

Migrants' Social Moods in the Border Regions of Russia with Different Levels of Security of Personal Relations

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to assess the social mood of migrants in the border regions of the Russian Federation, their subjective feelings of being safe in the host community, as well as overall satisfaction with various aspects of life in Russia. The empirical basis of the presented research consists of the results of a study conducted on the basis of a semi-formalized interview (2018) among migrants in five border regions of the Russian Federation. According to the research framework, indicators of migrants' satisfaction with various aspects of life are examined, namely "life in Russia," "work," "earnings," "relationships with colleagues and superiors," "relationships with family and relatives," "support coming from a religious community," "support coming from a national association," "communication with fellow countrymen," and "health."

1. Introduction

Migration contributes to the formation of human capital in migrants' countries of origin [13]. It is likely that migrant children attending school will receive education and better life prospects. Ultimately, migration could change existing social norms, as it will shape intentions to continue education [1, 11]. Moreover, migration, in addition to the general direct impact on well-being, increases the level of knowledge in the field of health care and leads to a decrease in infant mortality and the birth of children with higher body mass (for example, in Mexico) [5]. Arriving on time and returning home, migrants bring with them more effective health practices, such as drinking purified water and observing sanitary standards [3].

On the other hand, migration also poses a threat to migrants, since a whole list of migrant work activities is associated with occupational health risks, such as tuberculosis, pneumococcal infection, and increased injuries (for example, for people working in mines) [6]. Increasing mobility is also contributing to the spread of socially related diseases (such as HIV) [2, 4, 12, 8]. For example, Kane and co-authors [7] found that 27% of Senegalese male migrants were HIV-positive, while among non-migrant men, the proportion of HIV-positive was 1%. Sexually transmitted diseases also spread among migrants, both among migrants themselves and among their regular partners in the country of origin [6].

At its best, migration can be a valuable experience due to the interest in increasing the well-being of the household. However, more often moving to another country and separating from the family cause high emotional costs [3]. Temporary cyclical migration often leads to the risk of family breakdown, fragmentation of social ties, and psychological stress [6]. Moreover, emotional influence is not limited to migrants, and it also applies to abandoned families [9]. This becomes especially sensitive in low-income families who cannot allow joint emigration, and the departure of only one person undermines the family structure and relationships. As described by D'Emilio and co-authors [3], a more prolonged separation of parents from children leads to such a situation when children associate parents as "managers" in the family less often. More than that, the role and authority of parents as the main "suppliers" of love and material care is diminished. Other family members begin to replace parents, or children assume parental functions. The feeling of ostracism, isolation, and loss haunts abandoned children and cannot be compensated by material gifts and money from abroad. Of course, to some extent, modern technological capabilities through e-mail and affordable telephone communications can allow transnational families to form and maintain social networks even from a distance [11].

Although migration usually becomes a person's voluntary and planned choice, the reality may very much not coincide with the original expectations. Arriving migrants need integration in the labor market, which intensifies competition for existing positions. Such sentiment only intensifies during periods of economic crisis; the concerns of local people and politicians are growing due to the potential negative impact of immigration on the aboriginal population's potential. More than that, the immigrants themselves are becoming scapegoats, who are all blamed for the growing unemployment even in the absence of obvious evidence of their guilt [10].

In the international community, addressing the challenges of migration has become very important in order to ensure social and political stability, economic and demographic development of both countries of origin and countries of destination of migrants. At the beginning of the century, the vast flows of migrants to Russia became an integral part of the socio-political and economic environment and social discourse. Discussions on migration address a variety of issues, including the following: What are the trends of labor migration to Russia? To what extent are they determined by the economic and demographic development of the country? and so on. One such issue is the problem that migrants face in Russian society as a whole, and in the Russian labor market, in particular. At the same time, we note that international migration is partly determined by the perception of migrants themselves and their perceptions. Such ideas are outside the prevailing clichés, lack of knowledge regarding the attitudes of migrants to migration, the nature and influence of myths about migration, its images on migration dynamics. The purpose of this article is to assess the social mood of migrants in the border regions of the Russian Federation, the subjective feeling of being safe in the host community, and overall satisfaction with various aspects of life in Russia.

2. Materials and Methods

The empirical basis for the preparation of materials was the results of a study conducted on the basis of a semi-formalized interview (2018) among migrants in five border regions of the Russian Federation, such as the Altai Territory (n = 137), Amur Region (n = 41), Astrakhan Region (n = 15), Republic of Tyva (n = 65), Khabarovsk Territory (n = 76). The main areas for the selection of migrants were places of their accumulation, namely: migration centers, centers for testing the level of knowledge of the Russian language and Russian history, places of employment for migrants. Almost a third of the study participants (29.9%) came to Russia for the first time, 80.8% have jobs. Moreover, experienced migrants are more often employed, namely 82.9% versus 76.3%, for the first time arriving.

