

## MIGRANTS FROM CENTRAL ASIA: THEIR ROLE IN CHANGING THE SOCIOCULTURE ENVIROMENT OF A RUSSIA MEGALOPOLIS

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**Abstract:** The research topicality is due to the fact that, under globalization, huge migration movement is observed in many countries. The processes of blurring the cultural and national boundaries of states (creation of the European Union, CIS, etc.) and increased migration from Islamic states to Europe, from the Central Asian states, former Soviet republics to Russia, greatly influence the processes of changing the urban sociocultural environment of these states. Russia is one of the major actors on the global scene, while the Ural region is, on the one hand, a rapidly developing region of the country, and on the other hand, one of the main Russian regions where migrants from Central Asia arrive. Although the issue of migration is rather well developed in the Russian and foreign scientific literature, poorly studied is the question of the migrants' role in changing the sociocultural environment of Russian megalopolises. Meanwhile, this topic is relevant and publicly significant both for the Ural region and Russia as a whole. This research is aimed at bridging this gap. The research objective is to study the role of migrants from Central Asia in changing the sociocultural environment of the Russian, including Ural, megalopolises. The research methodology combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. Primary data were collected with methods of a questionnaire (n=500) and in-depth interviews (n=30). The research revealed a new trend in migrant communities of the Ural region – forming ethnic elite in migrant communities of the same nationality, with relatively high income and high probability of planning to stay in Russia. The research showed an existing demarcation in constructing the environment of the modern Ural megalopolis: migrants are separated into a specific area – “an immigrant community”, which is actually not integrated into the culture of the receiving country but is changing the urban sociocultural environment (55.0%). These migrants create a migrant community within the culture of a Ural megalopolis. The research identified two large urban districts inhabited by migrants from Central Asia (south-west of Yekaterinburg and “railroad station area” – Zheleznodorozhniy district). These are “Kyrgyz-town” and “Tajik-town” of the modern Russian megalopolis. About 60.0% of respondents live there. The districts inhabited by immigrants drastically change the sociocultural environment of the megalopolis. The authors conclude that social institutions (schools, shopping malls, cafes, hairdresser’s, etc.) are the public places where the complicated interaction between the migrants and the receiving community is manifested. Research of such public places of the sociocultural environment of a megalopolis will help to predict the prospects of interaction between the migrants and the receiving community and to identify the forming predominant models of such interaction.

**Keywords:** migrants, Central Asia, Ural megalopolis, sociocultural environment of a megalopolis, immigrant community.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The modern processes, including migration ones, take place under globalization and are characterized by deep transformations in economy, policy, social sphere, culture, etc. Under these conditions, huge migration movement is observed in many countries. The processes of blurring the cultural and national boundaries of states (creation of the European Union, CIS, etc.) and increased migration from Islamic states to Europe, from the Central Asian states, former Soviet republics to Russia, greatly influence the processes of changing the urban sociocultural environment of these states. Inability of people and states to solve the problems related to cultural diversity and migration flows leads to transformation of the sociocultural environment of megalopolises, cities, and other types of settlements. In this respect, the issue of the sociocultural environment of settlements becomes an important problem both for the people adapting to a new cultural environment and for the receiving culture.

Today, the Urals region is one of the leading Russian regions by the number of migrants from Central Asia. Nowadays, the problem of Central Asia migrants in the Ural megalopolises is very acute, publicly and politically significant. Migrants from Asian countries are not only a demographic reserve of the Urals, but an important labor potential, a significant component of the modern economic system. That is why, the issues of their sociocultural adaptation to the Russian culture and changes of the sociocultural environment under their influence are topical and have a general public character. The positive migration balance in Sverdlovsk oblast occurs due to arrival of people from neighboring countries, mainly from Central Asia. In January-November 2017 года the surplus was 3.5 thousand people. 7,636 people arrived to Sverdlovsk oblast from CIS countries (totally from abroad – 8,005 people). By the data of Moscow Institute for Urban Development, the population of Yekaterinburg agglomeration grows annually by 1.1% (about 23 thousand people). This growth is mainly due to migration from Central Asia (Migranty vytesnyayut..., 2018). Under these conditions, the problem of migration is one of the central in the European (Bokek-Cohen, Lissitsa, 2014; Castles, Miller, 1996; Flake, 2013; Düvell, Vogel, 2006; Putnam, 2006) and Russian (Abdullaev, 2008; Bateneva, 2013; Bondyreva, 2004; Grunt, 2016, 2017; Drobizheva, 2003; Borodkina, Sokolova, Tavrovsky, 2017; Zayonchkovskaya, Nozdrina, 2008; Mukomel, 2005; Rybakovskiy, 2003; Yudina, 2002) scientific discourses.

