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## A YOUNG ADULT MIGRATION FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF THE SEX-AGE COMPOSITION OF THE ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS POPULATING IN THE SHAKI-ZAGATALA ECONOMIC REGION

**Bayımkhanım Alirza Huseynova**

Institute of Geography named after acad.H.A.Aliyev

E-mail: nane\_huseinova@yahoo.com

*A research paper investigates young adult migration factor in the formation of the sex-age composition of the ethnic minority groups populating in the Shaki-Zagatala economic region on the basis of the statistical and survey materials. It is a known fact that a role of historical and socio-economic factors in the direction, intensity and diversity of ethnic composition of migration processes in the economic region has been great. The study found that there was a significant increase in the number of young people migrating to neighboring countries during the migration process due to demographic, socio-economic and historical settlement factors. According to local residents, in recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of women migrants. In addition, the intensification of migration among the population aged 19-34 has resulted in a decrease in the number of young people in the population. Undoubtedly, this process leads to a decrease in the number of marriages and natural increase. This, in turn, may result in a decrease in the number of minority ethnic groups and, as a result, their complete disappearance as an ethnos. In this respect, the study of the migration factor in the change of the gender-age composition of the Avars, Tsakhurs and Udis who settle compactly only in the Shaki-Zagatala economic region of the country is of special scientific and practical importance.*

**Keywords:** economic region, ethnic minority groups, young adults, migration, age-sex structure

### INTRODUCTION

The Shaki-Zagatala economic region, which covers the northwestern region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, has historically been one of the regions distinguished by its national-ethnic composition and the intensity of migration processes. The existence of Udi people and Inghilois who are descendants of 26 tribes that make up the ancient Azerbaijani state of Albania, the migration of Avars, Tsakhurs and Lezgins to the northern and northwestern lands of the Republic of Azerbaijan after the XV-XVII centuries, the resettlement of Russians and other peoples in the following years has culminated in a mixed national-ethnic composition [7, p. 209, 246, 296]. The location of the economic region on the border with Russia and Georgia has resulted in intensive migration of Caucasian (Dagestan) peoples living in Azerbaijan to Russia due to easy international travel. Particularly, after the disintegration of the USSR, this process began to manifest itself more vigorously. The deteriorating socio-economic situation in the newly independent country, the outbreak of the Karabakh conflict led to the closure of numerous work places and an increase in unemployment among the population. Unequal socio-economic development among the regions of the country has accelerated the process of interregional and external migration. It is an irrefutable fact that the majority of migrants were working-age population, especially the number of the working-age men was relatively higher. However, since the early 2000s, the number of women migrants has exceeded the number of men. In the process of permanent migration of the population, the large number of able-bodied people, especially women, has led to some violations in the sex and age structure of the

population. The intensification of migration processes among the population, especially among the younger generation, was also reflected in the Shaki-Zagatala economic region, which is characterized by a diverse ethnic composition.

The essential purpose of the research is to study the role of intensified migration processes among young people and predict future trends in changing the sex and age composition of the 3 minority ethnic groups - Avars, Tsakhurs and Udi people, living compactly only in the northwestern part of the country.

### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

An excursion to the research area was organized for the research work, a survey was conducted among 200 Avars, 150 Tsakhurs and 100 Udi people living the research area, and the collected materials were grouped and analysed. The survey materials included 12 different questions related to the study of migration processes. In addition to this, G.J.Javadov (1999, 2000), Sh.M.Muradov (2013, 2021), Z.N.Eminov (2005) and other researchers' research works who conducted research on the study of the population, including minority ethnic groups in the country, as well as, the materials of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan were used in the research work. As the 2019 statistics are not available, the official data cover the 2009 census.

In order to implement the research works, the mathematical-statistical, comparative-analytical, survey and other methods were used.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The total area of Shaki-Zagatala economic region covering the northwestern region of the Republic of Azerbaijan is 8,84 thousand km<sup>2</sup>, and the population is 630,4 thousand people [8]. The region is represented by 6 administrative districts, including 336 rural settlements. Representatives of more than 10 ethnic groups have settled in the region, which is quite diverse from the national-ethnic point of view. Generally speaking, almost all Avars, Tsakhurs and Udi people living in the country fall into this economic region [4, p. 275].

