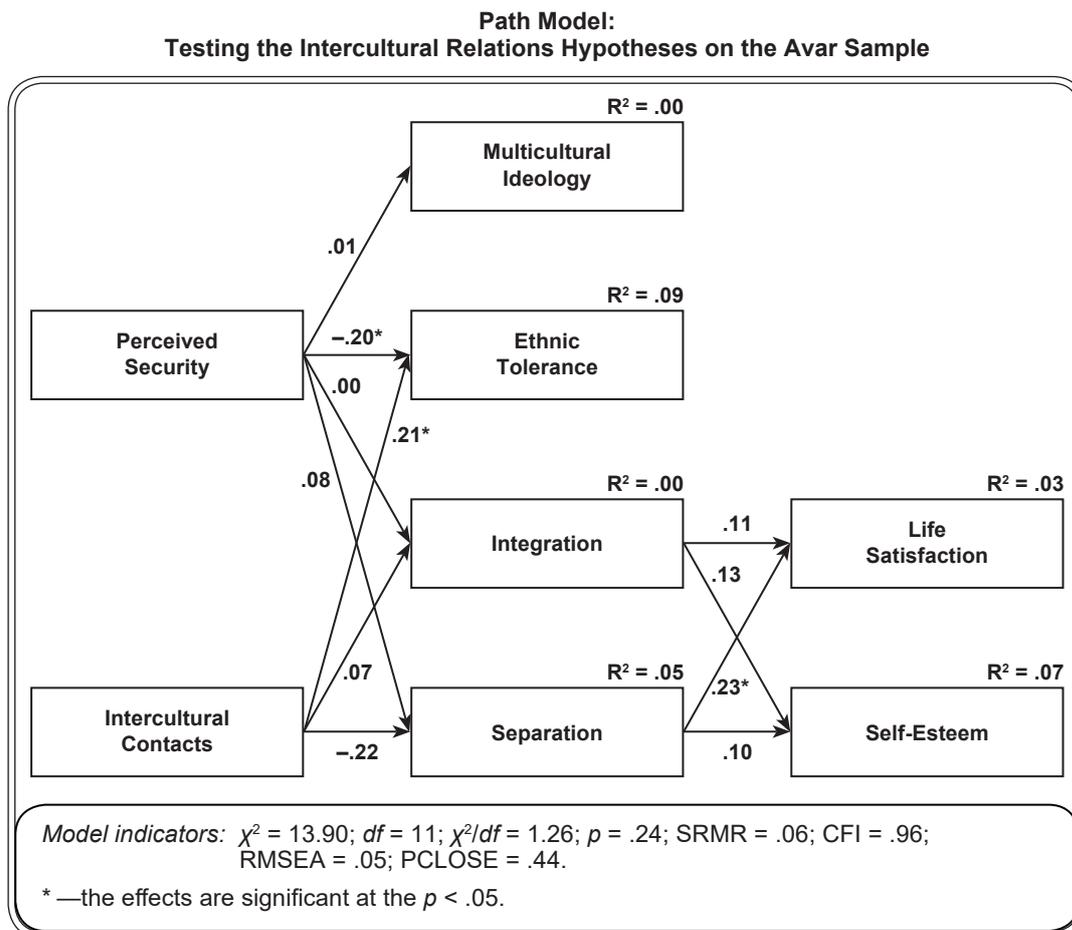
*Note:* M—average value; SD—standard deviation; F—Fisher's criterion; Partial  $\eta^2$ —partial eta-square—correlation ratio or nonlinear correlation coefficient.

\* —the effects are significant at the  $p < .05$  level;  
 \*\* —the effects are significant at the  $p < .01$  level;  
 \*\*\* —the effects are significant at the  $p < .001$  level.

Multi-group path analysis was subsequently performed. The estimated configuration invariance model for these groups did not demonstrate an acceptable global fit to the data: CFI = .937, RMSEA = .044; metric invariance:  $\Delta CFI = .089$ ,  $\Delta RMSEA = .003$  and scalar invariance:  $\Delta CFI = .040$ ,  $\Delta RMSEA = .003$ . Thus, here we can say about the absence of invariance for the three groups. Accordingly, the models for each group are different, therefore, each model will be described separately and compared to others.