Changing the sociocultural environment is determined by a combination of external (arrival of labor migrants, changes in their way of living, desire to integrate or not to integrate into the culture of the recipient community, etc.) and external factors, first of all such as the attempts of the representatives of the recipient community to place the immigrants into the framework of their world outlook. Various patterns of behavior of the representatives of the recipient community (from extremist to tolerant) directly depend on the renewed vision of social life and sociocultural environment. The situation is formed when almost every name (title) of a nation, involved into modern migration processes, a habitual trail of negative connotations is dragged (poor, sick, retarded, dirty, nomad), while migrants are “...a visual pollution” (Urry, 2012, p. 210) of the habitual sociocultural environment of a city.

The problem of migrant communities in the territory of receiving states was considered by the Russian and foreign researchers (Bondyreva, 2004; Brusina, 2008; Grunt, 2016, 2017; Abdullaev, 2008; Beck, 2010; Hobsbawm, 1990; Brubaker, 2011; Otto, 1990; and others). By U. Beck, national communities, defining themselves in terms of ethnic and cultural homogeneity, “the communities of fear” (Beck, 2010) are risking, while moving to the future, to find themselves in the past. As E. Hobsbawm wrote, “The power of their xenophobia is in the fear of the unknown, of the darkness which can fall on us as soon as the boundaries of

lands disappear, which denote, as we think, the objective, constant, positive boundaries of or joint belonging to some unity” (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 344).

Sverdlovsk oblast and, first of all, Yekaterinburg are one of the Russian territories which, on the one hand, successfully develop, and on the other hand, it starts to experience difficulties as a result of the growing diversity of the ethnic environment. Considering the problem of ethnicity, R. Brubaker distinguished two types or two models of ethnicity in their well-known correlation with the contexts of mobility and migration. For example, he marks the fact that ethnic groups in Western Europe appear mainly as a result of migration. They are exterritorial and, accordingly, the identity of such groups is defined as exterritorial “immigrant ethnicity”. In Eastern Europe ethnic groups are not immigrant but local by their origin. They, as a rule, are characterized by compact residence, have their ethnic territory and their ethnicity is expressed by “territorial nationality” (Brubaker, 2011, p. 267). These two types of identity imply different structures of requirements to the national state and different opportunities for self-implementation. For example, “the immigrant identity” requires: the policy of antidiscrimination; civil involvement; “light multiculturalism”.

That said, the ethnic requirements of labor immigrants are usually not framed as national ones (Brubaker, 2011, p. 269). In the east of Europe, “the territorial nationality” interprets itself in national categories and potentially is ready to require autonomy, to please their kin (Brubaker, 2011, p. 268). The two types of ethnicity and ethnic groups have different attitude to the problems of migration, migrant communities, and their role in changing the sociocultural environment of settlements. In case of the West European “immigrant identity” – it is an indispensable part of routine structures. Moreover, migration is a process of mixing and generating new forms of ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, new self-cognition. In the Eastern Europe, on the contrary, migration occupies the central position in life experience; it is perpetually experienced at psychological level and expresses hope for the future (Brubaker, 2011, p. 275, 276). Therefore, in the Western Europe the issue of migration, “immigrant identity”, new cultural, ethnic, religious and other culturally expressed groups of immigrants is strictly separated from the issue of identity of the receiving population, as well as from the forms and means of their self-cognition and mutual categorization. Permeability of the ethnic and cultural boundaries is compensated by the permeability of the national boundaries as an important agent of the process of national identification.

In the Eastern Europe, Russia in particular, migration movement entails the idea of boundaries movement. As R. Brubaker wrote, “Movement of boundaries across people, not people across boundaries” (Brubaker, 2011, p. 267). On the one hand, it resembles the pattern of nomadic movement, which is very congenial and understandable in the Russian culture, on the other hand, one of the principles of the early European nationalism, which declared a nation to be a community based on the unity of language and culture (Dann, 2003, p. 48), limited with the boundaries of residence of their carriers (Otto, 1990, p. 22-23). Actual transference of a boundary of an ethnic or cultural areal together with transference of an ethnic or cultural group into new habitats, undoubtedly, contains a certain exaggeration of the significance of ethnic and cultural forms as integrities involved into actual social processes. However, they cease being such in the form of images containing the ethnic and cultural codes of social construction of the reality. In this sense, the instability, mobility of a social boundary may serve, in some cases, as a prerequisite and marker of fluidity of social interaction and, accordingly, plasticity of social forms and environments, and in other cases – as a pattern and requirements of obligatory ethnic, cultural and religious separation.

