S.G. Maximova, D.A. Omelchenko, O.E. Noyanzina, N.P. Goncharova, S. Penkin

(Barnaul)

TRANSIT MIGRATION IN BORDER REGIONS OF RUSSIA: IMPACT ON REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT «OTHERS»*[1]

The dynamic of social-economic and geopolitical conditions is reflected in new forms and practices of migration, jeopardizing the systems of social security and assistance, functioned for decades before in developed countries. According to data provided by the United Nations international migration report, over the past 25 years (from 1990 to 2015) the number of migrant had increased by 90 million to amount to 244 million people [1]. Russia is second among most attractive countries for immigration, counting more than 11 million of migrants from over 30 countries of the world. In recent years, the ratio between proportions of countries of "near" and "far" abroad in net migration has changed dramatically because of introduction of new migration legislation, offering big preferences to workers from CIS, who received possibility to obtain a work permit themselves, bypassing the employer [2]. The leaders on migration rates are Uzbekistan (12.4% of all newly-arrived migrants), Kazakhstan (11.0%) and Tajikistan (8.0%) [3].

Besides overall problems of international migration, from the early 1990s Russia struggles with particular issues caused by transit migration. After the collapse of the USSR and the destruction of the holistic system of protection of the state borders multiple latent and overt transit routes from Asian and African countries to the Europe appeared in the territory of Russia. Occupying intermediate geographic position between developed and developing countries, Russia has become a natural transit region for migrants from the South-East Asia, Afganistan, Irak, Pakistan and other countries moving to the West [4; 5].

Border regions, which are in the focus of our research, are the most susceptible to risks, caused by migration, being not only transit territory on the

road of migrant to more prosperous countries and regions, but also the nearest point of their first location and adaptation to a new society. The substantial increase in migration poses a problem of growth of polyculture relations, leads to the change of ethno-social structure and ethno-cultural landscape of host communities and territories, intensifies identification processes within the frame of one national space [6]. In such a context, the study of categorical structures of public consciousness and public opinion about migration problems might provide important information critical for understanding and reflecting sociocultural transformations, that have occurred during the past decades.

Representations about different ethnic group which may be defined as 'others' or in contrary as 'we' was studied by means of modified technics of semantic differential and repertory grids. The procedure consisted in assessment of 10 elements (meta-ethnic groups) by 22 seven-point graded scales (from −3 to +3 points). The list of groups which had been evaluated: Russians, Europeans, Asians, Slavs, Caucasian peoples, Central Asian peoples, Small indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, Migrants, Friendly people and Hostile people. The set of constructs, proposed to respondents for evaluation, contained assessment characteristics, describing mentality, national culture, behaviour, interethnic and intercultural relations, forming social image of one or another meta-ethnic community and reflecting respondent's auto-identification.

The choice of regions was justified by their border geographic position and the need to represent different parts of Russian borderland. Thus, the Republic of Karelia was selected as a representative of the western part of Russia, one of the national republics with specific ethnic composition. The Altai region represented Siberian territories. The Jewish autonomous oblast (JAO) was selected as the only remaining federal subject with similar status. The Amur region represented one of oldest regions of the Russian Far East. The stratified sampling and proportional allocation (by age, gender and urban/rural place of residence) were used to get regional samples of population. All regional samples consisted of 100 respondents.

In the first step of analysis we described general profiles and explored interrelations between constructs and elements. In the second step, constructs were analyzed by means of hierarchical cluster analysis. Then, we have described the most important factors, extracted with principal components analysis and explored factorial invariance among regional samples. The fourth step consisted in building semantic spaces, considered as mental maps of representations of images of ethnic 'other'' or 'own' in the structure of social representations of population of borderland regions of Russia, having their general, invariant (core) and specific (peripheral) features.

As our research has revealed, characteristics, related to identification, emotional evaluation, security, social and economic position are the most important for the assessment of meta-ethnic groups. In all regions Russians are perceived as 'own' and 'close', their image is highly idealized, especially with the regard to public engagement and wiliness to help others, intelligence and ability to maintain security and order. Simultaneously, they are associated with weak discipline, poverty and low social status, that leads to a low self-esteem of majority of population from border regions, which are not economically well-developed. Slavs are very attractive for identification, people ascribe positive traits to them, such as practicality, education and high level of culture, related with individuality and superiority in comparison with other ethnic groups. The European's image is assessed as very appealing, especially on the criteria, related to material position and standards of living, but incompatible with the character and mentality of the majority of respondents. Only the inhabitants of Karelia have a very characteristic feature to include Europeans in the 'own' group, that might be explained by the specific of geographical position. Caucasian peoples are one the most contradictory categories, excluded from identification groups in all regions. The stereotype of this group consisted high evaluations of impulsivity and emotionality, conservatism, supplemented in several regions by aggressively, warlike behavior and intolerance. *Small indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East* were Inspiring sympathy and respect, this position was

