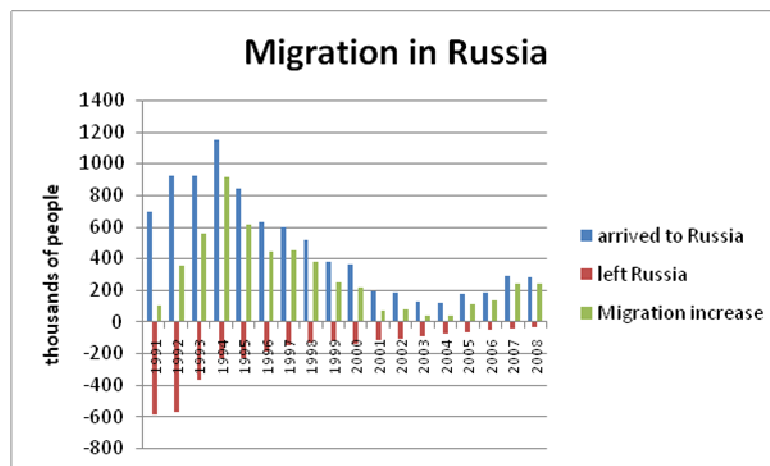


Immigration in Russia. Ethnic, cultural and spatial peculiarities of adaptation.

Immigration processes in Russia after the breakup of 1991

After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 thousands of people from the former Soviet republics moved to Russia as the most developed country. This continued until the late 1990s and afterwards the trend changed (fig.1). Usually 2 waves of migration are distinguished. The first wave took place from the breakup until 2000, the second from 2001 until now.

Figure 1. Migration in Russia after the breakup



Source: Federal State statistics service.

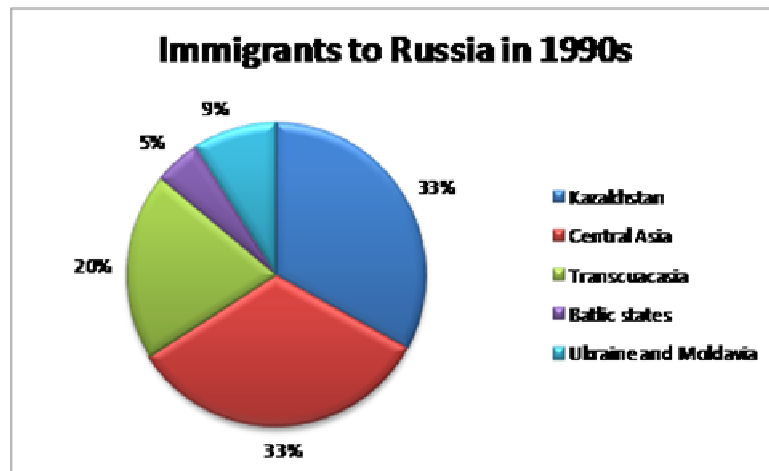
As can be seen on figure 1, the first wave is characterized by a large number of immigrants and emigrants. Besides their migration volume the structure of migrants was different in these two waves, which influenced local societies in diverse ways.

The first wave of immigration took place after the breakup and continued through the 1990s. About 8 million people crossed the border that time and came to Russia (Mukomel 2003).

The structure of this stream is shown on the graph. Most of the people came from Kazakhstan and Central Asia. In the third place were Transcaucasia countries (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan). The main cause of such a large number of immigrants was the quality of life (that was much better in Russia) and wars in some countries which

forced out thousands of people. People were searching for a better life in various regions of Russia. There were ethnic Russians and other nations among them.