The niches occupied by groups of people in the social, cultural and professional environment are a sort of claims on demarcating the environment, setting boundaries, through which only people with a certain identity are let. Z. Bauman believes that ethnic identity suits best for that (Bauman, 2008). It is preserved as an important cultural pattern, guarded at individual level, in the form of a personal, social and cultural environment. This pattern

is significant for the city dwellers – recent migrants, who came from ethnic groups and local cultures retaining the habits of demarking the sociocultural boundaries of their territory and “proving” by the fact of living in the city “their status of a relevant representative of the globalized culture” (Groys, 2000). The migrant flows into Russia are uneven. Most attractive are large cities and megalopolises. They have a better developed social infrastructure, enabling to find suitable places for settling (labor market, housing market, etc.).

Cities are a peculiar type of social environment organization. It is characterized by territorial stability, the result of which is constructing steady identification models of residents, enabling to distinguish between the “kin” and the “alien” through the networks of affections (Park, 1967). Being drawn into migration flows, cities become “live” laboratories, enabling to register the complicated systems of interaction between the “kin” and the “alien”. Perception through this distinction actually provides appropriation of land on which certain buildings, streets, parks, industrial venues, etc. are located, attributing a specific feeling of belonging to people who were born on that land. As J. Baudrillard wrote, “discourses of migration become a mutual content of each other. They almost completely substitute the real living processes of migration for its images, which are contrasted with the stable problem-free world of a national society and are envisaged as portents of future destruction and tragedy” (Baudrillard, 2006, p. 160).

In such discourses, a migrant appears to be not only an alien, but also the Other, and a problem of the Other is, first of all, our inner problem, an evidence of deep trouble inside ourselves, as “it is the problem of hospitality” (Baudrillard, 2006, p. 209) and identity erosion. The communities, about which we speak so much and whose culture we try to interpret as a protection barrier against the shocks of globalized modernity, often demonstrate “...extreme instability of the inner social links and exceptional hostility to aliens” (Urry, 2000, p. 194). However, migrants also appear to be actors of the process of changing the urban environment. Stability of a once steady routine picture of the world and space is discredited, which generates the feeling of uncertainty and distortion of prospects (Bauman, 2000). While for migrants it is a quite conscious risk, the local population faces it as a problem. Defocusing of perception of an urban environment by these actors aggravates the necessity for complex interactions, while attempts to consciously simplify the situation draw the important problem out of the public discourse of urban development. Although the issues related to migration in Russia are rather broadly explored, the role of migrants in changing the urban environment of a megalopolis is insufficiently. Thus, the objective of this research is to thoroughly analyze this topic.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research design

The research was carried out in October-December 2018 in Yekaterinburg, one of the large Russian megalopolises. The sociological research was carried out with mixed methodology: quantitative and qualitative strategies (method of a questionnaire (n=500) and method of in-depth interviews (n=30)), following the idea of an optimal balance between quantitative and qualitative sociological tools (Creswell, 2009). Such an approach enabled to answer the research questions, providing better comprehension of the role of migrants from Central Asia in changing the sociocultural environment of a Russian megalopolis. The research was based on QUAL-quan strategy (Morgan, 2014), which implies the dominating role of qualitative methods. The quantitative research was used to summarize the qualitative data and to reveal the key trends.

For questioning (n=500) we used spontaneous sampling. This was because labor migrants are a closed social group which is difficult to communicate. There are a number of

reasons (difficulties with the language, lack of spare time, problems with legal status or activity on the territory of the Russian Federation, etc.), which add difficulties in researching them. Among the respondents, 63.4% were men and 36.6% women; that corresponds to the gender ratio of migrants living in the Ural region. The main spheres of employment are transport (43.0%), construction (2.1%), trading and services (20.6%), 8.3% of migrants have their own business. The majority of migrants are rather young. The figures are as follows: most of migrants are younger than 30 y.o. (56.4%), 29.3% are from 30 to 40 y.o., 33.3% are from 40 to 50 y.o., and 2.0% of migrants are over 50 y.o.

