

# Bilingualism as a Social Factor of Youth Migration

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**Abstract:** Analysis of the situation with bilingualism among the youth of a megapolis and a middle-sized city in the Republic of Tatarstan is performed. The indigenization processes in power and management institutions, educational and cultural institutions and the impact of this process on the formation of migration motivation in the middle-sized cities of Tatarstan are considered. The ambiguous role of bilingual simulacra in the process of choosing by young people a place of residence is shown. The contradiction between real professional career opportunities and the choice of a job in a megapolis in the case of command of the two main languages in the Republic of Tatarstan and the unstable simulation capabilities of myths in solving the problems of bilingualism in the megapolis are revealed. The prevalence of migratory attitudes among high school seniors in middle-sized towns, and the presence of a stable orientation among some young people to live in their hometowns, as well as the existence of the opposite vector, which forces individual boys and girls to return to their small motherland due to disappointment in the simulacra of megapolises, including bilingual simulacra in cultural and domestic sphere, collapsing under the influence of globalization. On the basis of mass surveys of youth in the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan and medium-sized cities, the important role of the psychophysiological characteristics of youth and their great susceptibility to bilingual simulacra in the process of forming migration attitudes are revealed.

**Keywords:** megapolis, middle-sized town, youth, indigenization, migration settings, migration motivation, bilingual simulacra, bilingualism.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the conditions of the information society and globalization, the command of several languages spoken in a particular constituent entity of the federation should not only be an advantage in building the most successful career for young people, but also becoming an increasingly important factor in the migration of young people from the periphery to megapolises. Some researchers consider the bilingualism of residents of cities and villages as a factor contributing to the "brain drain" in Kazan, while other scientists are convinced that primarily Russian-speaking monolinguals migrate to megapolises.

In contrast to the mature generation (the generation of "stagnation years"), young people formed during the sovereignty period of Tatarstan and other republics of the Russian Federation, are usually able to communicate in

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Russian or Tatar, or at least understand them. This also applies to the peripheral settlements of the republic and its capital. It is advisable to find out who is more inclined to migration: bilinguals or Russian-speaking monolinguals. The growing scale of youth migration and the absence of special studies concerning the influence of the language factor on it confirm the relevance of addressing the declared topic.

## II. METHODS

In sociology, migration and bilingualism are considered using two main paradigms. Within the framework of neopositivism, these phenomena are interpreted as a consequence of the choice made by a person on the basis of belonging to a particular institution or social group, and depending on historical traditions and material factors; this also applies to moving to a megapolis (E. Lee, W. Thomas and F. Znanetsky, M. Todaro) [1-3], and the replacement of monolingualism with bilingualism (S. Iben and M. Deklerk, A. Marini, N. Eliseeva, F. Fabbro, O.A. Maksimova, V. A. Beliaev, A. Sampedro, J. Pena, S. Surraín, G. Luke, L. V. Efremenko, K. V. Saldaeva, N. G. Fersman, M. P. Agafonova) [4-12-23-25].

In the mainstream of non-positivism (humanitarianism), specific motives for choosing a place of residence and language, subjective and ideal factors of such a choice are considered (D. Gurac and F. Kases, G. Lowry, P. Bourdieu, D. Massey, S. Stoffer and others) [13-17-24]. This approach also includes the concept of "simulacrum" (J. Baudrillard, I.V. Polozova) [18, 19, 22], on the basis of which it can be concluded that among these factors and motives, the role of invented and imposed images of a megapolis grows in the heads of young people. The creation of qualitatively differentiated images of a megapolis in the minds of young people is largely determined by the language in which this process occurs; that increases the importance of bilingualism as a factor in the migration of young people.

The on-going indigenization of managerial personnel, education and the media in the Republic of Tatarstan, as in many republics of the Russian Federation, is changing the type and extent of bilingualism [7]. In a number of Kazan firms and institutions, the personnel screening is based on ethnic and linguistic principles, which increases the importance of knowledge of the Tatar language, while for the "stagnation years" generation this was not so important. This trend opens up new prospects for Tatar-speaking people who came from the periphery of the Republic of Tatarstan and, as a rule, are equally fluent in the state languages of the Republic of Tatarstan.