Figure 2. Immigrants to Russia

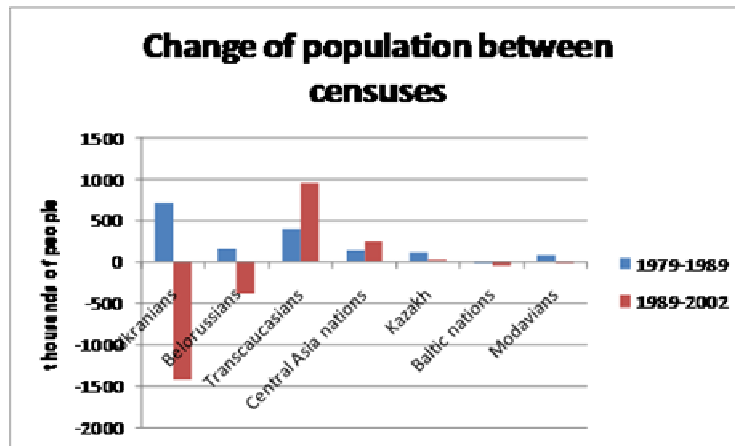


Source: Federal State statistics Service

Russians from other countries of the CIS had to move to Russia because of the oppression they were confronted with. In the former Soviet Republics, the governments were strongly favoring the natives of their own countries. In 1989 about 25,3 million of Russians and 4 million other native Russians were living outside of Russia (Mkrtchan 2004). After the breakup there were about 5 million people who left their homes in former Soviet republics and came to Russia to find their new home among the Slavic population (Federal Service of statistics). But the policy of government was not good enough to enable them to stay. Due to bad organisation of the adoption process half of these people returned to former Soviet republics. Many Russian immigrants who came to Russia lost out in some areas of their life (Mkrtchan 2009). For example, they couldn't afford to buy a new flat in Russia and received no support from the government on this issue. Those Russians who came to Russia didn't have many problems with adaptation into local societies, because they knew the language and Russian culture. Despite this stream the Russian population shrank between the censuses of 1989 and 2002. The number of emigrants were also considerable at this time. People from Russia went to Europe (ethnic Germans and Jews), USA ("brain drain") and Israel (Jews).

On the other hand the Transcaucasian population in Russia has been increasing in that period. For example, Armenian Diaspora increased 2,1 times between 1989 and 2002, Azerbaijan - 1,8 times (fig.2).

Figure 3. Change of population in different ethnic groups



Source: Census 2002

At that time there was a sudden change of the Tadjik population in Russia. Their number increased 3 times. By the end of the first wave of the immigration to Russia about 6,9 million (Mukomel, 2003) people has come from the former Soviet republics. Most of them were ethnic Russians therefore the question of their adaptation was not relevant. Nevertheless the first wave can also be characterized by a growth of xenophobia based on conflict in Chechnya (Russia) and the threat of terrorism. Due to the war in Chechnya the reputation of all people coming from Transcausasia considerably took a turn to the worse.

The second wave of immigration to Russia began in the 2000s. The amount of immigrants decreased and the structure of their ethnicity changed. The Tadjiks, Uzbeks and Chinese compensated for the decrease in available manpower. 17,5% of all immigrants coming to Russia in 2008 were Uzbeks, 14,6% - Tadjiks and 15,5% Chinese (Palnikov 2009). Therefore the question of their distribution and adaptation is very imperative.

Geographical peculiarities of immigration streams

The spatial distribution of immigrants especially not native Russians has been analyzed in much research (Mkrtchan 2008, Palnikov 2008, Zaionchkovskaya 2002). Due to the absence of any immigration policy people went to very different regions. Also to regions where there was no need in external manpower resources. Therefore most of the immigrants went to the most developed regions namely to Moscow, Moscow region and to the South Russia. There is some order of the spatial orientation of different streams presented below.

South Russia. Two migration streams domestic and external crossed there. One was from the North of Russia as a result of the abolishment of the subsidy system. In Soviet Union the government provided a subsidy for living in the North. The second stream originated from the Transcaucasia because of its closeness to the South Russia and from Central Asia as well.

Central region. It is the most attractive region of Russia for immigrants due to the proximity to the capital. That leads to economic growth and as consequence to huge rise of manpower needed in the region. There is a common opinion that this is the only place in Russia where you can easily earn money. Therefore the streams of different nations have been directed to the Central Region. There are a lot of Russians, Ukrainians, Transcaucasians, Kazakhs and people from Central Asia among them.