evaluated as 'rational', 'peaceable' and 'secure', but 'poor' and 'taking lower steps at the social ladder', 'not exciting envy' and 'conservative, traditionalist'. Taking into account the values of identification constructs (own/alien, similar/different, close/distant), which were relatively high, we may conclude small indigenous peoples, living in the remote areas, were perceived as a part of one Russian people, deserving sympathy and respect, but, at the same time, were singled out by the originality of life-style and traditions. Hence, in the Altai region this position had traits such as courage, ruse, shrewdness. In the Amur region the accent was made on the dissimilarity, while in the JAO, in contrast, small indigenous peoples were considered as 'own', 'close' and 'compassionate', but lacking responsibility and discipline.

Migrant's image had characteristics of alieness, it didn't excite envy, that meant that our respondents were aware of typical for migrants' hardships and difficult material situation, that was reflected in corresponding stereotypes. In the Altai region this position was associated with poverty, but at the same time with courage and determination, that reflected existing representations about migration as a long shot, supposing vulnerability and necessity to make serious decisions. In the JAO migrants were assessed as responsible and disciplined, and in the Republic of Karelia – as laborious and purposeful, but having low social status. It should be noted that this category didn't represent in the respondents' view a serious danger, for it was perceived in a whole as a group with conservative thinking, law level of education and culture, dependent from the receiving society.

Friendly peoples, in representations of inhabitants of Russian borderland, were dispossessed of financial power and wealth, the most important is a proof of good intentions and moral virtues, such as courage and diligence. This image involves paternalistic attitude, suggesting that 'Big Bother' (evidently Russia) supports and helps 'Younger brother', despite of not being himself in favorable and advantageous social-economic situation.

Interrelations between constructs form sustainable systems of meanings, used in comparison of ethnic groups. These systems, united by subjects of social-

economic position, interpersonal relations, national character and identification, define conditional division of all groups into 'own' and 'alien' ones. 'Own' are usually presented under the complex 'Russians – Slavs – Friendly people – Small indigenous peoples of North, Siberia and Russian Far East', representing the civilizational and cultural core of all-Russian people, which, despite its multi-national character, is perceived in close connection with dominant Russian nationality. Only in Amur region all positions of this complex are perceived separately, and we could not prove existence of significant semantic ties. In two Far Eastern regions (the Amur region and the JAO) we have found a tendency to semantical union of Asians and Europeans as two different groups of peoples, living on the same continent.

The high congruence of factorial structures in three of the four regions was indicative of existence of semantic determinants of similar assessment of meta-ethnic groups. Among key factors, influencing their perception, were the factor of social-economic progress and cultural development and the factor of types of mentality, corresponding to modern or traditional, rational or emotional types of civilizational cultures. Regional semantic spaces reflected systems of values and representations, existing in the conscience of population, forming stereotyped image of this or that meta-ethnic group. Of course, these representations are very simplified, with exaggerated positive and negative traits, they don't take into account many factors of personal, social group and societal character, having impact on real inter-ethnic relations.

Bibliography

1. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016. International Migration Report 2015. Highlights. United Nations, New York, 2016.
2. Legal attraction of foreign labor force on the territory of the Russian Federation in 2005-2008 (2009). Analytical material on the base of official statistical reports of FMS and Rosstat. Foundation "Migration XXI century".

3. Number and migration of population in the Russian Federation in 2015 (statistical bulletin) (2016). Federal Service of State Statistics. Moscow. Retrieved from http://www.gks.ru.

4. Ivakhnyuk, I. (2009) Russian Migration Policy and Its Impact on Human Development. Published in: Human Development Research Paper (HDRP) Series , Vol. 14, No. 2009.

5. Williams, L., & Aktoprak, S. (2010). Migration between Russia and the European Union. Policy implication from a small-scale study of irregular migrants. International Organization for Migration.

6. Maximova, S. G., Noyanzina, O. Y., Omelchenko, D. A., Maximov, M. B., & Avdeeva, G. C. (2016). Methodology of Diagnostics of Interethnic Relations and Ethnosocial Processes. International Journal of Environmental and Science Education, 11(11), 4885-4893.