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Based on these considerations, in September-November 2017, the research team, with the participation of several authors of the paper, carried out a field (in the Republic of Tatarstan) comprehensive sociological study using a quantitative methodology. This mass survey covered 1,480 questionnaires accepted for processing (including the questionnaires of 133 respondents from Leninogorsk, among them 48.1% were men, 51.9% were women, including people from Tatar (50.8%), Russian (28.3%) and other nationalities), and its analysis was carried out in 2018-2019. In addition, a representative online survey of youth in the Republic of Tatarstan ( $N = 1241$  people), and a mass survey of young people in grades 9-11 of the city of Leninogorsk in the Republic of Tatarstan on a representative quota sample ( $N = 300$  respondents) in recent years, as well as a meaningful analysis of messages sent by young users of Internet resources were carried out.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study showed that bilingualism introduced since the late 1980s by the authorities of the Republic of Tatarstan has an impact on the scale, motives and nature of youth migration to megapolises. If for the "stagnation years" generation, the orientation toward migration was primarily characteristic of those who spoke Russian without an accent, now the presence of the Tatar accent, which says that the person thinks and speaks the Tatar language, has become a bonus that allows one to get a highly paid work, and sometimes miss a series of steps when climbing the career ladder. Thus, bilingualism has become a channel of social ascent, a kind of "socio-professional elevator."

At the same time, for many Tatars from the periphery, a significant place in their attitude is occupied by the presence of their usual cultural and everyday environment. At first glance, Kazan is a bilingualism pattern. Ads in transport and stores are broadcast, signs are posted at all institutions, companies and public transport stops in two languages. The Tatar language is fluent in the speech of the townspeople. Until 2018, all children studied both main languages of the Republic of Tatarstan in schools and kindergartens. Tatar cultural institutions (Tatar theaters (drama, opera and ballet, Youth Theater), philharmonic societies, Tatar-speaking schools and other educational institutions and religious institutions continue to be popular. All these forms the conviction of some young people from Tatar villages and cities of great opportunities for self-realization in the field of culture and interpersonal relations in the megapolis. At the same time, many Tatars and Russians, who were dissatisfied with equalizing the number of hours for studying Tatar and Russian languages that existed before 2018, completely abandoned Tatar lessons later. Most private firms leave their signboards only in Russian, and Tatar-speaking cultural institutions have a limited audience segment and thus low functionality [20]. Outside government institutions and affiliates of firms and banks, those who are firmly convinced speakers of the Tatar language, independently segregate themselves (however, without forming intra-city ghettos - neither housing-space, nor family, nor others). As a result, Tatar language in interpersonal communication (in families, shops, at work) in Kazan is used much more limitedly than in Tatar-speaking villages and cities, returning to the status of the language only of the humanitarian intelligentsia and

migrants from villages. Thus, the confidence of the provincial youth in the wider cultural possibilities existing in the megapolis for the Tatars in many ways becomes a simulacrum, which is created and supported by the media and social networks.

Regarding fluency in the Russian language, the place of residence does not really matter. According to our survey, in the Republic of Tatarstan as a whole, the indicator of fluency in the called language is 98.5% (and, for example, in Leninogorsk as a typical middle-sized town in the Republic of Tatarstan - 100%); in Tatarstan, 1.2% of respondents are those who speak, but with difficulties, 0.1% understand, but do not speak, and 0.2% do not speak this language.

In Leninogorsk, there are slightly more people who consider Tatar to be their native language (38.5%), in the Republic of Tatarstan this figure is 36.7%. At the same time, the proportion of respondents who called Russian their native language in the Republic of Tatarstan and Leninogorsk differs more (57.2% vs. 51.6%). It is important from the point of view of real bilingualism that in Leninogorsk there is a larger proportion of people who consider both main languages native to themselves (7.4% vs. 4.9%).

In the virtualizing social space of modern Russia, the significance of megapolis simulacra for young people is growing: if Kazan's great opportunities in choosing work places, building a career based on the Tatar language and in the menu of places of "cultural rest" (in any of the languages) are real and undeniable, then in many ways the simulation capabilities of the Tatar language in the sphere of culture and life still motivate young people to move to a megapolis (see Table No. 1), thereby confirming the theorem of W. Thomas. Obviously, young people are actively migrating from medium-sized towns to Kazan and decision-making is facilitated by motives of both a professional and a cultural-everyday sense. Therefore, Kazan is growing continuously, and medium-sized towns are losing their population (primarily young), their status and prospects, becoming the category of small towns.