The research included 20 in-depth interviews with migrants who had been living in the Russian culture for over ten years and had undergone sociocultural adaptation and 10 in-depth interviews with diasporas' representatives. The following methodological conceptions were used in the research model: migrant communities are an important cultural pattern in the sociocultural environment of a megalopolis, creating the personal, social and cultural environment, thus changing the urban environment of a megalopolis and proving the status of a relevant representative of this environment (Groys, 2000); for a part of migrant communities, instability of inner social links was characteristic (transnational marriages, partial acceptance of norms and values, etc.) and, if not hostility, then negative attitude to "the other", to everything alien (Urry, 2000, p. 194).

To analyze the role of migrants from Central Asia and their activity for the culture of the receiving megalopolis, we chose the following indicators: 1) presence/absence of communicating with the diaspora; 2) presence of mixed (transnational) marriages; 3) transformation of traditions and way of living of migrants in the receiving culture; 4) presence/absence of the national cuisine; 5) using the language (native, Russian); 6) presence of social institutions within the immigrant community. These indicators correlate with the changes taking place in the sociocultural environment of a megalopolis, related to the activity of migrants from Central Asia. The key tasks of the research were to study the activity of migrants from Central Asia and their role in changing the sociocultural environment of a megalopolis.

The main hypothesis of the research was that the way of living of migrants from Central Asia and the presence of migrant communities in the receiving culture change the sociocultural environment of a Russian megalopolis. The hypothesis was tested with correlation of indicators: 1) presence/absence of communicating with the diaspora; 2) presence of mixed (transnational) marriages; 3) transformation of traditions and way of living of migrants in the receiving culture; 4) presence of the national cuisine; 5) using the native language when communicating in the family, in the job place, etc.; 6) presence of social institutions within the immigrant community and changes or lack of changes both in the way of living of migrants and in the sociocultural environment of a Russian megalopolis. The research was carried out in Yekaterinburg – one of the largest Russian megalopolises, thus, its results can be only partially extrapolated to other Russian regions.

## 2.1 Research procedure

### Qualitative research: In-depth interviews

A detailed guide of the interview was developed together with heads of diasporas and migrants who had lived in Yekaterinburg for over ten years and undergone sociocultural adaptation. The interview included 16 open questions implying a detailed answer, which allowed the respondents to express their opinion independently. Interviews were taken at jobs places of respondents in their spare time. The average time of an interview was 45 minutes. The results were deciphered and answers to the same questions were grouped together. Such grouping allowed revealing the typical and specific features in the answers, which eased the results interpretation.

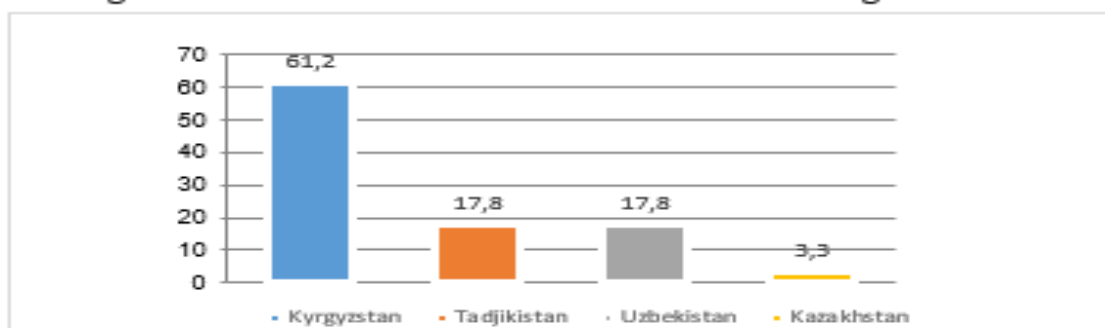
## Quantitative research

The quantitative research was carried out with a questionnaire. The questionnaire was formed as a result of in-depth interviews with 30 respondents, as described above. The questionnaire included 35 questions and was preliminarily tested within a pilot research with 30 migrants. After the pilot research, two questions were reformulated to make them more understandable for the respondents: “To what extent, in your opinion, have you achieved your goals in the new culture?” and “In your opinion, how easily do you get along with the local population?”. The questionnaire was performed at job places of the respondents. The average for filling in the questionnaire was 35 minutes. The results were processed with SPSS – specialized software for processing sociological and marketing information.

