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#### HOST POPULATION AND MIGRANTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN: ADAPTATION RESOURCES

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#### *Abstract*

The research topic is relevant due to the need to study the state of inter-ethnic relations in the regions of the Russian Federation. The Republic of Tatarstan has historically been one of the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional regions of the Russian Federation. The main ethnic groups here are Tatars and Russians, while the main religious groups are Muslims and Orthodox Christians. Ethnic minority groups in the Republic contribute to ethnic diversity. Migration processes are playing an increasingly important role in the country's economic, social, political and cultural development. Studying the adaptation indicators of the local population to the presence of migrants is relevant because of the needs of multi-ethnic and multi-confessional societies of the Republic of Tatarstan. The interaction between the host population and migrants has an impact on the social and economic development of society, the daily behavioral practices, and the general state of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. The purpose of the article is to characterize the attitude of the local population to the presence of foreign cultural migrants in their locality. The leading approach to the study of this problem is a polyparadigm methodology. The research used quantitative and qualitative methods. The article describes the attitude of the local population to the presence of migrants in the Republic of Tatarstan in 2018, provides comparative data on large cities and towns of the Republic. The article pays special attention to the characteristics of the general level of positive or negative attitude of the host population towards migrants.

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**Keywords:** Migration, multi-ethnicity, multi-confessionalism, socialization, cultural norms.



## 1. Introduction

The Republic of Tatarstan has historically been one of the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional regions of the Russian Federation. Migration processes play an increasingly important role in the country's economic, social, political and economic development. Studying the adaptation indicators of the local population to the presence of migrants is relevant because of the needs of multi-ethnic and multi-confessional societies of the Republic of Tatarstan. The interaction between the host population and migrants has an impact on the social and economic development of society, behavioral practices, and the general state of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations.

Inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations in society exist on two levels: institutional and inter-group. The first is studied mainly by ethnopolitologists (Rong, 2010) and the second by ethnosociologists (Sinan, 2015).

Studying interethnic attitudes includes a wide range of subjects. Researchers pay attention to the issues of intercultural communication (Volpe, Holochwost, Cole, & Propper, 2019), the effectiveness of studying interethnic relations in multi-ethnic regions of the world (Zainal, Abu, & Zulkifli, 2010), the problems of education among ethnic minorities (Gjicali, Astuto, & Lipnevich, 2019).

The article deal with ethnicity as a factor of discrimination (Rozmann & Walsh, 2018); and the impact of ethnicity on economic processes (Peñaloza, 2018).

Ethnic and sociological research covers the study of interethnic interactions through opinions, attitudes, orientations, and values of people in different spheres of life – business, manufacturing, leisure, and family.

## 2. Problem Statement

Studies of migration processes in the Russian Federation and in the post-Soviet space are relevant for representatives of various scientific directions. Sociologists study the ethno-social and ethno-confessional aspects of migration in modern society (Drobizheva, 2017). Political scientists are interested in the impact of the state of inter-ethnic relations on public policy (Mukharyamov, 2004) and social processes in society (Tichkov, 2016). A special place occupies the study of psychological aspects of interethnic interaction. Researchers are interested in the size of the intergroup distance between the host population and migrant groups, the level of xenophobia, and peculiarities of social contacts between representatives of different nationalities (Jumageldinov, 2014). Anthropologists and ethnologists study everyday practices of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations (Titova, Kozlov, & Frolova, 2017). The analysis focuses, in particular, on the study of the social distance between groups in a multi-ethnic society (Titova, Sabirova, & Frolova 2016). At the same time, the study of the peculiarities of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional interaction in the regions of the Russian Federation requires more detailed examination.

Inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations, being a part of everyday and professional life of the population, at the same time form a wide range of problems, the research and solution of which is both perspective and relevant.

### 3. Research Questions

This study examines the adaptation indicators of the local population to the presence of migrants in the Republic of Tatarstan in 2018. The study focused on the indicators of intergroup distance between the local population and migrants from other cultures.

### 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to characterize the attitude of the local population (Tatars and Russians) to the presence of foreign cultural migrants in cities and rural areas of the Republic of Tatarstan in 2018.

