Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, volume 364

International Conference on Sustainable Development of Cross-Border Regions: Economic, Social and Security Challenges (ICSDCBR 2019)

Factors of social activity of the population of the Russian border regions

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Abstract. The paper presents results of our research focused on analyzing factors of social activity of the population in the border regions of Russia. The research was conducted in six regions using a questionnaire survey (n=2,400). At the first stage of processing our research results, the typology of respondents according to the level of social activity was built using a two-stage cluster analysis. And two subgroups of respondents with high social activity and low social activity are identified and included into typology. At the second stage, a regression model (binary logistic regression, direct step-by-step method) of sufficiently high quality was built. It allowed to identify the factors of social activity of the population and correctly predict the level of social activity based on the severity of each factor. The factors of social activity based on regression analysis include: (1) in which region a respondent lives, (2) self-assessment of social activity, (3) confidence in some social institutions, (4) attitudes towards non-profit organizations' activities and other socially active people.

Keywords: social activity, factors of social activity, population, social institutions, non-profit organization, socially active people

1. Introduction

The contemporary world sets the task for ordinary citizens to be actively involved in social relations, in interaction with people and social institutions in various spheres of social life. Civil and social activity, motivations to participate independently in social life, to meet and implement various social needs and interests contribute to the formation and development of volunteering, leadership, and many other forms of social activity. In this regard, research interest in studying conditions and factors of manifestation and formation of social activity increases [2, 7, 9].

Social activity is defined as a level of manifestation of abilities and capabilities of a particular person as a member of society, a stable active attitude towards society as a whole. Most researchers include such criteria as responsibility, autonomy, and initiative of an individual in achieving socially significant goals as the main components of social activity [6, 8].

Participation in various forms of social activity provides a person with an opportunity to satisfy his/her "social" needs, realize personal abilities, and ensures personal development.

2. Materials and Methods

The research purpose is to identify the factors of social activity of the population living in the border regions of Russia. The paper empirically relies on the data of a sociological study of the state of civil

society in six regions of the Russian Federation: Altai region, Trans-Baikal region, Kaliningrad region, Kemerovo region, Orenburg region, and the Republic of Karelia.

Multistage sampling using quota selection was used in this study. The quoted attributes: gender, age, settlement. The quota ratio was determined taking into account the data of the Federal State Statistics Service on the population aged 15-75 years in the Russian regions as of January 1, 2010, as well as the data on the ratio of urban to rural population in 2009. In total, 2,400 respondents (400 for each of the surveyed region) took part in the study. A questionnaire in the form of a standardized interview at the place of residence of the population served as a method for collecting information.

Processing of quantitative data was performed using the statistical package of IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0. A two-stage cluster analysis was used to build a typology of respondents according to the level of social activity. A regression analysis using the binary logistic regression method was conducted to comparatively assess the degree of influence of various factors on the population's social activity.

The typology of respondents according to the level of social activity was built on the basis of four indicators:

1. Experience in organizing collective actions to solve their problems.
2. Experience in organizing collective actions to solve other people's problems.
3. Experience of organizing collective action for the implementation of any of their plans, initiatives.
4. Experience of organizing collective action for the implementation of any foreign plan, initiative.

To build a regression model, the following indicators were used:

1. An awareness of the activities of non-profit organizations.
2. Self-assessment of the social activity of the respondent.
3. Region of residence of the respondent.
4. Subjective assessment by respondents of the attitude of the Russian population to socially active people.
5. Respondents' attitudes to different forms of public activity.
6. Level of particular confidence of respondents in relation to different social institutions.

The final regression model is based on 237 observations, which accounted for 11.4% of the study sample.

3. Results

The fundamental characteristics of the social activity of the population are initiative, voluntariness and focus on the highest social and spiritual needs of the individual in self-realization and social service. In this regard, the typology of respondents in terms of the level of social activity was built on the basis of their experience in organizing collective actions to solve their own or others' problems, as well as to realize some kind of their own or others' plans, initiatives. A good quality model (mean silhouette measure was 0.7) was obtained as a result of a two-stage cluster analysis.

The first cluster with a size of 1,042 observations (44.1% of the entire sample) included respondents who had to organize collective actions to solve their (64.9%) or other's (63.4%) problems, as well as to implement their own (64.8%) or foreign (45.1%) intention. Obviously, this cluster includes socially active members of the population.

The second cluster, with a size of 1,323 observations (55.9% of the entire sample), included respondents who did not organize any collective actions, either for themselves or for others. Consequently, this cluster unites people for whom social activity is uncharacteristic.

The resulting typology of respondents was used as the dependent variable in the regression model. The model was obtained on the basis of the direct step-by-step method of including variables, the best quality of the model was achieved at the 11th step (χ^2=191,071, p<0.001). The share of the total variance described by the constructed model was 67.6% (Nagelkerke R Square = 0,676). The constructed model allows to classify a total of 84.2% of respondents correctly, and the classification

accuracy is higher for the subgroup of socially inactive (87.3%) rather than socially active (80.2%). Thus, the resulting solution allows not only to identify the factors of social activity of the population, but also quite correctly predict the level of social activity based on the severity of each of the factors.

Data on the statistical significance of the independent variables included in the analysis (significance) and Wald statistics for each variable (Wald) are shown in Table 1. Also, non-standardized regression coefficients (B) are proposed in Table 1, on the basis of which we can construct a regression equation and predict belonging to socially active or inactive people of each particular respondent in the sample. And standardized coefficients of equation (Exp (B)) are also proposed.

Table 1. Variables in the regression equation.