More than 900000 Avars whose numbers are more than 1 million in the world settle in Russia, including more than 850000 in the Republic of Dagestan and 49800 in Azerbaijan [3, p. 11]. According to the 2009 census, 49,5 thousand or 99,4% of the Avars are concentrated in the northwestern region of Azerbaijan, namely in the Shaki-Zagatala economic region. In particular, they populate in the Balakan and Zagatala districts of the region [1, p. 79].

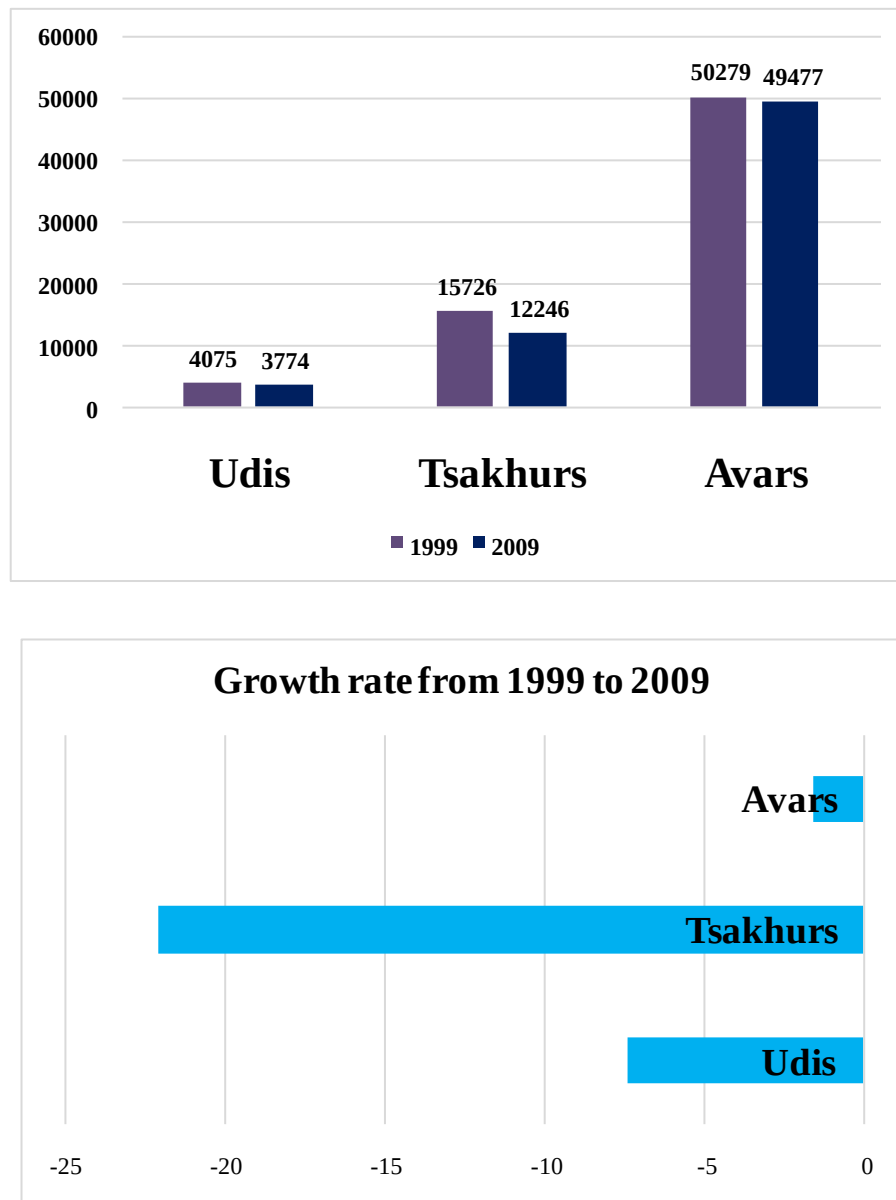
The Tsakhurs, estimated to number 50000 in the world, populate primarily in Azerbaijan and Dagestan. Their number is about the same in Azerbaijan and Russia (12.3 thousand people) [3, p. 11]. In 2009, 12200 people or 99,2% of the Tsakhurs living in Azerbaijan fell to the Shaki-Zagatala economic region. The Tsakhurs settle primarily in the Gakh and Zagatala regions of the region.

