

Ethnocultural Relations in the Republics of the Middle-Volga Region

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Abstract: The information presented in the article describes the results of the sociological survey of ethnic and cultural relations in the Ethnic Republics of the Volga Federal District, namely the Chuvash Republic and the Mari El Republic. The *purpose* of the research was to highlight issues concerning some aspects of ethnic culture, specifically intercultural communication among young people (of 16–30 years old) in Cheboksary (the capital city of the Chuvash Republic) and Yoshkar-Ola (the capital city of the Mari El Republic). The research was focused on revealing the tolerant or intolerant, respectful or disrespectful attitude of native young people (representatives of the prevalent ethnicity) to other ethnic groups. The study was conducted using the *methods* of interviewing by means of computer-assisted web questionnaire. The answers were collected from university students. In *conclusion*, it was established that in general, native people from the Chuvash Republic and the Mari El Republic are non-conflict, tolerant and friendly.

Keywords: ethnic and cultural relations, intercultural communication, Chuvash, Mari, ethnic groups.


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Научная статья

Этнокультурные отношения в национальных республиках Волжского региона

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Резюме: В статье представлены результаты социологического исследования этнокультурных взаимоотношений между людьми разных национальностей, проживающих (а также временно находящихся) на территории Чувашской и Марийской Республик. *Цель* исследования – выявление характера межкультурного общения среди молодежи, а именно толерантного или нетерпимого, уважительного или неуважительного отношения коренных жителей к людям других этнических групп. Исследование проводилось с использованием *методов* компьютерного интернет-анкетирования. Данные (ответы на анкету) были получены от студентов вузов (от 16 до 30 лет), среди которых не только коренные жители, но и временно находящиеся на территории республик молодые люди из других государств. В *заключение* установлено, что коренные жители (представители титульной национальности) Чувашской Республики и Республики Марий Эл в целом неконфликтны, толерантны и дружелюбны по отношению к людям других национальностей.

Ключевые слова: этнокультурные взаимоотношения, межкультурное общение, чуваша, марийцы, этнические группы.

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Introduction

The territory of the Volga Region is historically formed as a multi-ethnic region. At present, students of other ethnicities study at universities in this region. These are mainly Turkmens, Uzbeks, Tajiks and other representatives of Central Asia ethnic groups. Our current research is a follow-up to the research conducted in 2015, the results of which are presented in the articles «Основные тенденции этнокультурного воспитания на современном этапе: региональный аспект» [1] and «Современное состояние межнациональных отношений в Чувашской Республике» [2].

The research was focused around the following aspects:

- toleration and tension in the intercultural communication between persons and groups;
- attitude towards the culture, traditions and customs of native and foreign ethnicities among young people;
- ethnic mentality and problems of ethnocultural interaction.

Materials and Methods

The survey was conducted according to the «Diagnostics of personality tolerance» psychological test method, developed by G.U. Soldatova, S.V. Ryzhova [3]. The respondents were university students. They were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements:

- I believe that all rights to local natural and social resources belong to native people (statement No.1);
- I believe that foreign ethnicities should be limited in residence rights on my territory (statement No.2);
- I love my nation and respect language and culture of foreign ethnicities (statement No.3);
- I do not mind accepting a person of another ethnicity as a member of my family (statement No.4).

The method of computer-assisted web questionnaire allowed us to collect data rapidly from 204 students. The ethnicities of the students are as follows: Chuvash – 53 (26%); Mari – 18 (8,8%); Tatar – 16 (7,8%); Russian –

101 (49%); other ethnicities – 16 (7,8%). In the Chuvash Republic, the ethnic composition of respondents is as follows: Chuvash – 63 (69,2%); Mari – 2 (2,2%); Tatar – 7 (7,7%); Russian – 18 (19,7%); other ethnicities – 1 (1,1%). In the Mari El Republic, the ethnic composition of respondents is as follows: Chuvash – 4 (3,5%); Mari – 16 (14,16%); Tatar – 9 (8%); Russian – 69 (61%); other ethnicities – 15 (13,3%).

