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Psychological Features of Men in a Situation of Temporary Labor Migration: the Specifics of the Southern Federal District

The article brings forward the definition of labor migration as a socio-psychological category, the data of the empirical research revealing features of the psychological adaptation of male labor migrants working for more than a year in the Southern Federal District and having various ethnoconfessional belonging.

Key words: migrants, refugees, immigrants, adaptation, assimilation, integration, value and sense attitudes.

When ethnic migrations have appeared in human history, they have created a new situation which in the psychological plan requires from the person (and mankind in whole) "a hard work of understanding and acceptance of both another world view imprinted in other ethnic cultures and understanding of ethnic bases of own existence" [7, p. 5]. Mass character and intensity of modern ethnic migrations has generated the need for knowledge of psychological laws which the migratory behavior obeys. A special area of problems in the context of ethnic migration is connected with appearance and expansion of labor migration as migrants of this kind have their distinctive features and specific characteristics.

The successful or unsuccessful adaptation of migrants will be defined by internal, motivational structure of personality, depend on the hierarchy of the person's motives which induce him/her to migration and subsequently, obviously, will define a choice and realization of a corresponding strategy of behavior. It is possible to distinguish the following main indicators of the success of migrants' sociocultural adaptation:

- establishing a positive relationship with the new environment,
- solution of everyday problems,
- participation in social and cultural life of the accepting society,
- satisfied mental state and physical health,
- adequacy in communication and in cross-cultural relations,
- integrity and integratedness of personality.

In the context of the problem of migration personal senses are determinants of adaptational tolerance and adaptational opportunities that make it possible to analyze the problem of migrants' adaptation in the context of the theory of value and sense. The theory of the value of expectations, which claims that the adequacy of migrants' expectations from life in a new country directly influences their adaptation, becomes widespread in modern psychology. In this context we understand by personal senses "the integrated sense formation reflecting the person's real subjective relation to the purposes, motives, ways and modes



of activity; it is shown in unconscious or conscious (verbalized) emotional direct experience" [6, p. 60].

The person's adaptational opportunities are formed by the combination of the stimulating component towards life activity in new conditions in the form of the person's personal sense and adaptation abilities. We understand by adaptational opportunities "conditions necessary for successful realization of the person's adaptational potential based on the expressiveness degree of adaptation abilities (adaptability) in its structure and consisting in actualization of the personal sense of this activity positively directed on the purposes and problems of activity in the given changed living conditions" [ib., p. 60]. Thus, the success of the person's adaptation from the point of view of his/her readaptation to new cultural conditions of life activity, being characterized by psychogenic influence, and also from the point of view of his/her acceptance of the purposes and problems of life in these conditions is possible only by consideration of two these aspects of a single adaptation process in their close interrelation.

The analysis of psychological problems and mental disorders of forced migrants shows that they are complex, touching upon all the main spheres of personality: emotional, cognitive, behavioural, motivational, need, communicative.

Disorders in the emotional sphere of forced migrants are obvious and various – from indifference, depression, loss of interest in life, block turning into apathy and depression, to irritability, aggression, uncontrollable outbursts of anger; anxiety and excitability increases; there are mood swings, phobic reactions [3]. The overwhelming number of migrants have serious sleep disorders. Foreign clinical data shows that often there appears depression which leads this category of people to the zone of the increased suicide risk.

Changes of the hierarchy of needs and value orientations lead to decrease in the level of claims and sharp decrease of self-appraisal in the motivational sphere; the impossibility of satisfaction of both the basic and higher needs is taken hard. The frustration of needs leads to actualization of various defense mechanisms; the increase in aggression may be one of these defense mechanisms. Besides personal predisposition the aggression level is defined by social conditions and circumstances. Researches showed that "the general level of aggression of forced migrants is higher than among refugees" [3, p. 3]. The redundant aggressive energy determines forced migrants' adaptation according to an active type. That is they are not passive expats, they do not seem to be unfortunate people. Their aggressive energy is creative and active, first of all. Such people are ready to realize their plans, are ready to work and live all over again [2].

The cognitive sphere disorders accompany affective and motivational problems of forced migrants; there are cases of disorder of all main cognitive processes – disorders of memory (amnesia, confabulation, difficulties of memorization), absent-mindedness, distractibility, disorders of perception, thinking disorders (slippage, excessive circumstantiality).