The number of Udi people in the world is relatively lower than other ethnic minorities, at about 10000. Most of them, namely 3800 people populate in Azerbaijan and 4200 in Russia [3, p.11]. About 200 Udi people settle in Armenia and Georgia, each. Almost all Udi people living in Azerbaijan live in the Shaki-Zagatala economic region, especially in the Nij town of Gabala district [6, p.88]. The number of Udi people living outside the economic region is less than 50, and a majority of them falls to the Baku city (41 people) (2009). In th region, they settle mainly in the Gabala district and partly in the Oghuz district.

Generally, in 2009, the number of population in the region was 566,0 thousand people, and 18,6% of them were accounted for by the minority ethnic groups and national minorities, including 8,7% Avars, 2,2% Tsakhurs and 1,0% Udi people [5, p. 72].



Provided that we look at the dynamics of the number of minority ethnic groups in the study region, it can be seen that the number of all three ethnic groups decreased. The largest decrease was recorded in the number of Tsakhurs (-22,1) (Figure 1). The primary reasons behind this situation were assimilation, registering themselves as Azerbaijanis, and other factors. Along with such factors, migration, especially a young adult migration, has played a major role in this process.



Source: The indicators were calculated based on the census materials of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the years of 1999 and 2009.

**Fig.1.** Changes in the number of Avars, Tsakhurs and Udi people in the region

It is an irrefutable fact that migration affects the country's socio-economic and all demographic indicators, including ethno-demographic indicators and vice versa. As in other countries, the migration factor had a significant impact on the formation of the population in Azerbaijan. Although the migration balance in Azerbaijan is currently positive, there are still



significant differences between the country's different regions. This is due to the disproportions between the regions in the socio-economic and demographic situation. Provided that we look at the table, it can be seen that almost by all years, the migration balance took a negative figure. Undoubtedly, this process has caused by the young adult migration and in turn, has induced the emergence of serious problems in other demographic indicators, and the disruption of sex-age structure among these indicators. The region covering the northwestern part of Azerbaijan, is particularly different in terms of the intensity of migration. According to statistics, the migration balance was negative between 1999 and 2009 (Table 1).

**Table 1**

Trends in the balance of migration in the region by total population

| Years     | Natural increase | Total increase | Migration balance |
|-----------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1999      | 5,4              | 5,2            | -0,2              |
| 2000      | 4,9              | 4,1            | -0,8              |
| 2001      | 4,6              | 4,4            | -0,2              |
| 2002      | 4,3              | 3,9            | -0,4              |
| 2003      | 3,9              | 3,9            | 0,0               |
| 2004      | 4,8              | 4,7            | -0,1              |
| 2005      | 4,9              | 4,4            | -0,5              |
| 2006      | 5,3              | 4,9            | -0,4              |
| 2007      | 5,4              | 4,8            | -0,6              |
| 2008      | 4,8              | 6,7            | 1,9               |
| 2009      | 5,2              | 5,0            | -0,2              |
| 1999-2009 | 53,5             | 52,0           | -1,5              |

Source: The indicators were calculated based on the statistical materials of "Population of Azerbaijan" in the years of 1999 and 2009.

There are several reasons for the negative balance of migration in the region. These include migration of the able-bodied population to neighboring countries, including Russia and Georgia, in order to find a lucrative job, migration to Baku, where has more employment opportunities, migration to settle with close relatives living in neighboring countries, educational migration and other reasons (Figure 2).