First, for each mentioned republic (the Chuvash Republic and the Mari El Republic), we analyzed the answers of all respondents as a whole, and then we analyzed the answers of representatives of the prevalent ethnicity exclusively.

Results and Discussion

The following pie charts illustrate relations between people of different ethnicities; the results of sociological survey are given as percentages. The charts are divided into 3 segments representing the following answers: agree, disagree, no definite answer.

Fig. 1–4 show the difference of percentages between answers to the statement No.1:

– I believe that all rights to local natural and social resources belong to native people.

The most popular answer was «disagree», 53% in the Chuvash Republic and 51% in the Mari El Republic. On average, approximately one third of the total respondents gave no definite answer, and about one quarter of them have agreed with the statement. The distribution of answers of native residents of the Chuvash republic (Chuvash) and the Mari El Republic (Mari) was roughly the same.

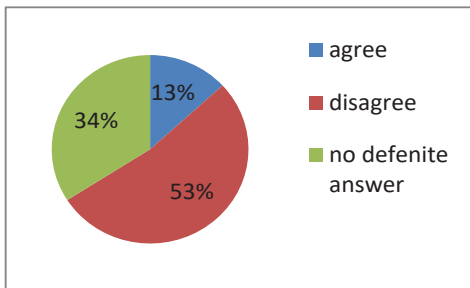


Fig. 1. Answers to question No. 1 (the Chuvash Republic)
Рис. 1. Ответы на вопрос № 1 (Чувашская Республика)

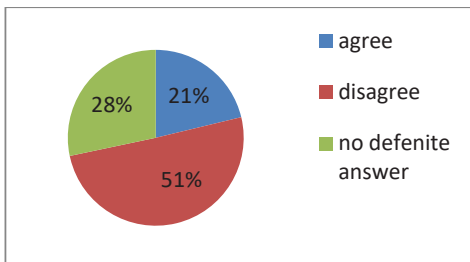


Fig. 2. Answers to question No. 1 (the Mari El Republic)
Рис. 2. Ответы на вопрос № 1 (Республика Марий Эл)

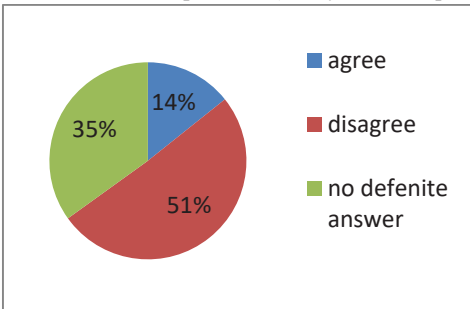


Fig. 3. Answers to question No. 1 (Chuvash)
Рис. 3. Ответы на вопрос № 1 (чувашаи)

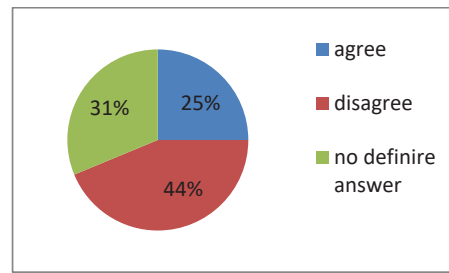


Fig. 4. Answers to question No. 1 (Mari)
Рис. 4. Ответы на вопрос № 1 (марийцы)

Next pie charts show distribution of the answers to the statement No. 2:

– I believe that foreign ethnicities should be limited in residence rights on my territory.