According to the research framework, indicators of migrants' satisfaction with various aspects of life v, such as life in Russia, work, earnings, relationships with colleagues, superiors, relationships with family, relatives, support of a religious community, support of a national association, communication with fellow countrymen, and health. Each of the indicators was evaluated on a five-point scale. According to the results, indexes reflecting the level of satisfaction of migrants with their position in Russia are built. For these purposes, based on the methodology for constructing indices of social moods, which was proposed by Yu. Levada [14] for analysis and visualization of sociological data obtained during monitoring studies, we used a method for constructing indices of a private nature. Indices are constructed according to the following procedure. A relative value is calculated for each question, which is equal to the ratio of the difference between the shares of positive and negative answers to the sum of the shares of positive and negative answers, and 100 is added to avoid the appearance of negative index values. The range of values that the index can take varies from 0 to 200. According to respondents, higher index values demonstrate a higher level of satisfaction.

3. Results

Most often, migrants come to Russia "not for nothing," almost half of the respondents (48.8%) noted that they were waiting for work. Among other things, a quarter of migrants (24%) have relatives in the host region, and about the same part (24.9%) have acquaintances and friends. Compared with the established contact networks in the host territory, other conditions of movement are not so attractive for visitors to Russia. 9.3% came because it was easy to find work in this region of Russia; 6.6% for comfortable living conditions, 6% because of the favorable climate; it was easier to get up in this region on migration registration for 4.8%; 3.3% came because of the absence of interethnic conflicts; 2.7% were attracted by the favorable socio-economic situation in the region. However, how satisfied are the migrants with their choice?

For each evaluated indicator using the previously described technology, the calculation of private satisfaction indices was carried out, such as: “life in general” (IndLife), “labor” (IndLabor), “remuneration” (IndSalary), “relationships with colleagues and superiors” (IndColleagues), “relationships with the family” (IndFamily), “relationships with the religious community” (IndReligious), and “ethnic diaspora: (IndDiaspora). Higher index values reflect higher levels of satisfaction. On average, for a sample of five border regions of Russia, the values of all satisfaction parameters are expressed at approximately the same level, namely below the average (taking into account the maximum possible index value of 200 points). The following options bring maximum satisfaction: the level of remuneration (85.8 points), relationships with the religious community (84.9), equally with relationships with the ethnic diaspora (83.6), and with life in general (83.6), the need for relationships with the family (78.4) and contacts with colleagues, managers (80.3).

At the same time, life in different border regions of the host state is assessed differently by migrants. Satisfaction with life as a whole is most pronounced for migrants in the Altai Territory (88 points), and satisfaction is minimally expressed in the Astrakhan region (76.5). In the Altai Territory, the level of satisfaction with work and the professional position were found more satisfying for labor migrants (86.7), apparently more in line with the expectations of migrants than, for example, in the Amur Region (76.2) and the Republic of Tyva (76, 3). The assessment of satisfaction with the wage level was distributed in a similar way. In particular, Altai Territory (91.1 points) took first place in the ranking, and Amur Region (80.3) and Khabarovsk Territory (80.3) took the last positions. Living conditions in the Altai Territory seem more comfortable for labor migrants than living in other regions of the Russian border. Satisfaction in relationships with close friends is higher here. Satisfaction in relations with colleagues and superiors is 84.6, with family is 82.1, with co-religionists is 91.2 and with compatriots is 91. Life in other regions is less secure for the well-being of migrants. The level of satisfaction with interaction with colleagues and bosses is as low as possible in Tuva (77.4) and Amur Region (77.7); level of satisfaction with interaction with the family is as low as possible in the Khabarovsk Territory (75.3) and the Amur Region (75.4); the lowest satisfaction with the religious community in the Amur Region (75.8), and the lowest satisfaction with the ethnic diaspora is again in the same place (75.6) (Table 1).

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE VALUES OF MIGRANT SATISFACTION INDICES IN REGIONAL COMPARISONS

Region	IndLife	IndLabor	IndSalary	IndColleagues	IndFamily	IndReligious	IndDiaspora
Altai Territory	88.0	86.7	91.1	84.6	82.1	91.2	91.0
Amur Region	80.1	76.2	80.3	77.7	75.4	75.8	75.6
Astrakhan Region	76.5	81.3	83.1	78.7	76.1	76.4	76.2
Tyva Republic	79.1	76.3	78.3	77.4	76.3	81.3	77.1
Khabarovsk Territory	80.9	77.6	80.3	75.3	75.1	77.6	78.6
Sample average	83.6	81.5	85.8	80.3	78.4	84.9	83.6