Volga region. The Volga region was also very attractive for immigrants and for domestic migrants because of its favorable climate and economic potential. These conditions attract Russians and Transcaucasians. This region also drew people from Central Asia and Kazakhstan for whom the border location of region was very important. The same situation could be noticed in the **Ural region**.

The situation in **Western Siberia** is very similar, Oilfields on the North and rich soils in the South attract migrants to local labour markets. In this region the population of Russians increased in the 1990-2000s. There are many seasonal migrants from Ukraine who work at the oilfields here. And there are immigrants from Kazakhstan and Central Asia who go here because this region is well developed enough and located close to the Kazakhstan border.

North and North-west regions are not very attractive for immigrants because of long distance to the border with Transcaucasia and Central Asia. From these regions only St.-Petersburg is a magnet for migrants.

The less attractive regions of Russia are **Eastern Siberia and Far East**. Many Russians left this region (so-called "western drift"). The loss of manpower force has been compensated by Chinese, Koreans and Vietnams (Gel'bras 2004). This presents some problems with their adaptation but the diffusion of xenophobia not so much in Eastern Siberia and Far East as in other parts of Russia.

As Russia remains a country of immigration the main idea of this investigation is to research the mechanisms of adaptation of immigrants in some border regions.

Immigration policy in Russia and some CIS countries

One of the most important aspects of immigration regulation is the policy of countries which supply and accept migrants. Different strategies of migrants often depends on the government's policy. This directly correlates with the stream of illegal migration. In the case of more tough policy there are more illegal migrants. In this section the immigration policy of Russia and some of its neighbouring countries will be discussed.

The first migration law in Russia was established in 1993 and allowed travel abroad and to Russia. The Iron Curtain was broken up. This led to aktivization of migration processes and to decrease of controlling. Free migration in 1990s was the cause of increasing illegal streams of people and goods. There were problems such as the exploitation of manpower force, trade in people and drugs and so on. Therefore the government decided to pursue a policy of rigid constraint of migration. A new law was established in 2002. There were a lot of insurmountable barriers in order to immigrate legally and to receive permission to work in Russia. In spite of government expectations the stream of migrants did not decrease but became illegal and gave rise to an increase of corruption in this area (Zaionchkovskaya 2009). The official rates of migration fell that contradict the interests of Russia. The next law was issued in 2006. That resulted in the relaxing of previously rigid constraint. Experts believe that the new law led to positive changes (Zaionchkovskaya 2009) and that the rate of illegal immigration decreased.

Other than laws there have been some programs aimed at supporting immigrants in Russia. There are 14 centres for temporary accommodation of forced migrants and 3 centres for temporary accomondation of immigrants. There are still not enough to keep people in Russia and to help them to adapt. Weaknesses in immigration policy lead to an increase in the temporary migration to Russia. That means that people will work a few months in Russia and live in their countries the rest of the year. This caused problems with their adaptation and integration to Russian society. In addition because of the money transmit the Russian economy loses a lot of money.

But some CIS countries have a special policy which stops people from leaving their native country. For example in Uzbekistan there is a ban of double citizenship. It means that if someone goes to Russia he has to come back to Uzbekistan, otherwise when he receives a russian citizenship he cannot be reinstated as a citizen of Uzbekistan for 20 years. That could lead to the break-up of families and other problems. There is also a big penalty in Uzbekistan for those who didn't earn enough money.

In other countries the policy is not so strict and people can get a double citizenship that helps them to earn money in Russia and to support their families in their countries.

All these specific aspects will be shown in detail below.

