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**ASSESSMENT OF DEMOGRAPHIC THREATS AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN REPUBLIC OF KALMYKI**

Natalia Kurepina (a)*, Lyudmila Namrueva (b), Nyudlya Pavlova (c),
Maria Shovaeva (d), Natalya Berikova (e)

*Corresponding author

(a) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, Elista, Russia,
kurepinanl@mail.ru 89615479310

(b) Kalmyk Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Elista, Russia, Inamrueva@yandex.ru,
89615475840

(c) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, Elista, Russia, pavlova_nc68@mail.ru,
89054005528

(d) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, Elista, Russia,
shovaeva@yandex.ru, 89061765436

(e) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, Elista, Russia,
natla13@yandex.ru, 89371932686

Abstract

Sustainable development of the society, prevention of negative processes and threats of economic security is undoubtedly an urgent topic of the study. These problems require continuous monitoring, including the use of sociological tools, which results are described in this paper. The paper analyzes results of the study of leading scientists in the field of economic security and interethnic relations. It shows the study of the authors in several directions: assessment of demographic threats, migration processes and international relations in a polyethnic region – the Republic of Kalmykia. The economics and statistics analysis, population census data of the Republic of Kalmykia for 1989, 2002 and 2010, population migration data made it possible to identify some destructive factors characterizing threats of demographic security. Population migration data in rural municipal settlements and the population dynamics showed that these processes are typical for all nationalities. The sociological survey showed that the above problems are mainly caused by economic and social situation in the republic, rather than by interethnic problems. Migration processes in rural municipal settlements of the republic are analyzed. It is found that high coefficients are typical for areas with different population structure. In order to ensure stability and prevent interethnic conflicts the state shall in due time try to avoid tensions connected with the problems of employment competition, participation in power structures, as well as personal threat and danger of losing cultural integrity so typical for the modern world. The purpose of the study is to analyze demographic threats in Kalmykia.

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Keywords: Polyethnic region, Republic of Kalmykia, demographic threats, economic security.



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1. Introduction

At the present stage of social and economic development, the phenomena of safety are considered on a bigger scale. This includes internal conflicts and oppressions caused by ethnic or religious intolerance, the quality of life of the society, demographic problems and other negative factors causing threats to economic security.

The interests of national security require continuous, system analysis and assessment of demographic threats. Demographic safety is an important factor of national and economic security, which influences the economic security at all levels of economic relations from living conditions of a certain person and his family to the country in general.

Since the beginning of the 1990s Russia entered upon a road of a lingering demographic crisis. The governmental measures aimed to solve demographic problems and support motherhood stabilized the situation and suspended the process of depopulation in Russia, but so far the country was not able to completely neutralize the threats of demographic safety.

The demographic problems in the Republic of Kalmykia were mainly associated with migration and depopulation.

The demographic situation demonstrates the number of threats, which elimination and reduction is an important condition in ensuring the national security.

2. Problem Statement

The problems of depopulation are typical for the whole country, which continuously takes various measures to overcome them. The depopulation and migration problems of the republic caused the need to study the reasons of demographic threats in a polyethnic region. The economic analysis and sociological survey allow assessing the level of threats and the need for measures to neutralize them. This is particularly important for specific regions with complex ethnic and confessional structure, such as the Republic of Kalmykia, which suffered significant changes in its ethnic structure.

The cross-disciplinary approach to the study conducted at the intersection of the theory of economic security and ethnosociology made it possible to prove the features of economic security of a polyethnic region for due prevention and neutralization of crisis threats.

3. Research Questions

The concept of demographic development became an important landmark in solving demographic problems, which logically fostered the development of the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation.

The scholars studying economic security also consider the questions of demography and migration as priority directions requiring thorough analysis and assessment of demographic threats, their magnitude and rate of change.

Demographic safety was studied by (Senchagov, 2005; Oleynikov, 2005; Vechkanov 2007; Goncharenko & Akulinina, 2015, etc.).

Considering national security threats as part of various dangers of human activity Logunov (2009) believes that “the regional balance of forces and the level of regional stability set the parameters of interdependence for the benefit of regional subjects, as well as forms and methods to manage the relations regarding any regional problem” (p. 34).