The results of testing the intercultural relations hypotheses on the sample of Avars are shown in Fig. 2.

Figure 2

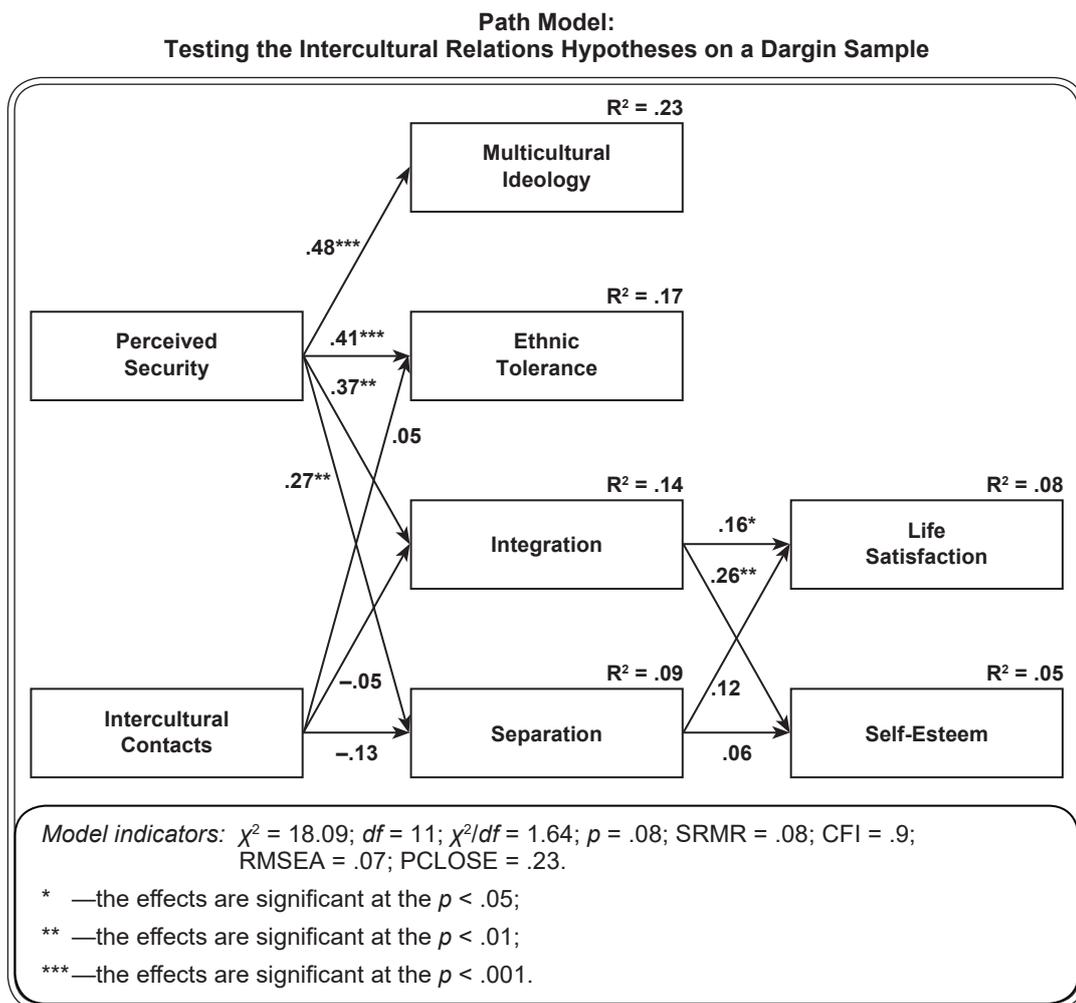


As Fig. 2 demonstrates, perceived security among the Avars shows a significant negative correlation with ethnic tolerance and has no significant correlation with multicultural ideology, integration and separation strategies. The multiculturalism hypothesis was not confirmed; on the contrary, an unexpected relationship was revealed: the more secure the Avars feel, the less tolerant and oriented towards social equality they are. The contact hypothesis was partially confirmed: intensive friendly intercultural contacts showed a significant positive correlation with tolerance and preference for social equality and a significant negative correlation with the separation strategy, while the correlation with the integration strategy was insignificant. The integration hypothesis was not confirmed

on the Avar sample: the integration strategy did not show a significant correlation with self-esteem and life satisfaction (the existing relationships are positive, but at the level of a trend). An additional hypothesis was partially confirmed on a sample of Avars: a preference for the separation strategy predicts a high level of life satisfaction and has no significant correlation with self-esteem. The correlation between perceived security and intercultural friendships among Avars was insignificant ( $r = .05$ ;  $p = .347$ ).