Orenburg region. Immigration and adaptation of ethnic immigrants

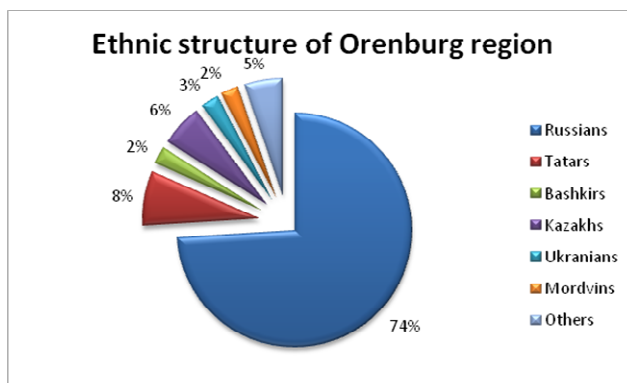
As a case study of the issue, it was decided to carry out a research in a very multicultural region close to the border to Kazakhstan and as a corollary escape to Central Asia which supplies the greater part of immigrants nowadays. The Orenburg region set an example how different ethnic groups could live together without problems (Gerasimenko 2005).

First of all the historical background of region should be mentioned. It was a gateway to Central Asia for a long time. After the building of railway from Samara (Russia) to Tashkent (Uzbekistan) in 1906 Orenburg became an important trade centre that influenced the development of the whole region. It was historical predefined that this region is multicultural and tolerant. First settlements on this area were settlements of Bashkirs and Kazakhs who still live in this region. The first Russians came to Orenburg in the XVIII century (Zobov 1996). During the last few centuries the region was very multicultural. The role as a border region emphasized that Orenburg was a capital of Kirghiz (Kazakh) republic at the beginning of XX century. Nowadays the Orenburg region has lost its role as a key region, but as a result of its location at the border it has close contact with Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

The ethnic structure of region is very diverse (fig.4). The proportion of Russians is one of the lowest among oblasts (Russian regions) of Russia. All the ethnic groups are native Russians except Kazakhs but have lived in this area for a very long time. Plural ethnic structure is constantly replenished with immigrants.

Besides ethnic heterogeneity there are religious differences. People who live here practice Orthodoxy (Russians, Ukrainians, Mordvins) and Islam (Tatars, Bashkirs and Kazakhs) as well. Immigrants could be also divided in two groups. Uzbeks, Tadjiks, Kirgizes and Azerbaijanians are Muslims. Armenians and Georgians are Orthodoxy. There are a lot of churches and mosques neighboring each other.

Figure 4. Ethnic structure of Orenburg region



Source: Census 2002

Nevertheless there are some problems with the immigration processes. Orenburg region is not very attractive for permanent residence among immigrants. Therefore there are many people who work there seasonally. It means that they go to Russia for the summer period to earn money and afterwards they come back to their countries of residence for winter period. Their adaptation into Russian society breaks up for the winter period. The second problem is that most immigrants from Central Asia do not speak the Russian language, especially those of them who come from villages where they speak only their native language. It's very common problem but there are not enough programs to solve it. As is shown before the policy of Russia on the issue of immigration is very weak. There are no statutory provisions talking about mechanisms of adaptation into Russian society and adaptation Russians to foreigners. Therefore the strategies of adaptation are very different and depends on rules accepted in societies of immigrants.