There are serious problems in the field of interpersonal communication both in marital relations and relations with children and in the sphere of interaction with representatives of own and another culture [5].

The results of empirical researches show that migrants' mental health worsening is related not only to the intensity of certain negative events, but also to their quantity. The forced departure and life in a foreign culture almost always include events of various degrees of extremeness. Thus, their quantity should be sufficient to cause a physiological and psychological stress [4].

The strategies of migrants' adaptation are described in different ways in psychological literature. The most widespread and adequate model of the adaptation of groups to another culture is the theory of acculturation of J. Berry.

According to this theory, acculturation is a complex and not harmonious process of cross-cultural interaction. The interaction of Berry's two factors (maintenance of culture and participation in cross-cultural contacts) defines four main strategies of acculturation (or adaptation):

- Assimilation. The migrant starts to adapt to positive stereotypes of the given culture, thus he/she may not share these values and orientations in behavior;
- Separation. The migrant does not aspire to expansive behavior (expansion of living space in the context of a new culture), tries to round up support of a certain ethnoconfessional group;
- Marginalization. The migrant starts behaving according to values of a certain marginal group (often opposing self to society and law);
- Integration. The migrant feels the personal transformation making it possible to perceive values of the given culture as own.

Integration is the most successful strategy of adaptation in a new culture since it assumes acquisition of skills of the given culture till achieving a full social adequacy in it. We should emphasize that acquisition of knowledge of a new culture doesn't assume a gap with own culture in favor of values of other people, but the preservation of own cultural identity. In the socio-psychological plan it is the most positive type of cross-cultural interaction since representatives of different cultures seek to break through cross-cultural barriers, to understand and accept another world view, and to recognize the person's right to a cultural originality and equal opportunities of existence. Immigrants' or labor migrants' positive group definiteness in the new sociocultural environment will proceed along the path of identification with own (Russian) ethnos, preservation of the positive relation to representatives of own group (migrants from the near abroad), and formation of the positive relation to representatives of the accepting group (Russian natives). The movement towards the new positive (common with natives) identity adequate to the changed sociocultural, economic and political living conditions in the Russian society is impossible without contacts with local population of accepting territories. Therefore the aspiration to the broadest relation-



ships with the new social environment is a necessary condition or a factor of the success of adaptation.

Psychological acculturation is another psychological concept which demands understanding. The “psychological acculturation” term was suggested by T. Graves for the purpose of designation of changes in individual experience in result of cultural contacts. Now they distinguish two levels of acculturation: acculturation proper which is understood as a process of change in the culture of group, and psychological acculturation which is understood as a process of change in the psychology of the individual. The process of change in the psychology of the individual in connection with resettlement in a new sociocultural and ethnic environment demands carrying out special psychological researches devoted to search of regularities and mechanisms of sociocultural adaptation. As we know, this is a very painfully process, since it is related not only to profound personal changes, but also to ethnic identity.

In the literature concerning adaptation of immigrants and labor migrants they usually distinguish specific characteristics or features of interacting cultures. They usually distinguish the following characteristics of interacting cultures influencing adaptation.

1. The degree of similarity or distinction between cultures. For the assessment of the degree of similarity of cultures they use various indexes of a cultural distance in which they usually include language, religion, family structure, climate, food and clothes. The results of numerous researches show that the intensity of “cultural shock” positively correlates with the cultural distance.

2. The features of the immigrant’s native culture. Thus, there is data (for example, the statistics of suicides of foreigners in France) that the Japanese meet great difficulties during adaptation. It can be explained by a ritualized character of Japanese culture, deep anxiety of Japanese “visitors” that they behave incorrectly since they do not know a “behavior code” of the accepting country.

3. The features of the accepting country, first of all, the way “hosts” influence visitors. For pluralistic societies greater tolerance towards cultural diversity is characteristic (in comparison with monistic societies) [7].

For the purpose of revealing features of adaptation characteristics among labor migrants of various ethnoconfessional belonging, who work in the Southern Federal District, we have carried out the diagnostic research. The following groups of labor migrants were respondents:

- the migrants identifying themselves as the Slavs, orthodox, from the near abroad (Ukraine, Belarus) – 276 persons;
- the migrants identifying themselves as Mussulmans, from the near abroad (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan) – 188 persons;
- the migrants identifying themselves as representatives of “oriental” culture: Buddhists, Shintoists, Catholics (Vietnam, China, Laos) – 127 persons.