Belonging to a particular demographic and social group determines the level of satisfaction with life. So, according to the data in Table 2, young people as a whole are more satisfied with life (83.3), work (81.9), and relationships arising in the process of professional activity (80.9). However, less than other age groups, young people are dissatisfied with wages (84.5, 85.9 in the middle age group and 87.7 in the older), family (78.2) and diaspora interactions (81.8). Women are less satisfied with their stay in the host community; in all respects, the satisfaction index for women is lower. It is interesting to note that the migrant's employment and employment does not bring him the desired satisfaction since the results show that unemployed migrants have a higher level of satisfaction with the existing interactions. However, there is one exception, namely: the need for contacts with family and close relatives is equally deprived for both working and unemployed migrants of border regions.

TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE VALUES OF INDICES IN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF MIGRANTS

	IndLife	IndLabor	IndSalary	IndColleagues	IndFamily	IndReligious	IndDiaspora
Age group							
under 29 years old	83.3	81.9	84.5	80.9	78.2	84.9	81.8
30-49 years old	84.0	81.5	85.9	79.8	78.1	84.7	84.2
50 years and older	80.8	80.0	87.7	79.9	79.4	84.3	86.2
Gender affiliation							
male	83.7	81.8	86.0	80.5	78.7	85.0	83.4
female	82.2	78.6	83.8	78.6	75.4	84.0	82.5
Employment status							
working	83.0	80.6	85.3	79.9	78.2	84.3	82.9
not working	85.5	86.4	87.6	82.6	78.9	86.3	86.0

Migrants instead feel safe in Russia. Almost half of the respondents said that they feel entirely safe in the host country (49.5%), almost a third (32%) said they were more likely to be safe, and only 12.2% said they felt not safe, and 2.2% said they did not feel it at all while in Russia. At the same time, we recorded significant ($p, \chi^2 \leq 0,005$) regional differences in the experience of a sense of security. Migrants in the Astrakhan region feel the highest security in the field of public relations. There are no migrants in this border region who give negative assessments of personal security. Furthermore, in the Altai Territory, migrants feel very safe and comfortable, where a total of 93.8% of respondents feel safe. Other surveyed regions of the Russian borderland cannot "boast" of such a healthy host community. In the Amur Region, a total of 16.2% of migrants live with the feeling of a threat of being in Russia; in the Republic of Tuva, their number is 27.7%, and in the Khabarovsk Territory is 24.6%. At the same time, the values of private satisfaction indices do not significantly vary in groups differentiated with respect to experiencing feelings of security/insecurity (Table 3). For example, the index of satisfaction with interactions with colleagues and management is lower in groups that feel safe (79.7), as well as with the index of satisfaction with family relationships (78.1).

According to the results of applying the decision tree method, only the variables that reflect the level of relationships with members of the religious community and family relations were included in the final model. In this method, a variable reflecting the security/insecurity of migrants was used as a dependent variable, and private satisfaction indices were predictors. So, the higher (above 75 points) the value of the index of satisfaction with a religious community, the higher the feeling of security ($p = 0.015$), a sense of security of those who have comfortable communication with fellow believers enhances satisfaction (75 points and above) with family relationships ($p = 0.001$).

TABLE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE INDEX VALUES IN MIGRANT GROUPS IN SECURITY OR NOT SECURITY

	IndLife	IndLabor	IndSalary	IndColleagues	IndFamily	IndReligious	IndDiaspora
Safely	83.2	81.5	86.0	79.7	78.1	85.2	84.1
Unsafely	84.8	80.8	84.1	83.4	79.3	84.0	82.3

4. Discussion

In attempts to interpret the obtained data, we note that the obtained data indicate a low degree of satisfaction of migrants with conditions and their stay in Russia as a whole. Moreover, the level of satisfaction is not determined by the general feeling of personal security/insecurity of foreign citizens. Given that in such circumstances, migrants continue to work so in the host regions, they form a cyclical pattern of their migration, that is, they return to Russia again and further to continue working, agreeing to the deprivation of the need for family ties and comfortable working conditions. Economic reasons will be decisive. The goal-setting of migration movements likely predetermines future migrations to a greater extent than the living and working conditions in the host region.

5. Conclusion

When deciding on migration, the presence of social networks ready to accept a migrant is crucial when choosing a region of entry, which reduces the risk of being in an unsafe environment. Satisfaction with various aspects of life in the host region is estimated by migrants to be below average, and contacts with family and professional environments do not bring the desired satisfaction. At the same time, despite the apparent regional specifics and significant variations in the security parameters of the host communities, migrants continue to work. It brings them low satisfaction both in terms of material support of labor and in formal and informal social ties, as well as a general sense of life.

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