Social activity factors	B	Wald	Sign.	Exp (B)
Awareness about NPO's activities		16.844	0.000	
I know about NPO's activities	1.467	16.358	0.000	4.338
I heard something about NPO's activities	-0.687	4.857	0.028	0.503
Self-assessment of social activity		38.281	0.000	
Of course, I can say that I am socially active	1.339	5.386	0.020	3.816
I can rather say that I am socially active	2.258	21.692	0.000	9.563
Rather I cannot say that I am socially active	-0.675	3.400	0.065	0.509
Region		32.529	0.000	
Trans-Baikal region	2.505	22.814	0.000	12.238
Kaliningrad region	-0.195	0.209	0.647	0.823
Kemerovo region	-1.282	10.510	0.001	0.277
Orenburg region	0.973	6.592	0.010	2.645
Socially active people are more likely to approve	0.448	4.005	0.045	1.565
I have a positive attitude towards public action	-0.636	4.851	0.028	0.530
I have a positive attitude to the creation of public associations	0.988	9.254	0.002	2.685
Trust in consumer rights societies		12.835	0.005	
I trust completely	1.836	6.773	0.009	6.272
I rather trust than do not trust	0.084	0.050	0.823	1.087
I rather do not trust than trust	0.039	0.008	0.927	1.039
Confidence in religious associations other than the ROC		11.718	0.008	
I trust completely	-1.598	4.920	0.027	0.202
I rather trust than do not	-0.368	0.835	0.361	0.692
I rather do not trust than trust	1.272	9.587	0.002	3.567
Trust in the State Duma of the Russian Federation		10.752	0.013	
I trust completely	0.440	0.359	0.549	1.553
I rather trust than not	-1.488	10.008	0.002	0.226
I rather do not trust than trust	-0.124	0.074	0.785	0.883
Trust in the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation		13.178	0.004	
I trust completely	-0.878	1.144	0.285	0.416
I rather trust than not	0.870	3.840	0.050	2.387
I rather do not trust than trust	1.401	8.078	0.004	4.060
Trust in courts		11.297	0.010	
I trust completely	-0.799	1.785	0.182	0.450
I rather trust than do not	-0.809	4.830	0.028	0.446
I rather do not trust than trust	0.174	0.230	0.632	1.190
Constant	-1.334	11.003	0.001	0.263

On the basis of standardized coefficients, we will assess the impact of each variable on the social activity of the population in the border regions of the Russian Federation. We consider only those coefficients with significance level is ≤0.05.

So, the most significant factor of social activity of the population is the region of residence. For example, living in the Trans-Baikal region increases times the probability of hitting the subgroup of socially active citizens in 12.2, in the Orenburg region – in 2.6 times, and the residents of the Kemerovo region, by contrast, are more likely to fall into the subgroup of the socially inactive (0.3).

Self-esteem depending on social activity is the second most important factor. Thus, assessing oneself as socially active is 9.6 times more likely to fall into the subgroup of socially active. If a respondent assessed him/herself to be unconditionally socially active, this would increase his/her chances in 3.8 times. Denying one's own social activity lowers the probability of hitting the subgroup of the socially active (0.5).

Among respondents who fully trust consumer protection societies, the probability of high social activity increases in 6.3 times, and those who rather do not trust activities of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation – in 4.1 times, those who trust – in 2.4 times; and those who rather do not trust religious associations\ activities, except the Russian Orthodox Church, – in 3.6 times. Low social activity is characteristic of those who rather trust the Russian courts (0.4), rather trust the State Duma of the Russian Federation (0.2), and completely trust religious associations' activities, except the ROC (0.2).

High awareness of activities conducted by non-profit organizations increases the likelihood of high social activity of a respondent by 4.3 times; an average level of awareness, on the contrary, indicates a low social activity (0.5). A positive attitude towards the creation of public associations increases the probability of a respondent entering a subgroup of socially active people in 2.7 times, while a positive attitude towards holding public actions, on the contrary, reduces this probability (0.5).

And finally, respondents who express an opinion that socially active people are more likely to approve, increase their chances of getting into the subgroup with high social activity in 1.6 times.

4. Discussion

As a result, it turns out that one of the key factors of social activity is the region where a particular respondent lives. Indeed, the regions of the Russian Federation in general (and the border regions in particular) differ from each other in a large number of parameters, including their civil society's development potential, which is assessed taking into account the population's social activity [5].

A subjective assessment of one's own social activity is an important indicator; comparing its severity with the indicators of the population's real social activity, we can identify the degree of discrepancy between ideal and real public activity. For example, a study that we conducted in the Altai region found that the proportion of people who rated themselves as socially active people was on average lower than the proportion of those who had to organize any collective actions. Therefore, the population of the Altai region is inclined to underestimate their own social activity [11].

Another equally important factor in social activity was the level of respondents' confidence in various social institutions. In this case, it is not a question of a "generalized" trust [4, 10], but it is rather a "particular" one [3]. Since the study clearly demonstrates that the socially active residents living the border regions of Russia belong to different social institutions with a certain degree of mistrust.

Certain activities of non-profit organizations indirectly reflect the level of public activity in the region [1]. Therefore, a high awareness of their work and a positive attitude towards their creation is one of the most important factors of social activity of the population of the border regions, as revealed in our study.

5. Conclusion

Thus, as a result of the study, the typology of respondents according to the level of social activity was obtained. The regression model was built on its basis. Using this model, we were able to describe the factors of social activity of the population living in the border regions of the Russian Federation, which include the following: a region of residence, self-assessment of its social activity, a level of

confidence in certain social institutions, attitudes to non-profit organizations and socially active people.

6. Acknowledgments

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