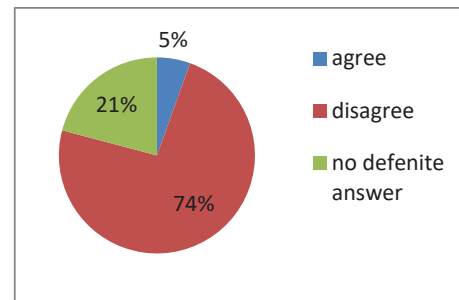


Fig. 5. Answers to question No. 2 (the Chuvash Republic)
Рис. 5. Ответы на вопрос № 2 (Чувашская Республика)

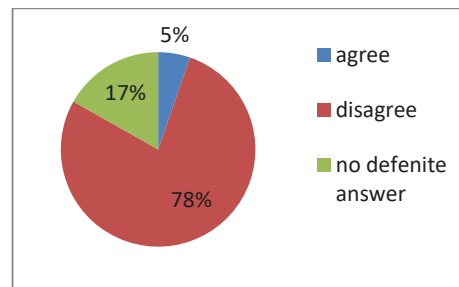


Fig. 6. Answers to question No. 2. (the Mari El Republic)
Рис. 6. Ответы на вопрос № 2 (Республика Марий Эл)

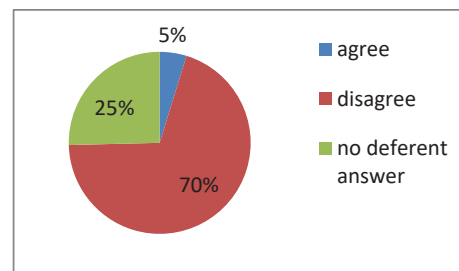


Fig. 7. Answers to question No. 2 (Chuvash)
Рис. 7. Ответы на вопрос № 2 (чувашаи)

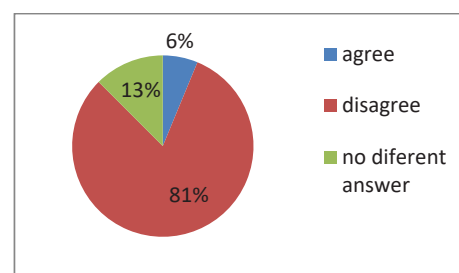


Fig. 8. Answers to question No. 2 (Mari)
Рис. 8. Ответы на вопрос № 2 (марийцы)

Far more than a half of answers to the statement No.2 were negative. This indicates tolerant attitude of native young people in relation to other ethnic groups. The share of negative answers to statement No.1 is comparable to the share of negative answers to statement No.2.

Fig. 9–12 indicate the choices of respondents regarding the following statement:

– I love my nation and respect language and culture of foreign ethnicities (statement No.3).

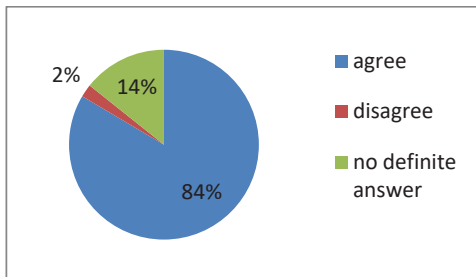


Fig. 9. Answers to question No. 3 (the Chuvash Republic)
Рис. 9. Ответы на вопрос № 3 (Чувашская Республика)

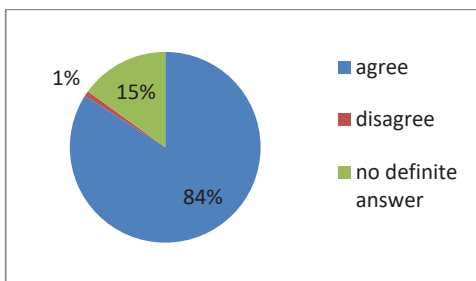


Fig. 10. Answers to question No. 3 (the Mari El Republic)
Рис. 10. Ответы на вопрос № 3 (Республика Марий Эл)

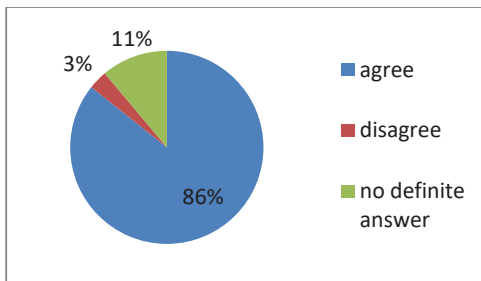


Fig. 11. Answers to question No. 3 (Chuvash)
Рис. 11. Ответы на вопрос № 3 (чувашши)