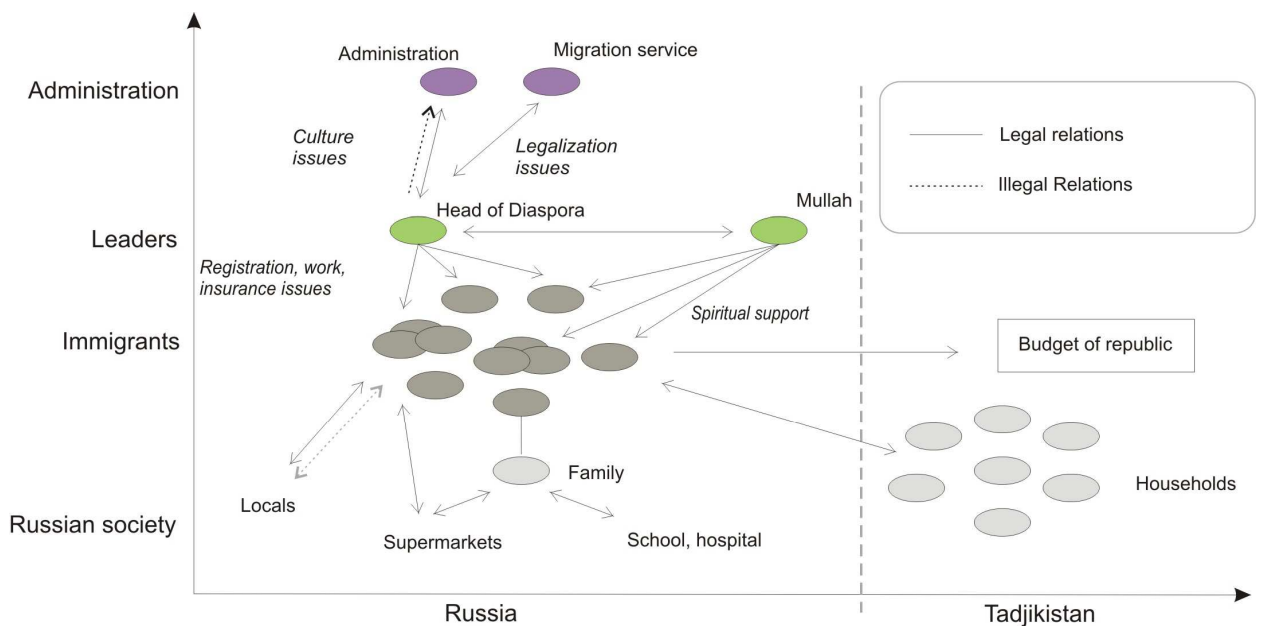
Tadjiks in Russian society

Tadjiks come to Russia in groups and work together. They take up low-skill positions in a local labour market. Usually they work in building, do some personal services, work in the markets. In their homeland they do other work and in Russia they have to acquire new skills. Most of them are seasonally workers. The Tadjiks are very hard-working as working in Russia is the only way for them to support their families in Tadjikistan. Therefore they work for about 12 hours a day without weekends the whole summer period. Then a lot of them go back to Tadjikistan for winter.

Tadjiks are very poor in general. And those of them who go to the Orenburg region are normally the poorest of all Tadjiks who come to Russia. It is so because Orenburg is the first region on the way to Central Russia and some of migrants do not have

money to go further. The positions of Tadjiks in russian society is very low. They are, as all foreigners from the former Soviet Republics, always under pressure of law-enforcement agencies. And because of their poverty the only way to defend themselves is to join the special organisation founded by Tadjiks. This organisation (also called Diaspora) helps immigrants in diffenernt questions as registration, work, transportation to Tadjikistan in case of death and so on. It is very important for Tadjiks because their families can't pay for the delivery of dead body which occurs from time to time as a result of hard work conditions. Diaspora plays a big role in communication to the other world. The Head of Diaspora is responsible for communication with administration and migration service. Except legal there are also illegal relations between administration, Diaspora and native citizens. This occurs because immigrant have to register and they "buy" a permit from locals. The scheme of main relations of Tadjiks Diaspora and local society can be seen on figure 5.

Figure 5. Main relations of Tadjik's Diaspora in Orsk (Orenburg region)



Source: field research of author

A very important role is played not only by the Head of Diaspora but also by the Mullah because Tadjiks are very religious.

In conclusion it can be said that Tadjik society is very conservative, hierarchical and inflexibly organized. As a result the only way for the Tadjiks to influence is with the help of their Diaspora. The main problem nowadays is that Tadjiks don't speak the russian language well enough which leads to misunderstandings in local societies. They also don't generally have an opportunity to learn Russian.

