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## **Economic and Social Aspects in the Republic of Tatarstan**

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**Abstract:**

*The urgency of the problem under study is conditioned by the need to study the state of interethnic and interreligious relations in polyethnic and poly-confessional regions of Russian Federation. The aim of the article is to analyze the situation in the sphere of interethnic and interreligious relations in the Republic of Tatarstan in 2016.*

*The leading approach to the study of this problem is the poly-paradigm methodology. The article gives the description of interethnic and interconfessional relations in the Republic of Tatarstan in 2014-2016, the comparative data on the largest cities of the republic are given. A particular attention is paid to the analysis of migrant perception peculiarities by the local population.*

*The materials of the article can be useful for ethnologists, social and cultural anthropologists, political scientists, as well as for the representatives of the bodies and structures responsible for the issues of interethnic interaction.*

**Keywords:** *Ethnicity, Religiosity, Migration, Poly-ethnicity, Poly-confessionality.*

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## 1. Introduction

The Republic of Tatarstan has historically been one of the polyethnic and polyconfessional regions of Russian Federation. The current state of Tatarstan society is characterized by ethnic, cultural, linguistic and confessional mosaicism. The urgency of the situation study problem in the interethnic and religious spheres is determined by the needs of the polyethnic and polyconfessional society of the Republic of Tatarstan. The situation in the interethnic and religious spheres influences the social structure of society, everyday behavioral practices of people and state policy.

Inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations in society are realized at two levels: institutional and inter-group one. The first one is studied mainly by ethnic political scientists (Tishkov & Shabaev, 2011), the second one - by ethnic sociologists (Drobizheva *et al.*, 2016).

In ethnic sociology, interethnic and interconfessional relations are studied through opinions, attitudes, orientations, values of people in different spheres of life - business, industrial, leisure, family one.

Interethnic and interconfessional relations, being the part of everyday and professional life of people, simultaneously form a wide range of problems, the study and solution of which seems promising and relevant.

## 2. Methodological Framework

The study is based on the methodological principles of the polyparadigmatic approach. In the context of our study, two provisions of F. Bart's theory are basic ones: first, the conclusion that the determinant for membership in a group is represented by socially-assigned factors, which are based on the phenomenon of categorical attribution, and not «objectively» existing cultural differences. Secondly, ethnic categories, both at identification itself and in the process of classifying others as belonging to certain ethnic groups, take into account not simply the sum of objective differences, but only those that are perceived by the individuals as significant (Barth, 1989).

The work is based on the analysis of empirical materials collected in 2014 - 2016. The information was collected using the methods of mass survey among the representatives of the main ethnic groups, observation, semi-structured and biographical interviews. The provision of the received material is based on the principles of the so-called «dense description», that is, the version of the analysis that is produced in terms of the informants.

### 3. Results

According to the results of the «Public Opinion-Tatarstan» Foundation research conducted in June 2016, the majority (82.8%) of the republicans estimate the inter-ethnic situation in the Republic of Tatarstan as «calm and stable». 13.3% believe that the situation is «calm, but the tension begins to grow». 2.2% of respondents consider the situation to be «tense and conflict».

The comparison of the data obtained with the results of earlier studies reveals a positive trend: in March 2016, 77.2% of respondents gave a positive assessment of the inter-ethnic situation, and the number of respondents who believe that «the tension starts to grow» was 18.7%.

The comparative data on the largest cities of the republic shows that a more critical assessment of the situation in the sphere of interethnic relations is characteristic of the city of Almetyevsk and Kazan (see Tables 1).

*Tables 1: Estimation of the situation in the sphere of interethnic relations by respondents living in large cities of the Republic of Tatarstan (%).*

What is the interethnic situation in RT now?	Kazan	Naberezhnye Chelny	Almetyevsk	Nizhnekamsk
Calm, stable	73,5	94,9	70	81,7
Calm, but the tension begins to grow	20,9	4,2	27	13,7
Tense conflict	4,2	0	1,7	3,5
Difficult to answer	1,5	0,8	1,3	1,2

Thus, about 20% of Kazan residents and a fifth of Almetyevsk residents note the presence of some problems in the sphere of interethnic relations on the general calm background. The most critical estimation of the interethnic situation is given in Kazan (4.6%) and in Nizhnekamsk (3.5%) (Tables 1).

