

## **Ethnic Migration in the Jewish Autonomous Region at the End of XX—the Beginning of XXI Centuries**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of the present paper is to reveal the peculiarities in social economic and ethnocultural situation in the Jewish Autonomous Region (JAR) at the end of XX—the beginning of XXI centuries as a region receiving the migrants. Cross-cultural method, systematic approach are the main methods of research. The paper also deals with some issues of the migrants' ethnocultural adaptation and integration in the receiving environment. With the increased flow of the migrants the region needs clear law guarantees here, as well as the measures to develop the system of inter-ethnic cultural relationships, migrants' adaptations allowing to minimize the manifestations of different deviant behaviors both from the migrants and the local residents. The authors arrive at the conclusion that it is necessary to develop the efficient communication channels between the local population and the migrants to ease the social tension connected with the ethnophobia and ethnostereotypes in the receiving society.

### **Introduction**

Constant intensification of migration processes in modern Russia and in the world determines the relevance of the research. The migration is connected with the processes in the ethnocultural and social relations of both a resettler and the receiving population. This is a very complicated and time-consuming process with, on the one hand, the migrants' adaptation to new ethnocultural conditions, on the other hand, preservation of their traditions, religious beliefs, the whole typical daily routine; on the third side, these issues are typical for local people as well. All these processes are a very relevant topic for discussion.

Such factors, as the distance from the Jewish Autonomous Region (JAR) to the center of Russia, its border location, special history of setting-up and development of the region as a subject of the Russian Federation determine the specificity in the development of the modern migration processes. In the post-Soviet period some local residents of the region migrated to Israel, the USA, European countries. In comparison with other Far East regions, the tension coefficient of JAR at the labor market is one of the lowest ones. The region constructs the residential buildings and large industrial enterprises, therefore, there is a need in additional working force. China, Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan are the main countries for the migrants to the Jewish Autonomous Region (JAR). At the same time, a significant share of the Central Asia population moves to the Far East for the permanent living rather than for a temporary stay. The share of the Chinese migrants arriving to the JAR is more than that in Primorye. Here more than 150 enterprises have Chinese investments. Several ethnic public organizations—Azerbaijan, Tadjikistan, Korea, Muslim, China—were founded on the territory of the region. Therefore, there is a need to prevent the conflicts in the sphere of inter-ethnic and religious relations.

## Literature Overview

The migration phenomena are connected with the social changes, with some personality transformations of those who migrate into a new society, with the local population perceiving the migrants. At the modern stage of the research in the migration processes the studies are considered to be traditional ones, if they are based on the macroanalysis of the state regulation in the migration policy, as well as on the analysis of functioning and methods to implement the draft legislations of the social political structures which participate in migration processes - these topics are covered in the works of L.A. Krushanova [1], V.T. Gelbras [2]. The migrants' adaptation problem to the receiving ethnical environment and the factors determining its characteristics, tolerance level and proneness to conflict in the context of migrants' interaction with the residents became a methodological basis for the works of V.A. Iontsev [3], Zh. Zaionchkovskaya [4]. A scientific work of Mark Ross, an American politics and conflict scientist developing a theory of ethnic conflicts, is very critical for the research [5]. Peculiarities of the inter-ethnic conflict tension are illustrated in the work by R. Fisher [6].

The development of the inter-ethnic communications is one of the factors of the migrants' ethno-cultural adaptation, a lot of works are dedicated to this phenomenon. For example, a work of Adrian Furnham and Steve Bochner is about the psychology of the intercultural contacts and the peculiarities of the cultural shock [7]. The relations between the migrants and the residents can clearly be demonstrated in the triad identified (1-"we are better than they are"; 2-"they are worse than they think about themselves"; 3-"we are better than they think about us") of such scientists, as J. Jaspars and M. Newstone [8]. A monograph "Forgotten Stalin Zion" by Robert Weinberg, an American historian from California University, also plays a critical role in this research, helps to track different aspects of Jewish migration history to the Jewish Autonomous Region and their further destiny [9].

## Methods of Research

Methodological principles are as follows: 1) consistency and historicism necessary to study the functioning of several phenomena of a comprehensive construct being developed in analyzing the essence and the structure of the migration flows in the JAR being changed in XX–XXI centuries, in determining the modern state of the previously existing features; 2) historical anthropological principle is to identify the deep-seated layer of the spiritual and material culture of the migrants, peculiarities of the development and reservation of the world and religious way of thinking, spiritual values and ethnical stereotypes of behavior. Historical antropological principle helped to study the forms of the spiritual culture, mechanisms for the traditional and modern sacramental values; 3) comparison historical identification of the general and specific in the worldview of the migrants and the residents, comparison of the ethnocultural, economic, political reasons to transform the life of study, etc.