**Table 1. Population of the main cities in the Republic of Tatarstan [21]**

City	Year		
	1990	2000	2019
Largest:			
Kazan	1.094.000	1.101.000	1.251.969
Large:			
N. Chelny	511.000	514.700	533.907
Big:			
Nizhnekamsk	195.000	223.400	238.879
Almetevsk	131.000	140.700	157.310
Zelenodolsk	97.000	100.200	99.743
Medium-sized:			
Bugulma	89.589	93.700	83.536
Yelabuga	53.537	67.500	73.913
Leningorsk	64.100	68.100	61.974
Chistopol	65.468	66.600	59.816

The statistics are confirmed by the materials of our surveys. High school students in medium-sized cities are faced with the choice of where to live. It can be said that for those who choose Kazan and other cities of the Republic of Tatarstan, the linguistic factor and the presence of bilingualism in Kazan play a significant role. So, according to a survey of high school students<sup>1</sup> in Leninogorsk, the most preferable city for migration is Kazan (this decision is of more than half of the respondents - 53.3%); For those who choose Moscow, St. Petersburg and similar cities, the language factor does not become a motive for moving: St. Petersburg (preferred 15.7%), Moscow (11.3%) and Samara (11.0%); Ufa was chosen by 2.0% of respondents, Naberezhnye Chelny - 1.7%, Almeteyevsk - 1.7%, Nizhnekamsk - 1.3%.

Then the respondents were asked with the question "Do you plan to stay in the city of Leninogorsk?", to which the majority of respondents answered "No" (79.0%). Only 16.0% plan to stay in their small town, and 5.0% chose the answer "other". Thus, an analysis of these data makes it possible to assume that among young people in medium-sized towns, a steady trend of migration to megacities remains.

Thus, there are 16% of stable residents of a middle-sized town among young Leninogorsk residents (this includes both those people whose interests are tied to purely local affairs and not striving for upward social mobility, or those who have "found themselves", that is, who have found chances for a professional career in their hometown) according to our survey.

The part of young people unstable by their motives who have not decided on moving is 5.0%. The part of potentially returning migrants, that is, those who intend to return to their hometown, after having studied in a megapolis, is 15.7%. Potentially non-returning migrants, or those who intend to leave to live, work or study without an intention to return are 79.0%, and for the majority this decision is firm and is final today.

It should be noted that any simulacra tend to collapse in a long-term collision with reality, which also generates a reverse flow of some young people who came from medium-sized cities to Kazan and later returned to their small motherland.

#### **IV. SUMMARY**

Big opportunities of Kazan for culture consumption, in comparison with the localities where there are no theatres and other institutions of Tatar culture, are a reality, but the comparative analysis of cities, where there is a Tatar theatres show that resources of Tatar culture in Kazan are largely a simulacrum due to the predominance of Russian-speaking environment. At the same time, commanding of the two main languages in the Republic of Tatarstan has become both a consequence and a cause of continuous indigenization and a channel of upward social mobility at the primary employment. Therefore, an analysis of the scale, nature and motivation of youth migration to a megapolis requires dividing of professional and cultural needs for bilingualism and a detailed study of the linguistic structure in different settlements: in Russian-speaking, bilingual and Tatar-speaking.

Material factors of migration are primary and determine migration behaviour, but for young people who are more

inclined to change places and are dependent on simulacra of a megapolis, and who are formed by social networks, including far-fetched "solutions" to the problem of bilingualism in it, often subjective factors form attitudes toward migration. At the same time, in modern conditions, simulacra of megapolises, which encourage young people in medium-sized towns to move, further lead to the disappointment of migrants and their return to their small motherland.

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

Thus, it can be argued that in some respects (professional) bilingualism becomes a real factor motivating some young people to migrate to a megapolis. In other respects (primarily cultural and domestic), the knowledge of two languages as an advantage giving additional advantages in a megapolis, is a simulacrum and in some cases can lead to frustration in some time after moving to Kazan.

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