## 3. RESULTS

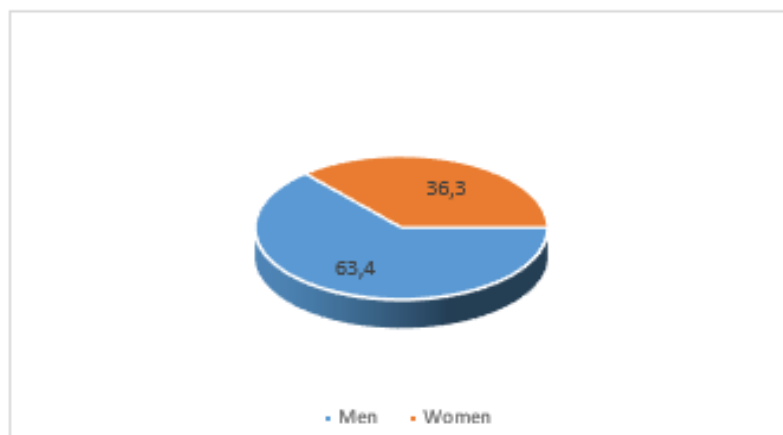
The research showed that the majority of migrants came to the Ural region from Kyrgyzstan (see Fig. 1).

**Fig. 1. Countries from which the Central Asian migrants come**



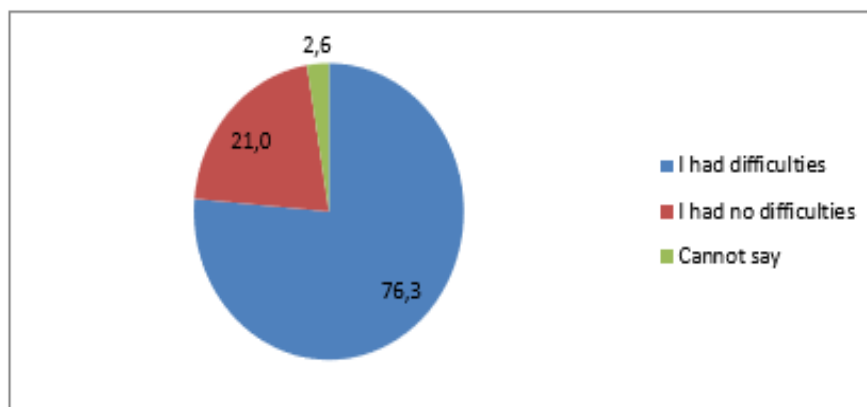
Among migrants, men prevail (63.4%), 36.3% are women (see Fig. 2). When moving to the Ural region, most of the migrants had relatives in Russia.

**Fig. 2. Share of men and women among migrants**



A large percentage of respondents faced difficulties when moving to the Urals region (see Fig. 3).

Fig. 3. Share of migrants who faced difficulties after moving to a Ural megalopolis



The research showed that the essential problem, faced by 40.0% of the respondents, was insufficient mastering of the Russian language. Another important problem for migrants was the absence of friends and relatives in Russia, who could have rendered assistance. This was pointed out by 20.0% of the respondents. In our opinion, that is rather logical, as, coming into the receiving culture a person faces unusual conditions and seeks support from friends or acquaintances. At that stage, an essential role in adaptation is played by compatriots who had come to Russia earlier and had undergone the period of adaptation. Every fifth respondent marked the absence of dwelling as an important problem. The third essential issue is interrelations with the local population (10.0%). Besides, 47.3% of migrants noted that they had conflicts with the local population. Most of them think that the Russians initiated these conflicts. The results of the questionnaire were confirmed by the data of in-depth interviews: *“Often the local people stir up conflicts themselves. You go along the street and hear harsh epithets. They think if I am a Kyrgyz, I can do nothing... I can be addressed rudely. Almost always I keep silent. But if I happen to answer – there is conflict”* (Woman, a hairdresser, 37 y.o., living in Russia for 11 years). On the one hand, it can be related to a not always adequate behavior of migrants, too. On the other hand, this is due to the formed stereotypes in the society, when migrants are associated with criminal situation, they are viewed as troublemakers, “aliens”, etc.: *“We are viewed as rude people, hooligans, uneducated people... As if all troubles in the city are due to us...”* (Man, 41 y.o., a taxi driver from Uzbekistan, living in Russia for 12 years). 77.3% of the respondents attempted to get employed after moving to Yekaterinburg. However, almost all of them faced difficulties with employment (see Table 1).

Table 1. Difficulties with employment faced by migrants after moving to Russia (% of the number of respondents)

Difficulties with employment	%
Insufficient professional training	76.7
Lack of vacancies	16.7
Low wages	57.3
Lack of skills of writing a resume and passing interviews	75.3
Insufficient level of language mastering	58.7
Nothing of the listed	8.0
Other	3.3

\* The sum exceeds 100% as each respondent could give several answers.

