

## MECHANISMS OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF REFUGEES

Jabbarov Rashid Vakil<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The article examines the characteristics of social and psychological adaptation and stress resistance of refugees living in Azerbaijan. It has been established that the social and psychological adaptation and stress resistance characteristics of refugees living in Azerbaijan are comprehensively influenced by individual psychological characteristics, gender differences, long-term frustration, number of children in the family and family conflicts. It should be borne in mind that forced migration is one of the factors that make it difficult to adapt, among many other things. The study found that despite the indicators that refugees living in Azerbaijan are important for local stress, social adjustment and resilience to stress are low. The article examines the characteristics of social and psychological adaptation and stress resistance of refugees living in

Azerbaijan. It has been established that the social and psychological adaptation and stress resistance characteristics of refugees living in Azerbaijan are comprehensively influenced by individual psychological characteristics, gender differences, long-term frustration, number of children in the family and family conflicts. It should be borne in mind that forced migration is one of the factors that make it difficult to adapt, among many other things. The study found that despite the indicators that refugees living in Azerbaijan are important for local stress, social adjustment and resilience to stress are low.

**Keywords:** internally displaced persons, social and psychological adaptation, stress resistance

### Introduction

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<sup>1</sup> Doctor of Psychology, Associate Professor of the Department of Social and pedagogical Psychology of Baku State University, Azerbaijan. E-mail: [rashid.cabbarov@mail.ru](mailto:rashid.cabbarov@mail.ru). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0623-2772>

The end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s of the last century were the most tragic years of the Azerbaijani people. Involvement in a forced war with the Republic of Armenia resulted in the infringement of territorial integrity of our country, occupation of 20% of our lands by the aggressor and formation of the army of more than 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons. Traumas from the war, IDPs living in unbearable conditions for several years, delay in the process of returning back paved the way for the decline in stress resistance and the emergence of different psychological and psychosomatic diseases seriously influencing the socio-psychological condition of refugees and internally displaced persons. If we would put aside the stressors arising from the local condition and adaptation opportunities, exposure of internally displaced persons to forced migration, their expulsion from native lands should be considered as an important factor. If we'll take into consideration that this part of population makes up 10 – 15 % of total population and lack of research works related to their socio-psychological assessment in recent years, we can conclude that the necessity

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for the assessment of impacts caused by this process on the gene pool is high from psychological point of view.

It is known that migration – is a set of replacements occurring for the purpose of changing any person's place of residence (Tyshkova M.,1987 ). Migration processes are characterized with the indicators such as public welfare or unfavorable conditions having a mass character. However, if we'll take into consideration the forced nature of migration, including its trauma creating nature, its impact on the society and psychology of those exposed to the process can be assessed in a negative direction. Numerous studies show that forced migration reduces stress resistance and the ability of adaptation.

Stress resistance of refugees and IDPs manifests itself in their psychological condition, in the process of adaptation and in the level of health. The most important mechanism among these mechanisms which is supported by the researchers is the socio-psychological adaptation. In this regard, the study of stress resistance and socio-psychological adaptation, in our opinion, is one of the important conditions for the

assessment of socio-psychological condition.

Forced displacement or forced migration reflects necessary adaptation mechanisms in itself which faces with a completely new, unknown condition in this process. Encountering with such a situation evokes stress and also forms the necessity for the activity creating the mechanism of active interaction with it changing the environment in accordance with its demands and needs. In this case, it also changes in this process of interaction.

According to G.U.Soldatova, “Unlike voluntary migration aimed at improving the living conditions, forced migration – is such a type of movement of people that in this case, they are forced to leave their homes in order to get rid of the danger to life or other persecutions and they seek shelter in other territories – in the borders of the country to which their citizenship belong or beyond its borders” (G.U.Soldatova,2001). At the same time, G.U.Soldatova shows that “traumatic practice and life difficulties of internally displaced persons (IDPs) determine the violations completeness and integration of their identities. The complex of problems that reflect the

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transformation of personality can be called as identity crisis” (G.U.Soldatova,2001).

“Identity crisis is formed as a result of events caused to migration of internally displaced persons, as well, cultural shock in a new environment and the adaptation to a new environment. The foundation of an individual’s personality collapses as a result of events occurred – the transformation of that world picture which includes the comprehensive range of images, ideas, visions, faith, relationships which are formed from the date of birth occurs” (G.U.Soldatova,2001).

According to I.M.Mammadli, there are two types of adaptation. The first type is accompanied by the prevalence of active – initiative impact on social environment. More precisely, the person who has come to a new place of residence tries to comfort. The second type is a passive type in which conformist tendency dominates. Accepting the requirements, norms, rules and values of social environment without starting up the process of active self – change in a conformist, passive way characterizes non – adaptation, more precisely, the feelings of

discomfort, being dissatisfied with himself/ herself and incompleteness. The person who necessarily obeys the values and norms of society and doesn't try to change them and affect them is mainly not adapted (Mammadli I.M. ,2013). It should be taken into consideration that though change in cultural values occur during forced migration, as internally displaced persons are in their homelands, the probability of a significant change in national values is low.