### 5. Research Methods

The research relies on the methodological principles of the polyparadigm approach. There are two basic provisions of F. Bart's theory in this study: firstly, the conclusion that the determinant for membership in a group is social factors, which base on the phenomenon of category assignment, rather than "reasonably" existent cultural differences. Secondly, ethnic categories, both in the process of identification and in the process of classifying people as belonging to certain ethnic groups, take into account not only the sum of objective differences, but only those that are perceived by individuals as significant (Barth, 1989).

The paper relies on the analysis of empirical materials collected in 2016-2018. Information was collected through a mass survey of representatives of the main ethnic groups (Tatars and Russians), observation, semi-structured and biographical interviews. The presentation of the received material follows the principles of the so-called "dense description", i.e. the variant of analysis, which is made in terms of the informants themselves.

### 6. Findings

The results of the survey show that, compared to the data of 2016, the share of respondents who are categorically against the presence of migrants in their locality has slightly increased (from 8.1% in 2016 to 12.2% in 2018). The highest percentage of such respondents was in Chistopol (22%) and Naberezhnye Chelny (19.3%). The share of those who declare indifferent attitude to migrants has increased significantly (see Table 01).

**Table 01.** Results of the answer to the question: "How do you feel about the presence of migrants in your locality? (2018 г., %)

Absolutely against their presence	Agreed, subject to certain conditions	Does not matter	Positive attitude
12,2	46,4	25,7	9,3

21.3% of respondents who agree with the presence of migrants under certain conditions believe that there should be as few migrants as possible (34% in Chistopol, 25% in Mamadysh, 21.3% in Naberezhnye Chelny, 16.4% in Kazan).

Overall, respondents mentioned increase in the number of migrants as one of the main factors causing discomfort:

From the interview: *"I don't like the fact that there are too many of them. As if, there was an overabundance in the country. They are all different, too. Some of them are insolent. We haven't seen any in our yard, but sometimes there were such "individuals" at work who simply demand too much".* (man, 35 years old, Tatar, Naberezhnye Chelny)

65.6% of those who agree with the presence of migrants under certain conditions believe that migrants should behave as a local population (73.3% of respondents in Laishevo, 67.7% in Nizhnekamsk, over 50% in Kazan and Mamadysh, 48.8% in Naberezhnye Chelny, 37.7% in Chistopol).

About a third of respondents (32.7%) believe that migrants should first know Russian. Russian respondents more often note the need for migrants to speak Russian (38.8% of Russians and 27% of Tatars).

Respondents explained their positions in informal statements:

*Из неформализованных высказываний респондентов:*

*«Immoral behavior of migrants, incompliance of their behavior norms with the norms accepted in the society of local population»;*

*"There is an expression: "When in Rome do as the Romans do" – if migrants arrived, they should accept the requirements of the given country and not dictate their conditions";*

*"There are too many of them, it is impossible to live in peace.*

*"They do not respect the local population; they do not speak Russian well.*

Thus, as in previous years, the dominant position among respondents is that migrants should respect the cultural norms of the host society and "behave as a local population".

From the interview: *"Neutral, let them live. The most important thing is to respect our traditions... Well, it happens that many people go beyond the accepted limits. Taking into account what we give them. We say that they can't do that and should behave accordingly. They seem to listen, at least in this area (woman, Tatar, 35 years old, Kazan).*

*"I don't want to seem nationalist, but I have a very negative attitude: migrants come here with their own rules, but they should live in accordance with ours, so it would be accepted as a normal thing. But they are absolutely not socialized, their children are mostly difficult to educate, bring up and so on, and I'm not saying that they take away jobs from us and so forth, but they are mostly large families and use our Russian laws to support this ... (focus group, Kazan).*

31.3% believe that about half of the residents of the republic share their attitude towards migrants, while 29.7% believe that the majority of the residents of the republic think the same way.

From the interview: *"I think a lot of people will support me. Especially on the issue of quantity. Everyone can see it. I understand that many companies and factories do not have enough employees. Young people do not really go there. But we have to attract our people to work, not just migrants. Although, you know, there are many of our people abroad. And they apply for other people's jobs there. So, here, some kind of balance exists.* (man, 35 years old, Tatar, Naberezhnye Chelny)

Migrants themselves are more optimistic than locals about the attitude of the host population towards them:

*"Great, because the people here are still friendly, good. Good relations. We share, talk with them, sometimes they even sympathize, that's when you go to the passport office. There are some problems with documents. Oh, yes, it is hard for you to come here. Of course, they sympathize; even try to give good advice. Well, that's all right. Everything is fine, thank God. The people are good. (focus group, Naberezhnye Chelny)*

Respondents are poorly aware of the presence of compact residence places for migrants in their locality: only 7.5% of respondents know exactly about their presence (11% in 2016).