In this research we studied what differences migrants see between their native and receiving cultures as it is an important indicator of successful activity of a person in a foreign culture. This question was offered to the respondents, and the following differences were

registered: *"Mentality. We see all problems in a different way, look at the world differently. We have different values – attitude to the senior, to parents, to a woman... That says it all, I think"* (Man, Uzbek, a driver, 41 y.o., living in Russia for 11 years); *"Well, people here are mainly without hang-ups, especially girls... more open, more free, more ambitious. Not as reserved as ours. We do not speak out even if we should. We cannot contradict the senior or men... That is our up-bringing. Here I had no problems with that, I always speak frankly with a person, at work I can speak on any topic. Openness, yes, one can say it is the main difference between the cultures"* (Woman, 37 y.o., Kyrgyz, a hairdresser, living in Russia for 11 years).

The research showed that for 45.0% of migrants who had moved to the Ural region for a short or longer period of life, the way of living and habits changed partially or completely under the influence of the new cultural environment, which is one of the indicators of changing (partially or completely) of both their culture and the sociocultural environment where they live. For them, it is characteristic to separate, if not completely then partially, from migrant communities, still preserving stable relations with relatives and friends, as well as with the representatives of the Russian culture. 35.0% are married to the locals, which leads to transformation of traditions and way of living of both migrants and the local residents. These migrants try to integrate into the receiving culture (each third of the respondents), are integrated into the culture of the receiving community (15.0%), and are planning to stay in the Urals for permanent residence (each third of the respondents).

As was noted above, traditions and way of living are essential elements of culture. One of the key traditions is celebrations. Analysis of holidays celebrated by migrants showed that most of them do not know Russian holidays and do not celebrate them (75.0%). The respondents named the following Russian holidays: 27.0% of the respondents celebrate New Year. It is celebrated by 34.4% of migrants. Also, the most celebrated holidays are: Easter (13.1%); Christmas (5.3%); Victory Day (8.7%), the Russian Army Day (4.5%). Besides, the respondents marked that they celebrate Muslim holidays. It should be noted that of all the mentioned holidays, purely Russian are only Victory Day and the Russian Army Day. The research showed that the older a migrant, the more Russian holidays they know and celebrate. The quantitative research data are confirmed by the in-depth interviews: *"For a long time our family lived in Kyrgyzstan. My wife is Russian. She came to Kyrgyzstan after graduating from university. We never divided holidays into the Russian and Kyrgyz ones. We lived in the Soviet Union. I was in the army, and Victory was one for all... And the culture was one for all. And what now??..."* (Man, 52 y.o., a taxi driver); *"Although I am young, 37 years old, but I have a Russian grandmother, my mother is half Russian. I studied in Russia, now I work here. I celebrate all holidays, both Muslim and Russian"* (Woman, 37 y.o., a hairdresser).

A national cuisine is a part of culture and its indicator, influencing the sociocultural environment in which a person lives. The research showed that about 60.0% of the respondents equally prefer the Russian and Muslim cuisine. Also, 30.0% of mixed marriages of migrants cook both the local and the national dishes (pilaf, dolma, shurpa, etc.).

The language which migrants speak is an important element of culture. 90.0% of migrants speak Russian. Over 40.0% of families speak two languages, the Russian and the native: *"Nazira speaks Russian at school and with her friends. I speak Russian well. I learnt it at school and at technical school. Nazira speaks Kyrgyz well, my wife also speaks Kyrgyz"* (Man, 45 y.o., Kyrgyz, a café owner); *"We are a mixed family, I am Uzbek, my wife is Russian. We got married in Uzbekistan. I and my wife and children speak two languages"* (Man, 41 y.o., Uzbek, a driver). As for the social institutions (schools, hospitals, cafes, cinemas, etc.), migrants most often attend those of them which are located in the sociocultural environment of their residence. This was indicated by every second respondent.

The research revealed another group of migrants. 55.0% of them do not try to integrate into the receiving culture. Their characteristics are low level of mastering the Russian



language (75.0%), insufficient legal literacy (90.0%), lack of desire to increase their educational level (90.0%). Almost of such migrants are employed at low-qualification and low-paid jobs (about 70.0%), some of them have illegal status (24.0%).