Next, we will consider the results of testing the intercultural relations hypotheses on a sample of Dargins. The results are shown in Fig. 3.

Figure 3

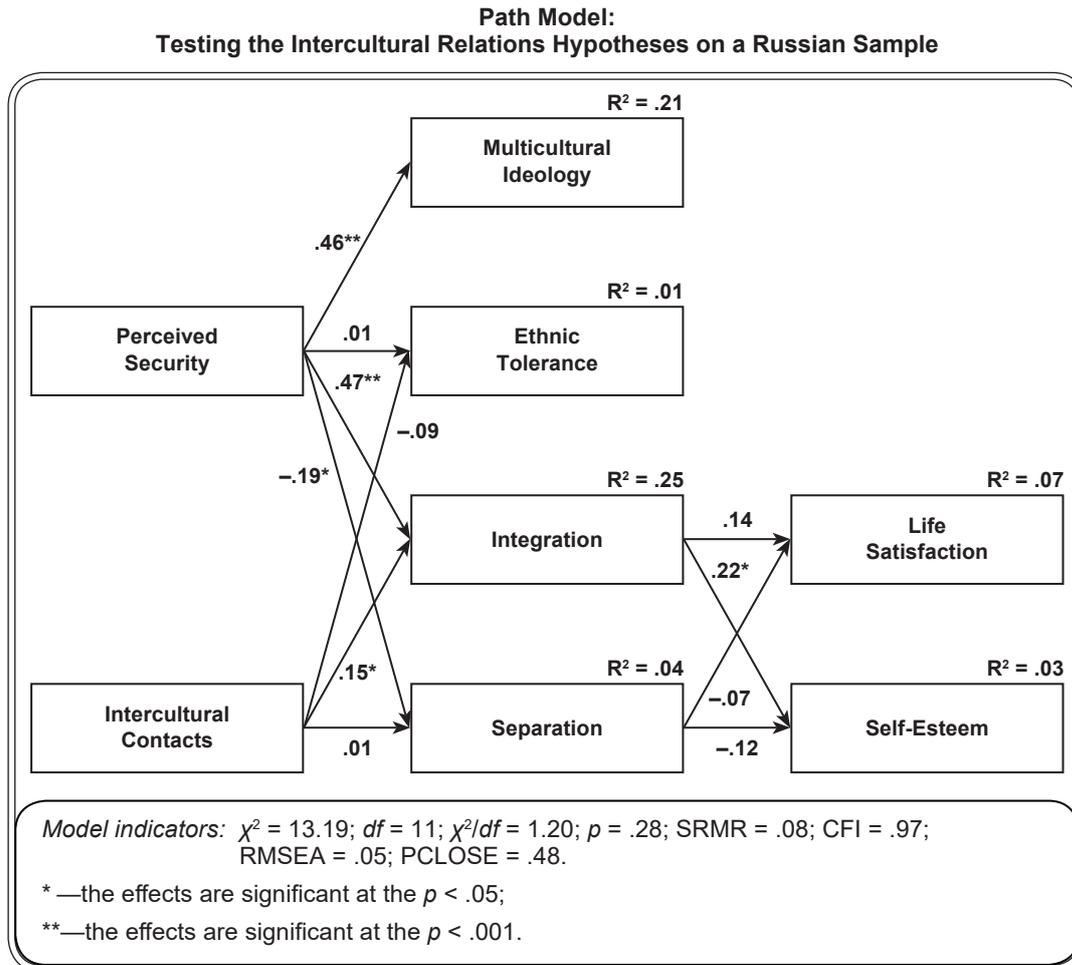


The results show that perceived security demonstrates a significant positive correlation with multicultural ideology, tolerance, and integration strategy. This confirms the multiculturalism hypothesis. However, we obtained an unexpected result: perceived security has a significant positive correlation with the separation strategy. It turns out that the more secure the Dargins feel, the more they prefer the separation strategy. Intercultural friendships had no significant correlation with tolerance and integration and separation strategies. Thus, the contact hypothesis was not confirmed on a

sample of Dargins. The integration hypothesis was fully confirmed: the preference for the integration strategy has a significant positive correlation with self-esteem and life satisfaction. We found no significant relationship between separation strategy and self-esteem and life satisfaction. Thus, our additional hypothesis was not confirmed on the sample of Dargins. The relationship between perceived security and intercultural friendships among Dargins was insignificant ( $r = -.08; p = .302$ ).