There are fewer problems with Tadjiks in Orenburg region because they are not only Muslims here and locals are already adapted to Muslims and Orthodoxy living together. Also the Tadjiks whose position is very low in Russian society and whose way of life depends on hierarchy in their society are quite easily to govern. Just the Head of Diaspora needs to be influenced and all other Tadjiks would follow him. It can be very helpful for local Administration.

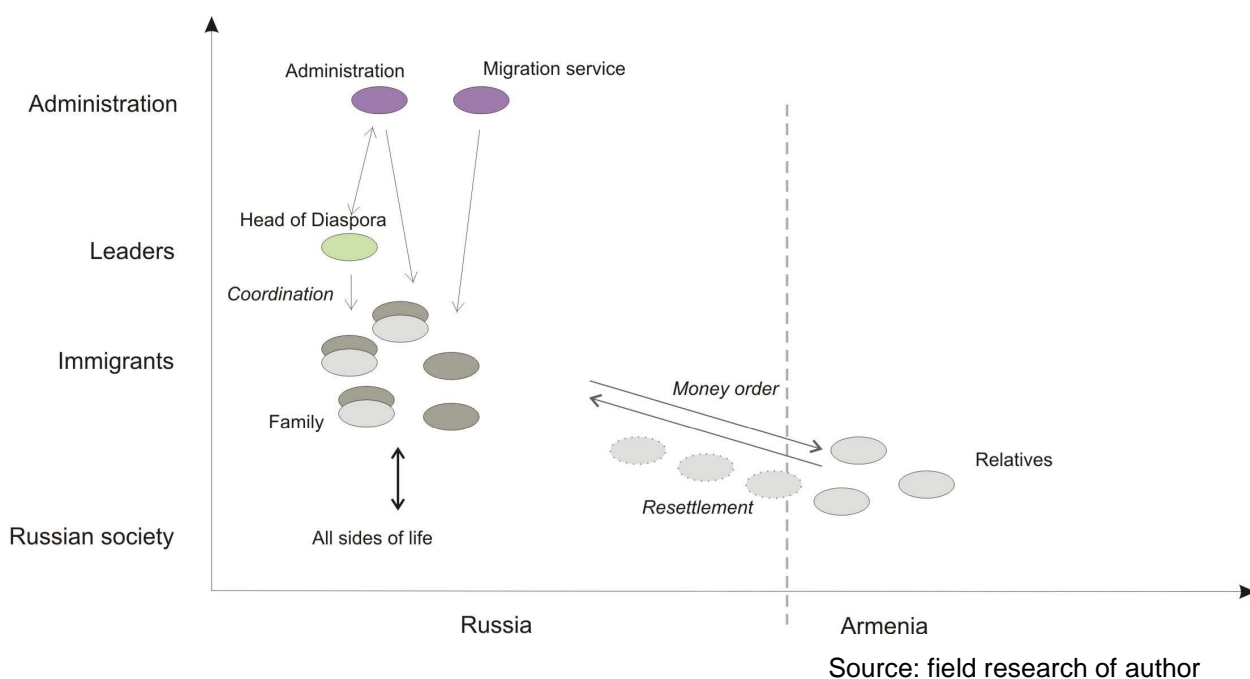
Armenians in Russian society

In comparison to Tadjiks who are rather new in Russian society Armenians have lived in Russia for a few centuries. The first Armenians came to Orenburg region at the end of XIX century. Their strategy of adaptation is different. Usually they come to Russia to improve themselves. They have very good education and give their children a good education as well. Many of them are very successful in business. They normally stay in Russia permanently and have a lot of contact with locals. Their aim is to integrate with locals and to have equal opportunities to fulfill their ambitions. Armenians connections are wide and are not exclusive on their own society. That leads to better integration of Armenians in Russia. Moreover the same religious belonging makes it easier to connect with them.

Armenians also have their national association in Orenburg but its role is different in compared to the Tadjiks organisation. Armenians unite to get know each other and to prevent deviant behaviour among themselves. Otherwise it could lead to the conflicts. The second aim of their association is to save their traditions and culture. The scheme of Armenian diaspora in Orenburg can be seen in figure 6.