The research identified two large urban districts inhabited by migrants from Central Asia (south-west of Yekaterinburg and “railroad station area” – Zheleznodorozhniy district) – “Kyrgyz-town” and “Tajik-town” (named by analogy with China-towns in European and North American cities. About 60.0% of respondents live there. It is a vast social network with high concentration of migrants from Central Asia. These districts have their own social institutions and organizations: cafes “Asia”, “Izyum”, “Shawerma”, “Kish-mish”; hair-dresser’s “Narina”, supermarkets “Europe-Asia”, which are attended by most migrants (90.0%). For example, in school No. 119 of Zheleznodorozhniy district 42.0% of students are children of migrants. Today, the school, as well as the sociocultural environment of these districts, is under institutional transformation.

The research showed that most of the representatives of this group wishes to return to their Motherland and live in their own country if there are favorable conditions for labor and living. This is also confirmed by a question which created an imaginary situation for the respondents: “In which country you would like to live if you could live anywhere?”. 71% of the respondents consider their own country to be ideal for residence (see Fig. 4).

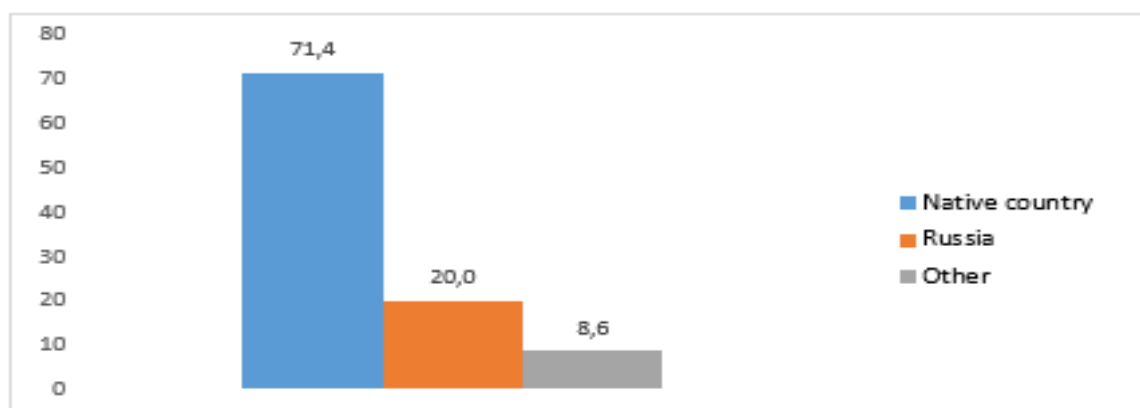


Fig. 4. Share of migrants who would like to live in their country and in Russia

Such migrants (75.0%) are poorly adapted to the sociocultural conditions of the receiving community. They communicate in their native language both in the family (75.0%) and in the job (about 70.0%), almost all of them stick to national traditions, etc.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Our research confirmed the results obtained by Moscow sociologists: most of migrants in Russia, including the Ural region, come from Kyrgyzstan, which indicates a new migration trend in Russia (Brusina, 2008), (Varshaver, Rocheva, Kochkin et al., 2014). The expected fact was the prevalence of men among migrants from the Central Asia in the Ural megalopolis. This is due to the fact that most of the respondents are labor migrants. As a rule, when coming to the Ural region, they leave their families in their countries. This can also be explained by the reasons for coming to Russia. As the reasons for moving, men marked searching for better working conditions (58.7%) and better living conditions (14.7%), while women marked moving together with their husbands (25.5%).

The research revealed that most of migrants are rather young people. Thus, the people coming to the Ural region are the most able-bodied population. The research showed that 40.0% of migrants from Central Asia faced difficulties when moving to a new sociocultural environment, which is rather logical, as, having come to a receiving culture, a person faces unusual conditions and seeks support from friends or relatives. At that stage, a significant

role in adaptation is played by compatriots who had come to Russia earlier and undergone the stage of adaptation, or a diaspora.

As was noted above, elder respondents did not mark differences between the native and the receiving culture. The diverse perception of cultures by migrants of different ages can be explained by different conditions of socialization. The younger generation of migrants underwent socialization after disintegration of the USSR, when the former Soviet republics became independent states with their own flags, symbols, ethnic norms and values. Also, propaganda of the peculiar national and cultural identity tried to eliminate the common cultural past of the USSR peoples. For example, national language was propagated (hence, most of migrants, especially the young ones, speak Russian poorly). The older generation, despite differences in national cultures, socialized within the common Soviet culture with propagated common norms and cultural values.