According to the survey materials, about 75% of migrants in the region are young adults aged 19-39. As age groups increase, the intensity of migration decreases significantly. It is interesting to note that a minority of migrants return when they reach retirement age.

There are 3 primary causes of the young adult migration. First of all, lack of the convenient business opportunities in the research area the dwellers are obliged to desert the region. It is a fact that the investigation area is located in the mountainous area, and most of the population work in the agricultural sector, especially growing of nut products. However, inadequacy of the companies producing the agricultural products and extensive development of agricultural sector have paved the way for the acceleration of the migration. Secondly, working in the agricultural sector is not lucrative to earn livelihood. And, thirdly, historically, a group of Avars and Tsakhurs migrated to this region from Dagestan and today, some of them migrate to the Republic of Dagestan which is the part of Russian Federation to settle with their relatives and create a family business.



**Fig.2.** Major migration destinations of minority ethnic groups migrating from the region

Provided that we look at the direction of the external migration, essential destination of the migrants is the Russian Federation, because there are several lucrative business opportunities in Russia as opposed to Azerbaijan. Speaking quite candidly, Avars, Lezgins, Tsakhurs and Udi people prefer to migrate to Russia owing to language ability.

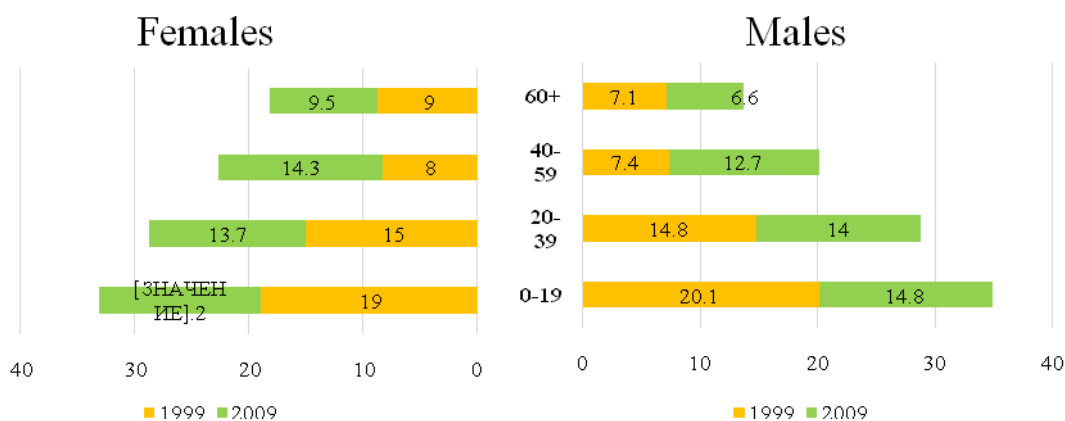


**Fig.3.** Sex-age structure of Udi people

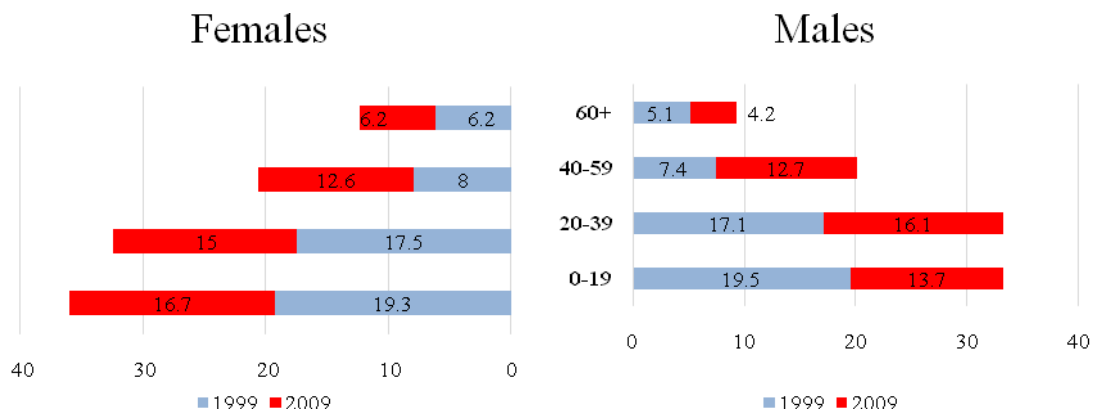


**Fig.4.** Sex-age structure of Tsakhurs

Providing that we look at the comparative age-sex pyramid of the Udi people, in 1999-2009 there was a decrease of 5,3% among men in the 0-19 age group and 4,8% among women, on the contrary, in the 20-39 age group this figure was 0,8% for men, and 1,3% for women [2; 3]. Among women, their marital status also plays an important role in increasing the percentage in this age group. Due to the return of migrants in the age group of 40-59, there was an increase in the share of both men and women in this age group (Figure 3).