At different times domestic scientists, such as Guboglo (2016), Drobizheva (2016), etc. studied the issues of ethnosociology. In 1970 and beyond they were engaged not only in the development of social differentiation of ethnic groups, but also conducted large sociological survey in federal and autonomous republics. In the 1990s during the transformation of the society the research tasks were complicated with the introduction of new stratification criteria. Interethnic tolerance/intolerance and interethnic patterns in this multinational state remain an urgent task despite all forecasts of specialists in globalization on the downward importance of ethnicity. This topic is quite diverse and integrates psychological, cultural and economic aspects, which are key in ethnosociology. The scientists in this research area from the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IS RAS) are actively analyzing the problems of Russian solidarity and interethnic consent, integration processes in the country, including interethnic tolerance.

The main conclusion of the fundamental research work under the editorship of Drobizheva (2003) *Civil, Ethnic and Regional Identity: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* is that the current attempts to present our country as the mononational state shall be opposed with data of a particular sociological study demonstrating that Russia is perceived by the majority of the population as the multinational country where ethnic, ethno-sectarian and regional identities of the population do not prevent the development of the Russian state and the civil identity as such, but are rather embedded into it. According to the All-Russian Survey *20 Years of Reforms Through the Eyes of the Russians*, 67% of the country believe that the multinationality of the country is more an advantage to its development, rather than a problem. These values are not lower in the republics, and even higher among titular nations.

The considered study is based on the experience of ethnosociologists from the IS RAS (research supervisor L.M. Drobizheva): research tools, methodical guidelines.

The scientists of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology named after N.N. Miklukho-Maclay of the RAS under the leadership of (Tishkov et al., 2016) were studying international relations and conducting ethnomonitoring.

Medvedev (2016) was engaged in the study of relations between the economic security and interethnic relations in the North Caucasian Federal District.

Thus, despite a certain scientific coverage of the regional economic security, the topic of the given study still seems quite relevant.

The originality of the ethnic structure of polyethnic regions causes the need to consider ethnopsychological, ethnocultural features, traditions of the people in terms of economic security. The study was conducted at the intersection of the theories of economic security.

Cross-disciplinary approach, i.e. the study at the intersection of the theory of economic security and ethnosociology may foster the improvement of research directions and methodology within the analyzed field.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze demographic threats in the Republic of Kalmykia and the results of sociological survey thus assessing the nature of interethnic relations and justifying the specifics of polyethnic regions as objects of regional economic security.

5. Research Methods

The study is based on the principles of objectivity, multidisciplinary approach, accounting of change and development of the studied phenomenon, consistency and integrated approach to the study.

The main methods of the study include sociological and expert survey, content analysis, structural-functional analysis, economic and logical analysis, methods of expert assessment, ethnological monitoring.

The social distance was measured via the Bogardus scale used in the world sociology to study the readiness of a person to accept a member of diverse social groups as a citizen of his republic, a business partner, a supervisor, a neighbor, a friend, a husband (wife) of his children.

6. Findings

The study of the demographic safety of the republic was conducted within several directions with the special focus on migration processes and reasons for departure of the population from the polyethnic region.

According to the results of the 2002 All-Russian Census, the population of Kalmykia made 292.4 thousand people. Compared to the results of 1989 census, the population was reduced by 30.2 thousand people. The statistics confirms the decrease in de jure population of the republic (Table 1).

Table 01. Ethnic composition of the population (according to population census data; thousand people)

Nationality, National groups	1989		2002		2010		2010 in % against 1989
	K ppl	%	K ppl	%	K ppl	%	
Republic of Kalmykia	322.6	100.0	292.4	100.0	289.5	100.0	89.7
Kalmyks	146.3	45.4	155.9	53.3	162.7	56.2	111.2
Russians	121.5	37.7	98.1	33.6	85.7	29.6	70.5
People of the North Caucasus	31.2	9.6	23.0	7.8	21.4	7.4	68.6
Other nationalities	23.6	7.3	15.4	5.3	19.7	6.8	83.5

The results of the 2010 All-Russian Census showed that Kalmykia is still facing the depopulation. Its population was reduced by 2.9 thousand people. It shall be noted that this process is typical for almost all groups of nationalities.

From 1992 to the present day Kalmykia is experiencing a stable negative migration balance being a prevalent factor of depopulation, an extremely adverse trend from ethnocultural, economic and geostrategic perspectives.

Table 2 shows the continuing population shift of both urban and rural population.