As for the first group of migrants (45.0%), who partially or completely changed their way of living in the new sociocultural environment, it should be noted that interaction of cultures takes place: the migrants try to assume the culture of the receiving community, while the latter, in turn, adapts to them for quicker integration, which somehow or other changes the sociocultural environment of a megalopolis. Besides, there are transnational marriages among migrants. On the one hand, it shows that the spouses of transnational marriages and the migrants integrating into the culture of the receiving country have to assume the norms, values, language, tradition, etc. of both cultures, as they are the actor of the new sociocultural environment. On the other hand, it is an evidence of the process of transformation of both cultures (including the Russian one) and the partial change of the sociocultural environment of a megalopolis.

The research revealed the second group of migrants from Central Asia who significantly influence the change of the sociocultural environment of the Ural megalopolis. The research confirmed the idea of Groys that such migrant communities are an important cultural pattern in the sociocultural environment of the Ural megalopolis. They create personal, social and cultural space, thus changing the urban environment and proving their status of a relevant representative of that environment (Groys, 2000). These migrants form a community of immigrants within the culture of the receiving country. The migrants who do not intend to stay for permanent residence in Russia, as rule, demonstrate low degree of integration into the Russian society. They show a certain closeness and unsociability, both personal and within an ethnic community. These migrants require close attention of migration agencies and administration of a megalopolis. This is due to the fact that under migration factor the social environment of a city is divided into segments, niches, sometimes even ghettos. Such place, as if given to the aliens, are little attractive.

The research revealed a new trend – the Ural megalopolis as a social space starts being segregated; some districts (south-west, railroad station area), certain institutions (cafes, markets, schools) get the status of “migrants”. As a result, within one sociocultural environment, two rather empirical actors start to act – “the locals” and the migrants. The character of their interaction determines the state of the city, the level of social and cultural tension. For example, a Russian school where over 40.0% of students are the children of migrants from Central Asia now undergoes institutional transformation, both due to the reforms and the changes in its sociocultural environment. This process is further impeded by the presence of new students, speaking poor Russian, having undergone socialization under a different culture, and having an uncertain legal status. A new demarcation line appears at school, with new criteria for differentiating the participants of educational space and chances for the students. Most of the immigrants’ children do not wish to adapt to the new sociocultural conditions. Misunderstanding between the children who were born in the Russian culture and the children of immigrants often leads to conflicts in schools.

Actually, these migrants remain “a foreign community” in the Ural region. Meanwhile, they live next to the local population with their own social institutions, organizations, and culture. Coexistence of the two cultures leads, on the one hand, to blurring the cultural boundaries of both the migrants and the Russians, and on the other hand, to changing the sociocultural environment of a megalopolis.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The migrant flows into Russia are uneven. Most attractive are large cities and megalopolises for migrants from Central Asia. They have a better developed social infrastructure, enabling the migrants to find suitable places for settling in the urban environment (labor market, housing market, etc.). The research registered new trends in the migrant environment of a Ural megalopolis: formation of a certain ethnic elite within the migrant community of the same nationality, which is characterized by a rather high material and financial well-being, relatively high degree of sociocultural adaptation and rather high probability of staying in Russia for permanent residence; most of migrants come to the Ural megalopolis from Kyrgyzstan; segregation of the sociocultural environment of the Ural megalopolis as a result of migrants from Central Asia residing in the territory of the Ural megalopolis.

The research shed light on the existing demarcation in constructing the environment of the modern megalopolis: migrants are separated into a specific area – “an immigrant community”, which is actually not integrated into the culture of the receiving country but is changing the urban sociocultural environment. The research identified two large urban districts inhabited by migrants from Central Asia (south-west of Yekaterinburg and “railroad station area” – Zheleznodorozhniy district). These are “Kyrgyz-town” and “Tajik-town” of the modern Russian megalopolis. About 60.0% of respondents live there. The districts inhabited by immigrants drastically change the sociocultural environment of the megalopolis.

The social tension caused by the increased number of migrants is still weakly articulated and is out of public discourse of the residents of the megalopolis. The issues of the boundaries and means of interaction between the migrants and the local population remain open, but there is some, though not vividly expressed, social tension. The social institutions (schools, shopping malls, cafes, hairdresser’s, etc.) are the public places where the complicating interaction between the migrants and the receiving community occurs. The research of such public places of the sociocultural environment of a megalopolis would enable in future to forecast the prospects of interaction between the migrants and the receiving community and determine the developing predominant models of their interaction. The low level of conflict should not be taken for high tolerance, as there are risks of unpredictable development of the situation.

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