The theories of the leading domestic and foreign specialists in migrantology are used as the theoretical methods of the research. These theories contributed into the analysis of the stadial phenomenon and culture type, a set of norms, rules and behavior models within the relatively closed roof; problems of the cultural interactions of both inside separate ethnos and within the enthocultural contacts with the neighboring people. Cross-cultural methods to calculate the interdependence between the indicators of the migrants' adaptation by a particular sampling are used. Systemic method with an analyzed object being a particular integrity with characteristics is applied.

The authors of the research conducted a survey among the migrants from 2011 to 2014 with the method of "a snow ball" on the territory of the Jewish Autonomous Region; one questionnaire with the half-closed and open type questions was suggested. The overall number of the surveyed was 197 people. There were the migrants from China—46 %, Tadzhikistan—15 %, Azerbaijan—17 %, Armenia—13 %, Korea—3 %, Ukraine - 2 %, Moldova—3 %. The survey was based on a set of several groups of the ethnocultural and social factors. First of all, this is about the individual

personality characteristics (social demographic—age, gender, education level) and motivational forecast (motivation, expectations, life experience); secondly, these are the ethnocultural factors, including subjective cultural distance and the peculiarities of the culture (command of language, peculiarities of the religious holidays, education level, material comfort, traditional ethnocultural components, family routine); thirdly, the survey reflected the macrosocial factors connected with the state regulation of the migration policy over the territory of the Region. The age varies from 19 to 54. Age is one of the adaptive resources of a newcomer in a new environment. Different categories of the age perceive the life conditions and different approaches to adaptation differently.

In education the migrants are represented by the following categories: higher education—9 %; secondary vocational education—38 %; general secondary education—41 %; incomplete higher education is typical for 12 %. The experience in the previous labor activities determines the efficiency to introduce a new one. This experience helps to evaluate the second socialization of a migrant's personality.

## **Results and Discussion**

The Jewish Autonomous Region is located in the southern part of the Russian Far East. In its west it borders the Amur Region, in its east—Khabarovsk Krai, in the south its border along the Amur River runs together with the borders of Russia and China. The JAR territory hosts the Trans-Siberian railway with its shorter routes from the Western Europe and the Middle East to the Asian-Pacific countries. The territory of the JAR occupies more than 36.3 thousand sq.km. and is divided into two equal parts: mountainous and flat. The area is rich in different natural resources and sufficient agricultural fields with developed transport infrastructure. The territory of the Jewish Autonomous Region, just like the whole Amur borderzone, was originally occupied by the Russians in the middle of XIX century, the population grew mainly due to the Cossacks, peasants-resettlers, deportees. Up to 1920s this territory was not a properly developed periphery between two centres—Blagoveshchensk and Khabarovsk, its development was determined by the construction of the transit roads—first field road (1898-1909), then railway road (1908-1916). The Jewish Autonomous Region was set up in 1934 with the original purpose to resettle the Jewish people, including the Soviet ones, to develop the east of the country.

The Jewish Autonomous Region can mainly be characterised as an artificially created area with no compact residing of the title ethos. During its history the share of Jewish people didn't exceed 10%, for example, in 1989 the number of the Jews was 8,887 people (4.2 %), while after the emigration at the end of the Soviet period this number reduced (2002 population census data showed 1.2 % - 2,327 people) [10], in 2010 – 0.92 % - 1,628 people (2010 population census data). In 1938-1991, the Jewish Autonomous Region was in Khabarovsk Krai, while by now for about two decades it has been an independent subject of the Russian Federation. Development and support of the cultures of different nations, first of all, is Jewish culture, which is a specific feature of the JAR. The development of the ethnic and religious organizations is a kind of the basis for the ethnic self-consciousness and culture to prevent the ethnic and religious political extremism. By the 1st of October 2011 the JAR registered 41 religious organizations, including 38 Christian organizations (19 Orthodox, 19 other Christian confessions), two Judaic communities and one Muslim community by their confessions.

The social efficiency of the economic structure functioning can be clearly seen by providing the population with the necessary working places. Since the Jewish AR is situated on the border with the other densely populated states (China), it has a strategic importance for the country. Region sees one of the priorities in attracting the countrymen, thus strengthening its demographic, hence, labor capacity. It is necessary to create the attractive conditions to live in the JAR. Voluntary resettlement of the countrymen, including the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, must be accompanied with the creation of the particular conditions for a favorable social adaptation of these people.

The number of the foreign citizens and stateless people who are registered at their place of stay on the territory of the JAR in accordance with the 2014 data was 8,754 people. The majority of the

citizens are Chinese people, 6,061 people (69.2 %); the citizens of the neighboring CIS countries are 2,170 people (24.8 %). The growth in the number of the migrants in the Far East Region results in the promotion of the ethnic self-consciousness for the migrants as a form to preserve uniqueness. Along with that, a stable crossing process can be observed - the growth of the integrative trends, de-bordering of the ethnic boundaries, globalization and unification of all public life spheres. In the context of the ethnic self-implementation in contrast with the integrative processes, it is necessary to construct an adequate model for the development of the inter-ethnic relations in the polyethnic Asia-Pacific Region.