The Armenians are more integrated in Russian society and their association in Orenburg region is rather developed to control all members of Diaspora that could help to develop mutually advantageous cooperation. But because they are more successful some locals feel envious of the Armenians, which leads to conflict. In the case of the Armenians the government should pay attention not only on them but also to make locals more tolerant. But it is difficult because a lot of people earn not so much and this is the reason of the conflicts.

Figure 6. Main relations of Armenian diaspora in Orenburg



Conclusion

The modern immigration policy in Russia is not developed enough therefore the research has been carried on it is crucial. In the example of the Orenburg region different ways of adaptation of immigrants and different ways of communication with government were shown. Orenburg region is one of the few that has a legislation that takes in account the multicultural structure of population and streams of immigrants come from CIS countries. As a conclusion some recommendations to local governments could be made.

The main problem for the most immigrants is lack of language knowledge that leads to problems in communication with locals and xenophobia among locals. Other problems are in the system of legalization which caused a lot of illegal processes.

Work with locals should be done in all regions of Russia especially there where there are a lot of immigrants. The case of Orenburg shows that different nationalities can live together but it should be organized properly.

Sources:

1. Gel'bras V. Гельбрас В. Г. Россия в условиях глобальной китайской миграции (Russia and global migration of chinese). М.: Муравей, 2004.
2. Gerasimenko Tatiana I. Проблемы этнокультурного развития трансграничных регионов (Problems of ethno-cultural development of transboundary regions). Санкт-Петербург. 2005. – 236.

3. Mkrtchan Nikita V. Internal Migration: Great Past, Modest Future// В кн.: Anatoly G.Vishnevsky, Sergei N. Bobylev (eds.). Russia Facing Demographic Challenges. National Human Development Report. Russian Federation 2008. Москва: UNDP, 2009. С. 74—84
4. Mkrtchan Nikita V. Готовы ли безработные ехать за работой? (Are the unemployed ready to go to find a workplaces?) // Российская миграция, 2009. № 2 (33), май . С. 13—15
5. Mukomel Vladimir I. Кто приедет в Россию из «нового зарубежья»? (Who will come to Russia from the former Soviet Republics?)// Мир России.2003. Т. XII. №3. с.130-146
6. Zaionchkovskaya Zhanna A. , Tyuryukanova Elena V. Immigration: Salvation or a Trojan Horse? В кн.: Anatoly G.Vishnevsky, Sergei N. Bobylev (eds.) Russia Facing Demographic Challenges. National Human Development Report. Russian Federation 2008. Москва: UNDP, 2009. С. 89—111
7. Zaionchkovskaya Zhanna A. Как изучали миграцию (How to research in migration)// Полит.ру, 2010. № от 17 февраля
8. Zaionchkovskaya Zhanna A. Новая миграционная политика: первые итоги (New migration policy. First results// Демоскоп Weekly, 2009. № 367 – 368 (2 - 15 марта). С. интернет издание
9. Zaionchkovskaya Zhanna A. О трудовой миграции (About labour migration)// Социальная сфера: проблемы и суждения. Высшая школа экономики.М., 2002: С.138-143
- 10.Zobov J. Древние обитатели Приуральских степей (Ancient inhabitants of Ural)// История Оренбуржья. – Оренбург, Оренбургское книжное издательство, 1996. – с. 5-19

Internet sources

11. Census of 2002. <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=11>
12. Federal service of statistics. <http://www.gks.ru/>
13. “Consultant-Plus”. Laws of Russia. <http://www.consultant.ru/popular/outcome/>
14. Palnikov Marat. Иммиграция в Россию из постсоветских республик (Immigration to Russia from post-soviet republics) // Internet journal «Перспективы» (“Prospect”) 2009. http://www.perspektivy.info/srez/val/immigraciya_v_rossiju_iz_postsovetskih_respublik_chast_vtoraja_2009-10-06.htm