Table 02. Population shift over January-May, 2018

	Absolute data, ppl.		
	Number of immigrants	Number of emigrants	Migration gain
Municipal settlements of the Republic of Kalmykia	4,281	5,553	-1,272
including Elista	1,610	2,052	-442
rural municipal settlements	2,671	3,501	-830

The study of migration processes in rural municipal settlements showed that Iki-Burulsky, Ketchenerovsky, Chernozemelsky, Yashaltinsky districts have the greatest outflow of the population. The migration rate in these areas calculated per 10 thousand people made 365.8; 192.6; 155.7; 214.3 respectively. It shall be noted that the areas with the majority of the Kalmyk people are characterized by high migration outflow of the population: Ketchenerovsky district – 87.7%, Chernozemelsky district – 56.6%, and the areas with the prevalence of the Russian population – 53.9%.

The demographic threats caused the need to study their reasons. Hence, for this purpose in 2017 the sociological survey was conducted in Kalmykia, which allowed defining the nature of interethnic relations in the republic.

The survey covered 700 people – residents of rural areas and the capital of the republic, among them there were 50.7% men and 49.3% women. The Kalmyk respondents made 73.0%, while the Russian – 18.4%, the remaining 8.6% represented other ethnic groups (Namrueva, 2014, 2018).

The situation of accepting migrants of a different nationality as citizens of the republic is quite relevant since it affects the interests of people living in the republic, first of all it reduces the ratio of the titular nation. In general, according to survey, over 80%, irrespective of their ethnic and territorial identity, are ready “to accept a person of a different nationality as a citizen of the republic”. This acceptance is slightly higher in urban (87%) than in rural areas (83%). In our opinion, this happens due to the fact that the city offers ample opportunities for utilization of one’s professional and business potential. Labor migrants occupy certain free niches of employment without competing with the local population. In rural areas, where there are almost no jobs, the migrants are perceived as the main competitors for any vacancy. In the ethnic context the majority of Kalmyk (83.8%) and Russian (89.6%) respondents declared their determination to accept a representative of a different nationality as a citizen of the republic (Table 3).

Table 03. Distribution of answers to a question “Are you ready to accept a person of a different nationality as one of the following”

Answers	Yes		No		Not sure	
	Kalmyks	Russians	Kalmyks	Russians	Kalmyks	Russians
Citizen of the republic	83.8	89.6	7.3	4.8	8.9	5.6
Business partner	58.6	68.6	6.7	19.5	14.8	11.9
Direct supervisor	42.6	56.8	39.9	27.1	17.5	16.1
Neighbor	75.3	86.4	13.0	8.5	11.7	5.1
Friend	67.1	76.1	17.0	13.7	15.9	10.3
Husband (wife) of your children	55.3	69.2	7.	18.3	17.5	12.5
Husband (wife)	45.5	66.9	36.6	18.6	17.9	14.4

54.5% of rural people, 65% of regional center residents, 64% of the urban population are ready to accept persons of different nationality as business partners. 26.4%; 17.8%; 27.3% of respondents were negative to this issue. It is possible to trace a certain difference depending on ethnicity. Russian respondents (68.6%) show higher readiness to work with a nonethnic business partner than Kalmyk respondents (58.6%). The obtained results confirm that the ethnic factor matters in the business sector of the republic.

The readiness to accept a person of a different nationality as a supervisor is a particularly pressing issue. The answers were as follows: rural population – 43%, regional centers – 53% (10 times more), urban population – 44%, while 35.2%; 25.5%; 44.7% respectively were negative to this question. Again the difference in answers of the representatives of two main ethnic groups in the republic made 10 and more percent. 42.6% of the Kalmyks and 56.8% of the Russians were positive to accept a person of a different nationality as their supervisor. The negative opinion was expressed by 39.9% of the Kalmyks and 27.1% of the Russians.

As for social interaction, then the answers concerning friendly and family relations were different. Thus, the survey showed that 77.6% of rural people, 83.1% of regional center residents, 73% of the urban population were open for joint rest and entertainment. 67.1% of Kalmyk respondents and 76.1% of Russian respondents held the same opinion. On the contrary, 10.9%; 7.8%; 15.9% of respondents within the studied groups were closed for such communication. 17.0% of the Kalmyks and 13.7% of the Russians are not ready for joint rest with the representatives of different nationality.

The results of the study confirm that the culture of our respondents is high and the range of their communication is rather wide. In general, the majority of respondents positively perceives the representatives of another ethnic group in various analyzed situations.

Thus, 83.1% of regional center residents; 77.6% of rural people; 73% of the urban population; 75.3% of the Kalmyks and 86.4% of the Russians are ready to have representatives of another nationality as their neighbors. A considerably smaller number of respondents hold a different opinion – 10.9%; 7.8%; 15.9%; 13% and 8.5% respectively.