The materials of the in-depth interviews confirm that the absence of conflicts on ethnic grounds is still the hallmark of our region: «We have the only such a city where all nations, all religions are present without hostility» (m., 55, manager, Kazan).

«We are not interested in nationality» (f., 25, engineer, Kazan).

«Everything is quiet. There are clashes somewhere, but we do not have any» (m., 26 years, industrial climber, Kazan).

«There are many nationalities here. We did not have someone beaten on ethnic grounds. We do not have such an issue at all» (f., 41 years, a pensioner, Chelny).

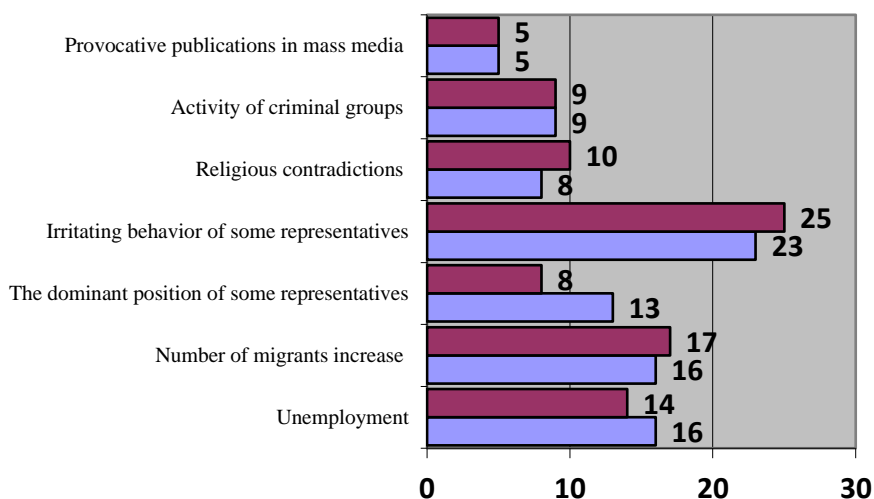
«There is no national strife here» (f., 61, a pensioner, Chelny).

Respondents say that the merit in the harmonization of interethnic relations, to a certain extent, belongs to the former and current leadership of the republic «*Interethnic discrimination is immediately suppressed here. If something is born here, such a thing is stopped in the womb. We live in peace*» (m, 32 years old, electrician, Kazan). The consideration of respondent attitude dynamics to the representatives of other ethnic groups residing in the Republic of Tatarstan shows that in comparison with the first quarter of 2016 the number of respondents with a negative attitude to the representatives of individual peoples increased, «*since the representatives of this culture, language, way of life irritates*».

This position can hide both the rejection of the cultural norms of the migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus, and, albeit with less probability, the unwillingness to accept any norms of the people of the main contacting ethnic groups.

The comprehensive study «*The state of interethnic relations in the Republic of Tatarstan*», carried out in the third quarter of 2015, confirms that the respondents Tatars and Russians are in solidarity with the opinion that the evocative behavior of the representatives of individual peoples is an important factor that can complicate interethnic relations (Figure 1). The same percentage of Tatars and Russians who noted this source of complication of the relationship suggests that this factor is more relevant to migrants.

**Figure 1:** *The problems that may complicate interethnic relations in a native city / a native village in the opinion of Tatars and Russians (the IIIrd quarter of 2015), (%)*.



Among the troubling issues the issue with languages is quite serious according to Tatarstan citizens. This was noted after the study «*The state of interethnic relations in the Republic of Tatarstan*» (the IIIrd quarter of 2015).

Two aspects of the problem are distinguished: the problem of a native language study and the problem of a native language use. Both problems concern, first of all, the Tatars, and the problem of teaching the native language worries the Russians. The materials of qualitative research conducted in 2016 show that the main stream of complaints is conditioned by the prevalence of the number of lessons of the Tatar language over other school disciplines:

Respondents do not see the need for compulsory learning of the national language for Russian-speaking residents of the region, and the decision of the republic leadership on this issue does not take into account the opinion of a significant part of the population.

According to the results of the study *«The state of interethnic relations in the Republic of Tatarstan»*, conducted in the third quarter of 2015, the problem of uncontrolled influx of migrants is one of the leading problems in the list with which the state in the sphere of interethnic relations is associated. This is evident from the rating of problems that concern people most of all (Figure 1).

According to the survey *«Hosting Population and Migrants in the Republic of Tatarstan»*, conducted in the 4th quarter of 2015, a significant proportion of respondents from all ethnic groups (about 40% of Russians and Tatars and 35% of other nationalities) would agree to the presence of migrants in their settlement on condition that they behave like a local population.