The command level of the local language is one of the main conditions for a favourable migration in our Russian environment. The language barrier limits the adequate process of the employment in the local conditions. Very often a migrant with no command of receiving community language deals with unqualified labor. As for the migrants in the JAR, some surveyed said they know Russian language (37 %) together with their mother tongue; some noted that they know English language (4 %, several people are English teachers), while the rest of the surveyed (59 %) is not very good at Russian language or doesn't know the language.

Since the migrants have to invade a new, strange culture for them, in many cases the corresponding protective mechanism—projection—starts working. A migrant assigns the characteristics, which he doesn't notice in himself, to the population—reserved personality, detachment, lack of trust and fear. This protective mechanism was described by Sigmund Freud in 1894 work "Protective psychoneuroses, as an alienated projection" [11]. The projection is over by the act that all positive aspects are assigned to oneself, while the negative ones are assigned to those who act in accordance with the evaluated situation, and here a hostile image is developed. This dominating projection is typical, as Freud said, for a personality with a protective behavior and self-esteem. Later we arrive at the following dispositions "friend - foe", where "friend" is a personality being similar to oneself, while "a foe" is in contrast not similar to "a friend". In this case the migrants hope to be provided with a social status, a prestigious social position, with the competition and the rivalry with the local population.

The migrants have to be in contact with the local administrative institutions, for example, health care bodies, law enforcement bodies, the bodies of the Federal Migration Service and others. Many studies have pointed out that certain person's rights are connected with the safety of life and health conditions, and play a significant role in the process of the successful adaptation of a person on a new territory. The performance of the local social institutions to provide these rights is averagely evaluated by the respondents. So, the survey shows the following results: respondents are completely satisfied with the local health care authorities—37%; the respondents are partly satisfied—40%; it is difficult to say - 23%. 42% of the respondents are completely satisfied with the performance of the law bodies and the Federal Migration Service, 48% of the respondents are partially satisfied, while 10% find it difficult to evaluate the situations. Thus, a particular part of the newcomers feel unprotected from the local institutions, that can affect the migrants adaptation in a nonethnic environment.

The respondents were asked about the fact what is necessary to do, as they see it, to improve the adaptation of the newcomers on the territory of the JAR. The following answers were given: "it is necessary to help in finding a job (more privileges)"; "help in finding a job and in finding a decent place to live"; "help in providing work, living place, and mainly the perspectives for the future to grow and to nurture children physically and mentally healthy".

The migrants evaluate the period of stay in the area as a new one: more than a half surveyed said that they had the plans to live in the region on a permanent basis, the others (about 34 %) said that they would try to leave the region for the homeland. In many cases the return to the country can be supported by the fact that temporary decline in the key areas of the economy, including the industrial production, construction and agriculture, leads to an increase of unemployment in the area, thus, the quotas on a foreign working force are reduced, and the migrants can't find a job. Here is one of the answers: "construction is frozen—no money—and I can't find a job at all. I have to spend a lot of money to come here, and I have spent it. I don't know what to do." The respondents

support their answers with the following reasons: "to enter the university in another city" [12]; "to return to parents to the homeland, they need my help"; "to return to the family with money"; "when the contract expires". There were also answers with a simple desire to get back home.

Still, there were attempts to cooperate with other public communities among the local ethnic societies. Muslim Public Organization is ready to support the ethnocultural events taken place in the region, to support poor families or families with low income, that positively contributes into strengthening mutual understanding and agreement in the region. "With the Eid al-Fitr festival we expect the members of the Muslim community in Birobidzhan. Our friends in Obluchie, Smidovichkii and Leninskii districts organize their festival events. 350-400 guests. This day we received the congratulations from the chief managers of the city and the region, business ombudsmen in the JAR, our friends from Birobidzan Jewish Religious Community". In 2015 the festival Eid al-Fitr was celebrated in a newly constructed mosque in Birobidzhan for the first time. In 20 August an agreement on interfaith cooperation was signed between the representatives of religions (Orthodoxy, Judaism, Islam) in the JAR. Thus, a very good tradition of the inter-ethnic communication between the representatives of different ethnoses living on the territory of the Jewish Autonomous region is being developed.

## Conclusion

The development of inter-ethnic communication as the basis of peaceful coexistence of people in today's globalized world is a fundamental concept of the recognition of the equality of all cultures which have equal right to development. Processes of active differentiation in the ethnocultural area suggest that the majority of social change could lead to greater variability of ethnic and cultural identities, and, as a consequence, to the continued need for the more precise alignment of regulatory mechanisms of inter-ethnic communication in recognition of the diversity of cultures. Due to the fact that the Jewish Autonomous Region is located on the border with other populated country (China), it has a strategic importance for the country. Ethnocultural adaptation of migrants in the local, new environment for them, happens under the influence of a number of interrelated processes—ethnocultural self-organization and rational state regulation. The process of adaptation to a new social status, in the new ethical environment, amongst students-migrant is associated with the problems of personal and financial insecurity.

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