More than a half of respondents (61.9% of rural people; 56.2% of regional center residents; 59% of the urban population; 55.3% of the Kalmyks; 69.2% of the Russians) are ready to accept a person of another nationality as a husband (wife) of their children. A quarter of respondents in each studied group (23.8%; 26.1%; 25.6%; 7%; 18.3) deny such interethnic union of their children.

Nearly a half of respondents is ready to start a mixed family (51.2% of rural people; 47.2% of regional center residents; 53.1% of the urban population; 45.5% of the Kalmyks; 66.9% of the Russians). Nearly a third of respondents negatively perceive such marriages (32.9%; 36.1%; 30.2%; 36.6%; 18.6%).

The polarization, which began in Kalmyk society in the 1990s, is becoming more intense with strong concentration of wealth at one extreme, and poverty – on the other, i.e. social and economic mobility towards the poles of social structure. As a result, we face the “development of mutually exclusive interests of the “top” and the “bottom”, “ghettoization” of large groups of the population at the lowest levels of social hierarchy without the prospects of improving their situation”.

The income ratio of the most and the least wealthy population of the republic has been increasing over the studied period. There is an intensification of income inequality, a rising gap between the rich and

the poor due to illegal and nonlabor stratification, weaker incentives to constructive labor. The sociological survey conducted by the author in 2017 demonstrates such stratification in the republic (Table 4).

Table 04. Distribution of answers to a question “Your income allows you ...”

Answers	Kalmyks	Russians
to barely make ends meet, don't have enough for everything, to constantly take food through a debt	23.9	20.3
to purchase only the bare essentials	57.0	63.3
to purchase the bare essentials and household appliances (without prejudice to the budget)	14.8	12.5
to purchase healthy foods, household appliances, to travel abroad (without prejudice to the budget)	3.7	3.1
to purchase healthy foods, cars, real estate, to travel abroad (without prejudice to the budget)	0.6	0.8

The obtained data allow defining the levels of poverty of the population in the republic. 24% of Kalmyk respondents and 20% of Russian respondents find themselves at the level of extreme poverty or deprivation. These respondents barely make ends meet, don't have enough money for everything, constantly take food through a debt. The income of the majority of respondents indicates the average poverty when such people can only purchase the bare essentials, which is confirmed by 57% of Kalmyk and 63% of Russian respondents.

The groups of wealthy people that can afford buying the bare essentials and household appliances (without prejudice to the budget) and super-wealthy people that can buy healthy food, household appliances, a car, a real estate, can spend their holidays abroad (without prejudice to the budget) include a small number of respondents (4.3% of the Kalmyks and 3.8% of the Russians).

7. Conclusion

The survey showed that the demographic threats in the Republic of Kalmykia are caused by depopulation due to migration processes.

The problem of migration loss negatively influences human resources since the majority of able-bodied population including people with high professional and general educational potential generally leave the republic.

Changes in the ethnic composition of the population are mainly caused by external migration, differences in natural reproduction of population groups, change of ethnic consciousness under the influence of mixed marriages and other factors.

At the same time, the sociological survey confirms that the above problems are more connected with economic and social situation in the republic, but not with interethnic problems. The survey showed that the Republic of Kalmykia is characterized by favorable international relations positively influencing social and economic situation in the region. Despite economic problems of a certain part of the population, the relations between ethnic groups are free from conflicts, which, certainly, positively affects the economic security.

The majority of people in both groups is at the level of poverty and there is no particular difference in their social status, which confirms the reliability of obtained results. The poor are excluded from the

economy, public life and policy, or are only included under certain conditions. The population at the level of poverty is deprived of any opportunity to enter the labor market, to have access to commodity markets and financial resources. Another part of the society is trying to neglect them or to discriminate them even more.

Russian sociologists note that there is a famous phenomenon of a scapegoat in the world practice, when the economic situation is seriously deteriorated and the competition in the labor market increases, there is always someone feeling more fears, frustrations, capable to invite aggression, demonstrate destructive behavior (Drobizheva, 2003).

To avoid such negative situations and to ensure the stability of the society there is a need to decrease the level of poverty, to efficiently manage both macrofactors (social and economic potential, capacity of the region to support the economic activity of the population and social and economic policy of the country, the Russian subject), and microlevel factors (basic interests, values and motivation of poverty subjects).

Therefore, in our opinion, it is critical for such polyethnic region as the Republic of Kalmykia with its acute migration issues to solve social and economic problems, to reduce poverty of the population, to decrease unemployment, to ensure decent quality of life and other aspects of social protection of the population.

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