The analysis of the results obtained on the sample of Russians is presented in the path model in Fig. 4.

Figure 4



The multiculturalism hypothesis was confirmed on a sample of Russians: perceived security shows a significant positive correlation with multicultural ideology and integration strategy and is significantly negatively correlated with the separation strategy. A significant positive correlation was found between intensive friendly intercultural contacts among Russians and their preference for the integration strategy, and no significant relationship between the former and the separation strategy and tolerance. These results partially support the contact hypothesis in a sample of Russians. The integration hypothesis was also partially confirmed: Russians' preference for the integration strategy is significantly positively correlated with their self-esteem and has no significant correlation with life

satisfaction. The results showed that the separation strategy was not significantly correlated with self-esteem and life satisfaction (although a negative tendency was revealed). Thus, our additional hypothesis was not confirmed in a sample of Russians. We found no significant relationship between perceived security and intercultural friendships ( $r = .008$ ;  $p = .883$ ).

## *Discussion and Conclusions*

Dagestan is a unique republic of the Russian Federation. Its high ethnic diversity and the multiconfessional and multilingual environment have led to a rise in the researchers' interest in analyzing the relationships between different ethnic groups in this republic. In our study, we tested three hypotheses of intercultural relations based on Berry's theory.<sup>27</sup> The study also poses a hypothesis about the relationship between the separation strategy and psychological well-being and tests it with regard to the peculiarities of the republic's sociocultural context. All hypotheses were tested both on the total sample and on specific ethnic group samples.

The results demonstrated that the multiculturalism hypothesis was partially confirmed on the total sample of Dagestani population, and on the sample of two groups: Dargins and Russians. In the total and Dargin samples, the results established that the more generally secure the residents of Dagestan and representatives of the Dargin ethnic group feel, the more they support the multicultural ideology, the more geared they are towards tolerance and social equality, and the greater their preference for mutual integration in intercultural relations. Similar results were obtained among Russians in a study conducted in Latvia:<sup>28</sup> their perceived security contributed to the adoption of multicultural ideology, preference for tolerance, and integration preference.

For Russians in Dagestan, we identified that the more secure they feel, the more pronounced their supporting of multicultural ideology, the greater their preference for the mutual integration strategy and the lesser their inclination towards the separation strategy.

The multiculturalism hypothesis was not confirmed among the Avars, moreover, a negative relationship was revealed between perceived security and tolerance. This may be due to the unique situation of concurrent rivalry and mutual agreement between ethnic groups in Dagestan. A complex system of power distribution based on ethnic traditions has developed among the 14 ethnic groups of indigenous peoples with an official status in Dagestan.<sup>29</sup> For instance, the president (head) of the republic could be either an Avar or a Dargin (i.e., a representative of one of the two largest ethnic groups). The Chairman of the People's Assembly (Parliament) could also be a Dargin or an Avar. For Avars (they are the largest ethnic group in Dagestan, making up 29% of the total population of the republic<sup>30</sup>), security may be associated with their most recent position in power structures, rather than with social equality. Therefore, we found that the more secure the members of this group feel, the lower their preference for social equality and tolerance.

Another unexpected result was the positive relationship between perceived security and preference for the separation strategy in the sample of Dargins (the second largest group in Dagestan<sup>31</sup>). This result may be explained by the existence of latent competition between the Dargins and Avars,

<sup>27</sup> See: *Mutual Intercultural Relations*, ed. by J.W. Berry.

<sup>28</sup> See: N. Lebedeva, A. Tatarko, V.N. Galyapina, "Intercultural Relations in Latvia and Azerbaijan," in: *Mutual Intercultural Relations*, Ch. 3, pp. 59-80, available at [Doi.org/10.1017/9781316875032].