According to T.G.Stefanenko, social adaptation of migrants is characterized as a result of interaction between personality and social environment which leads to the optimum ratio of aims and values of personality and group (Heslov V.,1994).

As well, N.O.Neykhts identifies the social and psychological adaptation of migrants as a complex, multi-stage process of interaction directed to the investigation of behavioral mechanisms (adaptation methods) that are considered acceptable in accordance with the personal and group potential of migrants and changed living conditions of person or group. Migrant gets adapted to the parameters such as natural climatic conditions, social and cultural environment, foreign ethnic

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environment, foreign religious environment, culture of the population accepting, mutual relations with local population and manifestation of the crisis of individuality (Neuhts N.P.,2006).

E.A.Kligina identifies the psychological adaptation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) as the process of formation of new positive social identity (common with local population) being adequate for changing social conditions, complex multidimensional process of interaction between the representatives of different cultures, the presence of conditions for ensuring the needs of migrants for different activity types - first and foremost professional activity, interpersonal relations system, social and socio – political life of the country where they are placed, self-esteem and self-realization, the process of development of personal potential for active involvement etc. (Klygina E.A.,2004).

Every man is striving to achieve a positive individuality – his/ her positive image in the context of the theory of socially becoming individualized . According to researchers, positive individuality enables to accept the world as a place where stability and justice

dominate. If the positive individuality is lost, not only the discipline of inner life, but also imaginations about the outside world is violated .

N.S.Palagina who brings the problem into the center of attention considers that “if internally displaced persons can’t adapt to a new ethnic environment, in this case, they face with negative transformation. Their psychological situation changes, physical health is deteriorating, social arrangements are destroyed and attitude towards the world and people change. Such a transformation can lead to different results starting from separatism and ethnic nihilism to serious fanaticism and nationalism and these stem from the formation of distinct negative image of the ethnic group causing to such behavior” (Palagina N.S.,2007).So, forced migration – is one of the extreme impacts on the personality requiring the solution of new problems which are not faced previously by internally displaced persons, the elimination of stress conditions and behavior management. It is necessary for them to find strength in order to re – adapt and form new values,

believes and behavioral forms that are characteristics for that environment.

### **Research methods**

The survey (questionnaire) method, stress resistance and socio – psychological adaptation methods have been used in the context of socio – psychological approach in the study. Internally displaced persons settled in Baku and its surrounding districts - Masazir and Mushvig have been participated and the following methods are used in the study:

1. Methods of social and psychological adaptation by K. Rogers and R. Diamond.
2. Stress resistance method of Thomas Holms and Richard Raux.
3. The questionnaire method.

### **Discussion**

Statistical analysis was conducted with the help of Independent Samples T-Test SPSS15 in order to identify the sexual differences of stress resistance of internally displaced persons settled in Baku city, as well as, Masazir and Mushvig settlements.

**Table 1. Group statistics of sexual differences of stress resistance of internally displaced persons**

Age	Group	Quantity	Standard deviation	Standard error
25-55	1.00	103.5840	85.35621	4.25634
25-55	2.00	100.4235	80.756233	2.68235

**Table 2. Information obtained with the help of Independent Samples**

**T-Test criteria**

	Equality of dispersions		T-Test						
	F	Reliability	T	Standard deviation	Reliability	The difference of quantities	Standard error	95% difference interval	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Equal deviation	0.83	664	546	768	356	6.06256	4.46352	-8.63327	16.8766
Equal deviation			523	627	384	6.06256	7.68543	-8.68760	19.2243

According to the results of Tables 1 and 2, significant differences are weak on the gender signs of stress

resistance of internally displaced persons settled in Baku city, as well as, Masazir and Mushvig settlements. This shows

that responses to these or those stress conditions which male and female respondents of internally displaced

persons settled in Baku city, as well as, Masazir and Mushvig settlements face with in their daily lives are the same.

**Table 3. 4Indicators of identification of significant differences of stress resistance between groups of internally displaced persons**

	The sum of the squares	Standard deviation	Quantity in square	F	Reliability
Intergroup	241194.756	20	8967.734	1.506	144
Within the group	5703387.205	752	60120.637		
Total	5944581.961	772			

According to the results of Table 4, there is no any significant difference between the characteristics of stress resistance and socio – psychological adaptation of internally displaced persons settled in Baku and its surrounding districts depending on the regions in critical war conditions or places from where they came. However, it becomes clear from the analysis conducted with the help of One Way ANOVA SPSS 17 criterions (Table 3) that not significant, but the high-stress

indicators (183. 20) among internally displaced persons of Mushvig settlement prevail among average statistic indicators of stress resistance and socio – psychological adaptation. In other words, internally displaced persons coming from war zones and directly participating in wars give a more severe reaction to stress conditions of the city which shows itself in their psycho-emotional situations as a probability and the probability of their psychosomatic illnesses is high.

**Table 4. Indicators of significant differences of stress resistance characteristics of internally displaced persons according to age**

	Sum of squares	Quantity in square	F	Realiability
Intergroup	76381.029	26542.457	2.198	0.038*
Within the group	5301453.824	6922.776		

Total	5377834.853			
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Note: \* It shows significance in the level of P= 0.05.