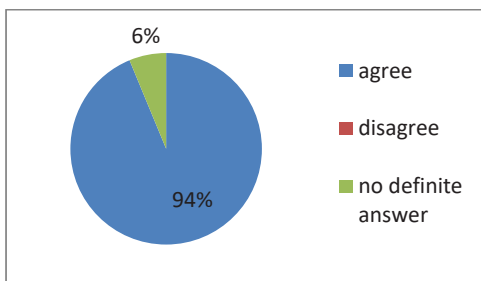


Fig. 12. Answers to question No. 3 (Mari)
Рис. 12. Ответы на вопрос № 3 (марийцы)

The share of positive answers to statement No. 3 is fairly high. In fact, this shows respectful attitude of native respondents to other ethnic groups.

The number of respondents who chose the «I do not mind accepting a person of another ethnicity as a member of my family» option is high (Fig. 13; Fig. 14).

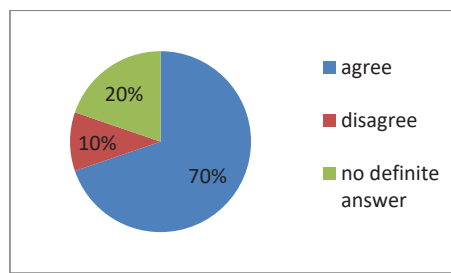


Fig. 13. Answers to question No. 4 (the Chuvash Republic)
Рис. 13. Ответы на вопрос № 4 (Чувашская Республика)

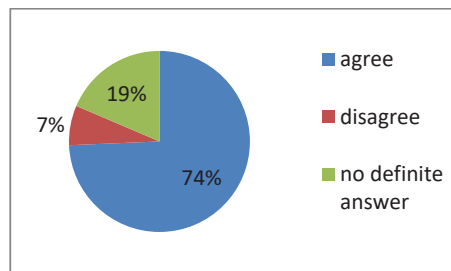


Fig. 14. Answers to question No. 4 (the Mari El Republic)
Рис. 14. Ответы на вопрос № 4 (Республика Марий Эл)

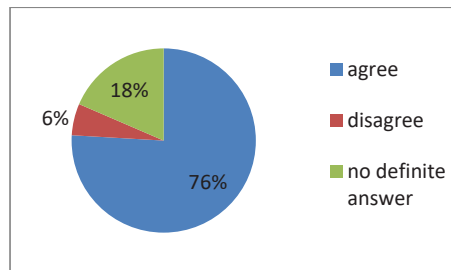


Fig. 15. Answers to question No. 4 (Chuvash)
Рис. 15. Ответы на вопрос № 4 (чувашши)

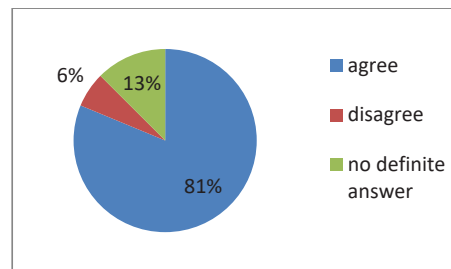


Fig. 16. Answers to question No. 4 (Mari)
Рис. 16. Ответы на вопрос № 4 (марийцы)

Conclusion

As a whole, the above-mentioned charts show that the number of tolerant and respectful oriented young people in the Chuvash Republic and the Mari El Republic is more than half of total number of the respondents.

The Figure 17 clearly shows general trends over time. In general, the distribution of answers collected in 2015, 2016 and 2021 is similar, with the exception of answers to statements No. 1 and 4, the former showing decrease in the number of tolerant answers, and the latter showing increase – the number of tolerant answers to statement No. 4 has risen to almost two times.