Of these, about a third are "okay" and a quarter are categorically against such places (see Table 2).

**Table 02.** Results of the answer to the question: "How do you feel about the presence of migrants in your locality? (2018 г., %)

<b>It is okay, nothing disturbs me</b>	<b>The existence of such places annoys me, because there is a cluster of people with a different culture</b>	<b>I am totally against these places</b>	<b>I have trouble answering</b>
34	13,9	25,4	26,8

Answering the question: "How would you feel about your child's friendship with children of migrants? 57.9% of respondents said that they would not mind such friendship.

At the same time, 22.7% noted that they would try to limit their child's friendship with children of migrants. The share of such respondents is higher in Chistopol 38%, in Nizhnekamsk – 30.7%, in Laishevo – 28%, in Naberezhnye Chelny – 24.7%, in Kazan – 20.3%, in Mamadysh – 4%.

Respondents discussed problems related to the socialization of migrant children during focus groups:

*"I would add: they come – their children are not socialized, they do not go to kindergartens, because it is paid, and the school is free. They have dumped their children and do not care about them: that children do not have notebooks nor textbooks – nothing at all; they do not come to school to find out how their children are, they do not even come on call. They have dumped the children and believe that they are getting an education. And the fact that these children ruin our statistics, while we are working with them, it does not help them. There are only a few who want to look after their children. And they are not officially registered – parents. (focus group, Kazan)*

21% of respondents believe that the presence of legal labor migrants has a positive impact on the economic situation in the country; 20% – a negative impact, 33.5% – does not have a significant impact, 24.8% find it difficult to answer.

In informal statements, respondents explained their positions as follows:

*From informal statements of respondents:*

*"Great competition in agricultural markets, and the choice is often towards migrants (lower tariff), and the quality leaves much to be desired;*

*"The majority of citizens remain without jobs;*

*"The large number of migrants increases the crime rate;*

*"The economic situation in our republic is quite stable and we do not need additional labor;*

*"First of all, it is necessary to employ unemployed citizens, and then to invite migrants.*

33.2% believe that the entry of legal labor migrants into the country should be restricted.

A significant number of respondents has trouble in evaluating the work with migrants carried out by the authorities of the republic. 42.3% of respondents "positively" and "rather positively" assess the work with migrants carried out by the authorities of the republic, 17.9% "negatively" and "rather negatively", and about 40% have trouble answering.

Speaking about the potential readiness of migrants to integrate into the host community, respondents note that migrants do not have good contacts with the host population, explaining this by the low level of inter-group trust:

*From the interview: "Migrants feel... even after time... judging by their neighbors... they feel uncomfortable. Although they are sufficiently protected and I think they feel uncomfortable because they are visiting and their national traditions do not allow them to behave fully the way they behave at home. They are pretty shy. For example, my neighbors are men, we often meet them at the entrance and they say hello, but they don't get in touch that often. Perhaps this is due to the fact that they are still afraid of some documents' check-ups. Some kind of unfriendly attitude to themselves. Perhaps they are afraid of people with whom they once met somewhere. Because no matter how it may be, they are still not fully protected from unscrupulous employers and from people who are dishonest and mean. (man, 1984, Tatar, Kazan)*

Differences in behavioral practices are also noted by migrants themselves:

*"There's very little communication, you don't really know your neighbors, you don't get to know them. We have a different way, of course – too close relations with relatives, with neighbors, here people are not so close". (focus group, Kazan)*

## **7. Conclusion**

The problem of ethnic borders between the host population and migrants remains, at both the group and individual levels.

Representatives of the receiving population believe that migrants have the opportunity to participate in the economic, social and cultural life of their community and feel comfortable.

The integration of the host population into the presence of migrants is limited by several factors:

- Cultural backgrounds of migrants, in the opinion of respondents, are in conflict with those of the host population;
- The level of inter-group trust between the receiving population and migrants remains quite low;
- The increase in the number of migrants causes discomfort and a latent sense of loss of dominance among the local population.

At the same time, migrants themselves are more optimistic than locals about the attitude of the receiving population towards them.

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