As it can be seen from Table 6 that significant differences of stress resistance characteristics of internally

displaced persons according to age shows itself in the level of  $p = 0.05$ .

**Table 5.. 6Indicators of the impact of psychological situation in the family on stress resistance and social adaptation**

Psychological situation in the family	The number of participants of survey	Indicators of stress resistance and socio – psychological adaptation
Normal	57	103.3187
Conflicting	43	130.8791

Significant differences were found in average statistical analysis of dependence of social adaptation and stress resistance in normal and conflicting families of internally displaced persons on the parameter of psychological situation in the family.

Stress resistance in conflicting families showed itself at the low level which respectively brings the problems existing in socio – psychological adaptation to the center of attention. Additional surveys showed that the low level of stress resistance in conflicting families



stemmed from psychological climate in the family and additional stress burdens made it more severe.

There is no any significant difference in the levels of social adaptation and stress resistance depending on the number of children, as

well as, migrants who have children according to the calculations carried out in SPSS software and average statistical information of notes on stress resistance for the number of children in the conducted study.

**Table 6. General indicators of social adaptation and stress resistance of internally displaced persons with the level of education**

The level of education	The number of participants of survey (%)	Indicators of stress resistance and socio – psychological adaptation
Higher education	38.85	103.40
Vocational	46.15	103.41
Secondary education	12.57	106.08
Other	7.05	111.79

General indicators of social adaptation and stress resistance of internally displaced persons doesn't

depend on their level of education. The assumption put forward was not confirmed.

**Table 7. Indicators of social adaptation and stress resistance among internally displaced persons depending on the settled regions**

Settlements	The number of participants of survey (%)	Indicators of stress resistance and socio – psychological adaptation
Baku city	35.6	97.18

Masazir settlement	38.7	138.54
Mushvig settlement	25.7	127.80

As it can be seen from Table 10, stress indicators of internally displaced persons settled in Masazir settlement (138.54) and Mushvig settlement (127.80) significantly prevail in the average statistical range of indicators of stress resistance and social adaptation.

Lower stress factor indicators (97.18) have been identified for internally displaced persons settled in private houses and public institutions in Baku city. It can be directly explained with the proximity of workplaces to places of residence.

**Table 8. Indicators of stress resistance among groups of internally displaced persons on their settlements**

	The sum of the squares	Standard deviation	Quantity in square	F	Reliability
Intergroup	174206.898	8	234189.887	3.755	000*
Within the group	5174329.153	546	5880.540		
Total	5348536.051	549			

Note: \* It shows significance at the level of 0.05.

As it can be seen from Table 8, indicator of stress resistance among groups of internally displaced persons on the settled regions is significant at the level of  $p = 0.05$ . So, the determination of significance of the indicators of stress resistance among groups once again confirms that the level of stress resistance of internally displaced persons is generally low and this thoroughly

affect their socio – psychological adaptation.

### Conclusion

Our research showed that the degree of stress resistance of internally displaced persons settled in Baku city and its surroundings were different. Enough stress resistance to current state is observed in some places, and in others, enough stress resistance in local

conditions lacks. This factor depends on the characteristics of local cultural - social conditions in which internally displaced persons have grown up and got education. Of course, moving to a region different from social and psychological point of view requires additional adaptation sources and this, surely, manifests itself in the decrease of stress resistance limits. In addition, the research showed that the indicators of norm limits dynamically decreases in younger and adults representatives. Regarding this, it should be noted that the fact that internally displaced persons face with the necessity of re - adaptation is an important condition in terms of the significance of socio - psychological adaptation. They are obliged to break out the previous, accustomed forms of interactions with environment and form new ones.

In addition, internally displaced persons are obliged to form new values, beliefs, behavior inherent in their environment for themselves. In this case, they must find the strength for them to reject the previous ones and sometimes it is more difficult to do this. For this reason, an extensive period of time is spent requiring the re - establishment of

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external conditions of the personality and also adaptation of migrant qualitatively for the adaptation process of migrants. Taking into account the above - mentioned, adaptation difficulties of internally displaced persons, especially those living in suburban districts can be logically understood.

It becomes clear as a result of the conducted research that sexual characteristics and education doesn't affect seriously the process of social adaptation and stress resistance of internally displaced persons living in Baku city and its surrounding districts. However, though weak, there is dependence. Conflict of psychological climate in the family causes the increase in impact degree of these factors.

If we are to determine the main aims of young IDPs (internally displaced persons), then such a consideration can be put forward according to survey data that the main motifs are professional development, obtaining material well - being and getting higher education and of course, these increases the socio - economic attractiveness of Baku city. Therefore, stress resistance in surrounding district is sharply different

from city life and reveals some problems in the process of adaptation. Of course, factors such as children in the families of internally displaced persons, especially, the presence of the only child or children at the age of maturity in the families increases psychological factors that reduces their stress resistance and this is mainly related to psychological characteristics of progress of family relations and the dynamics of change in parents' roles, not being associated with the adaptation processes and of course, affect the general dynamics of stress resistance and weakens the social and psychological adaptation.

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