In our opinion, the number of tolerant answers to statement No.1 has decreased in 2021 due to difficult international situation and migration, not to mention the fact

that in the Chuvash Republic and the Mari El Republic there were public protests against attracting foreign investors for land lease. This fact was regarded by native people as morally and legally wrong and caused general public outrage.

The statement «I do not mind accepting a person of another ethnicity as a member of my family» received the largest number of positive answers. The number of tolerant answers has risen almost two times because the number of

foreign students has increased in recent years, thus leading to active intercultural communication among young people.

In general, our survey shows a tendency of increase in respectful attitude of young people towards different ethnic groups and, furthermore, in tolerance to people of different culture. Therefore, we can assume that in seven years span, the number of tolerant answers remains high.

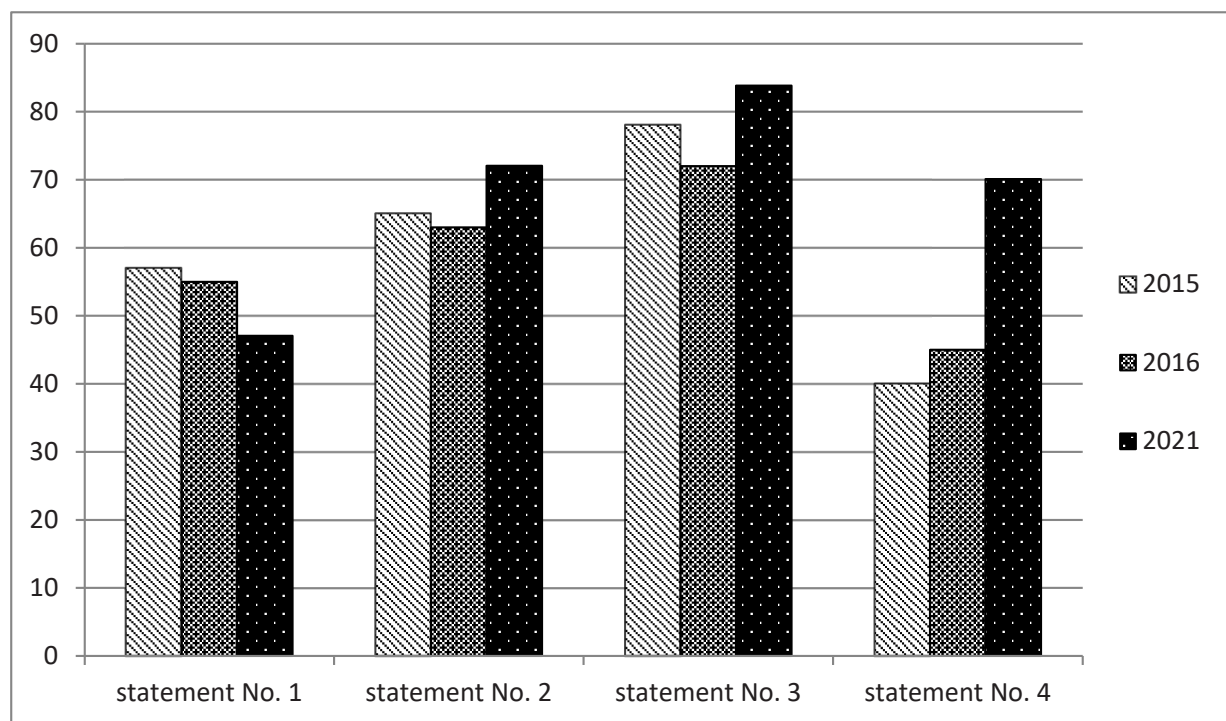


Fig. 17. The number of tolerant answers to statement No. 1, 2, 3, 4 in the Chuvash Republic and the Mari El Republic in total over the period 2015–2021

Рис. 17. Количество толерантных ответов на утверждения № 1, 2, 3, 4 в Чувашской Республике и Республике Марий Эл за период 2015-2021 гг.

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