From the informal responses of the respondents: «if a person is willing to register officially, to pay taxes officially, i.e. to observe all legislative and moral and aesthetic norms that, maybe, are not inherent in their country, then it seems to me that we should even support and help these people to adapt somehow» (f., 30 years old, Russian, Kazan).

The studies conducted in the 1st quarter of 2016 by the Foundation *"Public Opinion-Tatarstan"* show that the majority of respondents are ready to accept the presence of migrants provided they comply with the legislation and cultural norms of the host society.

The data of June 2016 show that, in general, 37.2% of respondents are loyal to their presence in their locality; 29, 7% are neutral. A negative attitude towards the presence of migrants in their locality as a whole is shown by 32% of respondents who explain their position by competition in the labor market. The attitude towards migrants in large cities of the Republic of Tatarstan is illustrated in Table 2.

**Tables 2:** Attitude of respondents to the presence of migrants in their cities, (%).

What is the interethnic situation in RT now?	Kazan	Naberezhnye Chelny	Almetyevsk	Nizhnekamsk
Positive	7,4	2,6	5,4	5,8
Calm, they do not bother me	33	30,3	18,3	31,2
Neutral	29	28,8	33,8	30,4
Negative	29,7	37,8	42,1	31,8
Difficult to answer	0,9	0,4	0,6	0,8

Most of the population, who are negative about migrants, are concerned not with the very presence of migrants, but with their non-integration into the host social-cultural environment. The non-integration of migrants, «evoking» the behavior (typical mainly for recent foreigners and especially for temporary labor migrants, both internal and external ones) is the leading topic in interviews with experts and activists when it comes to the issues related to migrants:

*«As in any other country, it is, first of all, a cultural distance, a mutual misunderstanding. In some cases, the reluctance of migrants to adapt, integrate into the host society».* (f., Tatar, expert).

*«Many representatives of the local population are dissatisfied with the behavior of visitors, because they do not know the culture, the language, the traditions, and this is understandable, because every normal person wants to be respected and see the respectful attitude to the place where he lives. There is also a clash of interests at the domestic level, and only then it goes to the national component».* (Russian, m., activist).

#### 4. Discussion

The studies of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations in Russian Federation are relevant for the representatives of various scientific fields. Ethnic processes in the past and the present are studied within the framework of the historical ethnographic trend (Bromley, 1983). Sociologists study ethnic-social and ethnic-confessional processes in modern society (Tishkov, 2003; Drobizheva, 2009). Political scientists are interested in the problems of interethnic relations influence on state policy and social processes in society (Abdulatipov, 2004). A special place is occupied by the study of psychological aspects of interethnic interaction (Stefanenko, 2003). Researchers are interested in the magnitude of the intergroup distance between ethnic groups in a multi-ethnic society, the level of xenophobia, the characteristics of social contacts between the representatives of different nationalities. The studies of everyday

practices of interethnic and interconfessional interactions are of interest to anthropologists and ethnologists. The focus of the analysis is, in particular, the study of social intergroup distance in a multi-ethnic society (Titova, Sabirova & Frolova, 2016). At the same time, the study of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional interaction characteristics in the regions of Russian Federation requires a closer study. In this study, the author's team studied the situation in the sphere of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional relations in the Republic of Tatarstan.

## **5. Conclusions**

The results of the studies conducted in the first and second quarters of 2016 show that the RT maintains a high level of interethnic harmony. The dominant majority of respondents assess interethnic relations as calm and benevolent.

At the same time, as compared with the first quarter of 2016, the number of respondents with a negative attitude towards the representatives of individual peoples has increased. This position, most likely, hides the rejection of the cultural norms of migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Two points are indicative in the relations between the representatives of the main ethnic groups residing in the Republic of Tatarstan: first, the materials of in-depth interviews show that, in the absence of obvious contradictions, the Tatars residing in the republic feel more comfortable in the opinion of the respondents. The second point is the problem of teaching the native language, which bothers the Tatars and Russians.

## **6. Recommendations**

The materials presented in the article may have scientific, humanitarian and practical significance. The materials of the article can be useful for the experts in social sciences: ethnologists, social and cultural anthropologists, political scientists, as well as the representatives of the bodies and structures responsible for migration policy and interethnic interaction.

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