Turning to the comparative age-sex pyramid for Tsakhurs, similarly, in 1999-2009, the share of men in the 0-19 age group was much lower than that of women, however, the opposite trend was observed in the 20-39 age group [2; 3]. In the 40-59 age group, the share of men and women in this group increased as a result of the return of some of those who left to their previous place of residence (Figure 4).

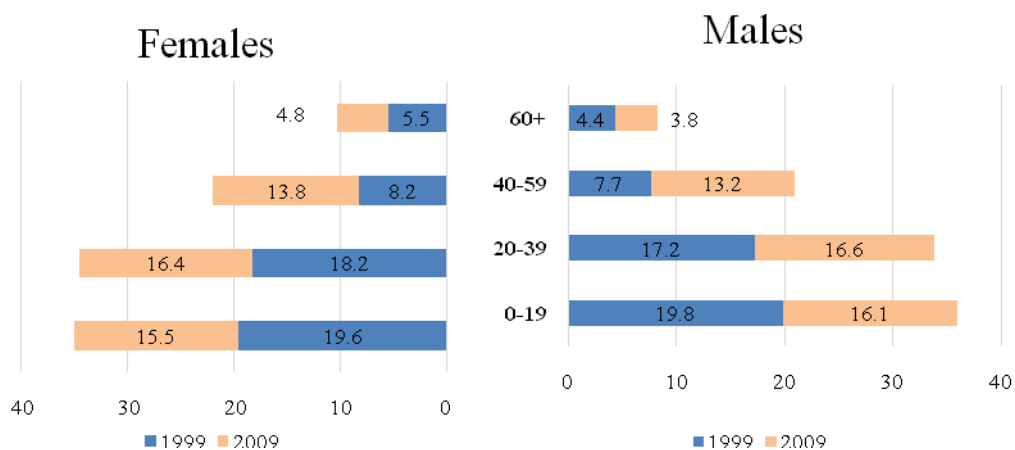


**Fig.5.** Sex-age structure of Avars

Regarding comparative age-sex pyramid of the Avars, it can be concluded that the similar situation was valid for them as well (Figure 5).

## CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn from a study on the role of young adult migration in changing the sex and age composition of minority ethnic groups living in the Shaki-Zagatala economic region:

1. In 1999-2009, both the number of Avars, Tsakhurs and Udins decreased, and the largest decrease was recorded in the share of the Tsakhurs (-22.1%). This was due to the intensive



migration processes in the region. Generally, the migration balance in the region in 1999-2009 was negative.

2. According to the results of the survey, the majority of migrants was constituted by the 20-39 age group. Thus, the share of both men and women in the 20-39 age group in the total population of all three minority ethnic groups decreased, and after the age of 40, the share of both sexes increased. This was due to the decrease in the number of young people among the general population due to migration, and the return of some of those who left. Interestingly, the share of men aged 0-19 in all three ethnic groups decreased, while the share of women in the age group 20-39 decreased. This was due to changes in the marital status of women in the 20-39 age group, their ability to make independent decisions, and other factors.

3. As for the primary migration destinations, the essential destination for the minority ethnic groups from all three groups is Russia, which has more lucrative employment opportunities. Some of these young people are migrating to Baku. However, the continuation of such a situation could result in the assimilation of these minority peoples in the world and the loss of the region's ethnic diversity.