<sup>29</sup> See: A. Sidorenko, "Politicheskaia vlast v etnicheskikh regionakh," in: *Federalizm i etnicheskoe raznoobrazie v Rossii*, Collection of articles, ed. by I. Busygina, A. Heinemann-Grüder, Rossiyskaia politicheskaia entsiklopedia, Moscow, 2010, pp. 94-111.

<sup>30</sup> See: *All-Russia Population Census 2010*, Statistical Collection / Rosstat.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

and the desire to emphasize their ethnicity, their culture. In our opinion, this determines the desire for separation among the Dargins: they associate greater security with the separation strategy in intercultural relations.

The contact hypothesis was also tested during our research. We believed that for a multicultural republic like Dagestan, contacts between representatives of different ethnic groups are an important and necessary part of everyday life.<sup>32</sup> Hence, we supposed that the intensity of intercultural contacts would contribute to the integration of various ethnic groups and tolerant interethnic attitudes. However, the contact hypothesis was only confirmed on two groups in our study: on the sample of Russians (intensive friendly intercultural contacts of Russians determined their orientation towards integration) and on the sample of Avars (in this case, Avars' intensive friendly intercultural contacts do not so much contribute to their integration as prevent their separation and stimulate them towards social equality). Similar conclusions were reached by Alberto Voci and Miles Hewstone,<sup>33</sup> who found that intercultural contacts significantly improved the attitude of the host population towards migrants and ethnic minorities.

This hypothesis was not confirmed on the total sample and the Dargin sample. According to Gordon Allport,<sup>34</sup> the contact hypothesis is not confirmed when the following conditions fail to be met: parity in contact, intergroup cooperation, members of groups share common goals, institutional support for the ideas of equality of groups at the government level is available. However, in our case, we may be dealing with a different situation, since the equal status of ethnic groups is determined by law, groups are forced to interact as part of regular life, since there are many of them, there is support from the authorities available for all languages, cultural traditions and customs.<sup>35</sup>

Interethnic contacts in multicultural Dagestan, where Russian is the lingua franca for all ethnic groups, are a natural part of their life and are perceived as the normal state of things by the population, not as a contribution to the integration of ethnic groups. The Russians are an exception: they are not the titular ethnic group, and make up 3.6% of the population,<sup>36</sup> having settled in Dagestan only at the end of the 19th century.<sup>37</sup> In addition, they live in a different ethnic and confessional environment, hence, they may feel a greater need for intercultural contacts than representatives of other ethnic groups, which, in turn, contributes to their preference for integration.

The integration hypothesis was fully confirmed in Dagestan on the total sample and the sample of Dargins: the preference for the integration strategy leads to psychological well-being. Similar results were obtained in the sample of Russians, who are an ethnic minority in Azerbaijan,<sup>38</sup> and in the sample of an ethnic majority, namely Tajiks in Tajikistan.<sup>39</sup> Integration preference promoted both self-esteem and life satisfaction in both of these groups.

This hypothesis was partially proven on a sample of Russians: the greater their preference for the integration strategy, the higher their self-esteem. Our data are consistent with the results obtained by Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti and her colleagues<sup>40</sup> in Finland. They found that integration preference pre-

<sup>32</sup> See: N. Gadzhiakhmedov, op. cit.; A. Mekhtikhanov, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> See: A. Voci, M. Hewstone, "Intergroup Contact and Prejudice Toward Immigrants in Italy: The Mediation Role of Anxiety and the Moderational Role of Salience," *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2003, pp. 37-54.

<sup>34</sup> See: G.W. Allport, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> See: N. Gadzhiakhmedov, op. cit.; A. Mekhtikhanov, op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> See: *All-Russia Population Census 2010*, Statistical Collection / Rosstat.

<sup>37</sup> See: "Etnicheskaia demografia russkikh Dagestana," 2011, available at [<http://evrazia.org/article/1788>], 11 March, 2017.

<sup>38</sup> See: N. Lebedeva, A. Tatarko, V.N. Galyapina, op. cit.

<sup>39</sup> See: J.W. Berry, V.N. Galyapina, N.M. Lebedeva, Z.Kh. Lepshokova, T.A. Ryabichenko, "Intercultural Relations in Georgia and Tajikistan: A Post-Conflict Model," *Psychology. Journal of the Higher School of Economics*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2019, pp. 232-249, available at [DOI: 10.17323/1813-8918-2019-2-232-249].