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## ŞƏKİ-ZAQATALA İQTİSADI RAYONUNDA MƏSKUNLAŞAN AZSAYLI ETNİK QRUPLARIN CİNS-YAŞ TƏRKİBİNİN FORMALAŞMASINDA GƏNCLƏRİN MİQRASIYASI AMİLİ

**B.Ə. Hüseynova**

Məqalədə statistik və sorğu materialları əsasında Şəki-Zaqatala iqtisadi rayonunda məskunlaşan azsaylı etnik qrupların cins-yaş tərkibinin dəyişməsində gənclərin miqrasiyanın rolu təhlil edilmişdir. Məlumdur ki, iqtisadi regionda miqrasiya proseslərinin gedişində, intensivliyində və etnik tərkibinin rəngarəngliyində tarixi və sosial-iqtisadi amillərin rolu böyük olmuşdur. Tədqiqat nəticəsində məlum olmuşdur ki, demoqrafik, sosial-iqtisadi və tarixi məskunlaşma amillərinin təsiri ilə miqrasiya proseslərində qonşu ölkələrə miqrasiya edən gənclərin sayında ciddi artım olmuşdur. Yerli sakinlərin məlumatlarına görə son illərdə, miqrasiya edən arasında qadınların



sayında ciddi artım qeydə alınmışdır. Bundan əlavə, 19-34 yaş qrupunda olan əhali arasında miqrasiyanın intensiv xarakter alması əhali arasında gənclərin sayının da azalması ilə nəticələnmişdir. Heç şübhəsiz ki, bu proses nikahların sayının və təbii artımın azalmasına səbəb olur. Bu da öz növbəsində azsaylı etnik qrupların sayının azalması və nəticədə bir etnos kimi tamamilə itməsi ilə nəticələnə bilər. Bu baxımdan, ölkədə yalnız Şəki-Zaqatala iqtisadi rayonu ərazisində yaşayan avar, saxur və udinlərin cins-yaş tərkibinin dəyişməsində miqrasiya amilinin öyrənilməsi xüsusi elmi-praktiki əhəmiyyətə malikdir.

**Açar sözlər:** *iqtisadi rayon, azsaylı etnik qruplar, gənclər, miqrasiya, cins-yaş tərkibi*

## **ФАКТОР МИГРАЦИИ ВЗРОСЛЫХ МОЛОДЕЖИ В ФОРМИРОВАНИИ ПОЛОВОЗРАСТНОГО СОСТАВА ЭТНИЧЕСКИХ МЕНЬШИНСТВ, НАСЕЛЯЮЩИХ В ШАКИ-ЗАГАТАЛЬСКОМ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОМ РАЙОНЕ**

**Б. А. Гусейнова**

В статье на основе статистических и обзорных материалов анализируется роль молодежной миграции в изменении половозрастного состава малочисленных этнических групп, проживающих в Шеки-Загатаальском экономическом районе. Известно, что роль исторических и социально-экономических факторов в протекании, интенсивности и разнообразии этнических процессов в экономическом районе была велика. В ходе исследования установлено, что в процессе миграционного процесса в связи с демографическими, социально-экономическими и историческими факторами расселения наблюдается значительный рост числа молодых людей, мигрирующих в соседние страны. По словам местных жителей, в последние годы наблюдается значительный рост числа женщин-мигрантов. Кроме того, активизация миграции населения в возрасте 19-34 лет привела к уменьшению численности молодежи в составе населения. Несомненно, этот процесс приводит к уменьшению числа браков и естественному приросту. Это, в свою очередь, может привести к уменьшению численности малочисленных этносов и, как следствие, к их полному исчезновению как этноса. В связи с этим особое научное и практическое значение имеет изучение миграционного фактора в изменении половозрастного состава аварцев, цахуров и удин, компактно проживающих только в Шеки-Загатаальском экономическом районе страны.

**Ключевые слова:** *экономический район, этнические меньшинства, молодежь, миграция, половозрастной состав*