<sup>40</sup> See: I. Jasinskaja-Lahti, G. Horenczyk, T. Kinunen, op. cit.

dicts the successful psychological adaptation among migrants from Russia and the former U.S.S.R. Other studies have also found that migrants' choice of integration strategy has positive consequences for their psychological well-being.<sup>41</sup>

Interestingly, this hypothesis was not confirmed on the sample of Avars, however, an additional hypothesis was proven about a positive relationship between the separation strategy and psychological well-being in the same sample. The more Avars prefer the separation strategy in intercultural relations, the more satisfied they are with life. Also, an additional hypothesis was confirmed on the total Dagestani sample. Our results somewhat contradict the data obtained in Estonia.<sup>42</sup> The results of the study of the acculturation of Russians in this country showed that the desire to preserve Russian culture is negatively correlated with life satisfaction. We believe that Dagestan's cultural diversity can be perceived by ethnic groups, especially small ones, as a danger to the preservation of their own culture. Ethnic groups aim not to "dissolve" in the multitude of other cultures, rather than juxtapose their culture to others. This may be related to the determination made in our study: not only the integration strategy, but also the separation strategy are the predictors of the psychological well-being of various ethnic groups in Dagestan.

Generally, perceived security plays an important role in intercultural relations for the residents of Dagestan (total sample), which predicts the preference for maintaining a multicultural ideology, preference for tolerance, social equality, and integration strategy. The psychological well-being of various Dagestani ethnic groups is facilitated by both the preference for the integration strategy and the preference for the separation strategy. Perhaps, in Dagestan, where representatives of a large number of ethnic groups are indigenous peoples, the motives for choosing a separation strategy are different from the motives that determine the choice of this strategy among migrants, and this may become the subject of further research.

For Avars, intercultural contacts play the greatest role, since they are associated with the preference for tolerance and social equality and hinder the choice of the separation strategy. At the same time, the preference for the separation strategy is associated with satisfaction with the life in Avars.

Perceived security is very important for Dargins; it is associated with multicultural ideology, tolerance, integration and separation strategies. The psychological well-being of the Dargins is facilitated by their preference for the integration strategy.

For Russians, perceived security and friendly intercultural contacts are of great importance: the more secure Russians feel, the more support they demonstrate for a multicultural ideology, prefer integration and reject separation; intensive friendly intercultural contacts between Russians are associated with their choice of the integration strategy. This strategy is most successful for Russians, since it is related to their self-esteem.

Our results demonstrate the importance of solving the perceived security problem for building effective intercultural relations in Dagestan. Studies show<sup>43</sup> that negative multimedia messages and nationalist rhetoric do not contribute to perceived security; on the contrary, they lead to an increase in the perceived threat. Proceeding from this, the authorities should build their national, economic and social policies with regard to potential threats.

Intercultural contacts also play a significant role in building effective relationships in Dagestan. At least in certain cases (i.e., Russians and Avars), they determine the preference for integration and social equality. It is important for the authorities to support interethnic contacts. Under these circum-

---

<sup>41</sup> See: *Mutual Intercultural Relations*, ed. by J.W. Berry; J.S. Phinney, G. Horenczyk, K. Liebkind, P. Vedder, "Ethnic Identity, Immigration, and Well-Being: An Interactional Perspective," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57, 2001, pp. 493-510.

<sup>42</sup> See: L. Kus-Harbord, C. Ward, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> See: V. Esses, J.F. Dovidio, G. Hodson, "Public Attitudes Toward Immigration in the United States and Canada in Response to September 11, 2001 'Attack on America'," *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, Vol. 2, 2002, pp. 69-85.

stances, relationships will become more positive, for instance, through the growing recognition of similarities.<sup>44</sup>

In shaping national policy, the authorities should be careful to preserve the cultural identity of various ethnic groups, since, as our research has shown, the choice of the separation strategy leads only to life satisfaction, while the choice of the integration strategy is associated with both life satisfaction and self-esteem of Dagestan residents.

---

<sup>44</sup> See: T.F. Pettigrew, op. cit.