All the participants of the research (591 persons) were men at the age from 19 to 54 years who work in the Southern Federal District for at least a year and have official registration. The research included the following stages:

- 1 stage – selection of participants of the empirical research;
- 2 stage – carrying out the survey for the purpose of revealing the features of consciousness of the specifics of adaptation to living conditions in the new cultural environment;
- 3 stage – carrying out the diagnostics for the purpose of revealing the levels of personal anxiety, frustration, social isolation and respondents' locus of control;
- 4 stage – the comparative analysis of the received diagnostic results.

The analysis of the empirical data obtained in the survey and diagnostics made it possible to reveal the following:

- though according to cultural traditions and social values the first group of examinees (the Slavs) approximate to the accepting population of the Southern Federal District mostly (more than 70% of respondents recognize the similarity between cultural traditions), they feel discomfort in the greatest degree. They often consider their life situation as critical (27% of the respondents in this group) and intend to come back home at the slightest opportunity (“I would never arrive here for work, only I’m in a completely hopeless situation”). Many cultural traditions of the accepting population are perceived by them hostilely; the effect of idealization of own national and territorial group is observed (our people are kinder; our women are more beautiful etc.). In this group the respondents are discontented with that they are forced to be engaged in low-skilled jobs, to draw a small salary (“they treat us as second-class people”). The main adaptation strategy is assimilation;
- the second group (Mussulmans from the near abroad) estimate a current situation as admissible, but only for a certain period (“I’ll go back, if everything is alright in my country”; “I’ll go back, if I help the parents to build the house”). They also state a certain hostility and estrangement of the accepting population, however their estimates are more restrained than the estimates of the Slavs (“people are different; their life, purposes are different). Confessional differences are most painfully perceived (“They treat Mussulmans badly in Russia; there are too little mosques; they drink a lot). However answering the questions concerning alternative variants of labor migration (“If you had a choice, in what country would you like to work?”), these respondents almost always choose the non-Muslim countries. The main adaptation strategy is separatism with marginalization elements;
- the third group (representatives of “oriental” culture) treat the situation of labor migration positively or neutrally in whole. Many of them (more than 60% of respondents of this group) regard this period of life as a stage of development and comprehension of new behavioural norms and rules of existence



in society. More than 70% of representatives positively estimate a number of attributes of culture and traditions of the accepting population (traditions of education, cultural specifics: cinema, television). The main strategy of adaptation is separatism. They are very dependent on the group with which they share the situation of labor migration, experience the greatest difficulties in language studying.

The analysis of the questionnaire ensures us to reveal that answering the question whether they feel themselves adapted for a new culture in which they live and work now 68% of respondents (regardless their ethnoconfessional belonging) consider themselves not adapted or badly adapted for new living conditions and work, 15% consider themselves well adapted, 17% found it difficult to answer definitely.

The psychometric research made it possible to reveal that the representatives of the second group demonstrate the situation of social isolation most strongly. According to this index they appraise themselves as isolated from the host population (64 %). The results of psychodiagnostics the first group (the Slavs) show that the level of social isolation is characteristic for less than 17% of respondents. The third group has shown average results – 39% of respondents consider themselves isolated from the accepting population. Frustration processes and personal anxiety are increased among the representatives of the first group who thus feel themselves not adapted for new living conditions (at the level of $p \leq 0,01$; significant direct relation). Locus of control as the indicator of the dependence of life success on the person's efforts is high among the representatives of the 1st and 2nd groups. These respondents (84% of the total sample of two groups) consider that their destiny depends on them in many respects. Despite their different sense of life attitudes they show very similar results on this parameter. The respondents of the third group are fatalists in general. 72% of respondents of this group consider that their destiny does not depend on their own efforts; it is defined by more powerful forces.

On the whole the carried out research made it possible to make a number of conclusions concerning the features of a psychological condition of male labor migrants working in the Southern Federal District:

- the mechanism of psychological adaptation to labor activity in new conditions is in a certain substantial sequence corresponding to stages of the person's adaptation to new conditions of activity;
- according to its meaning for the person's successful readaptation to new conditions of activity the content of each stage of the adaptation process in a situation of labor migration is determined by individual personal features, ethnoconfessional belonging and external conditions of these stages;
- on the whole, the majority of labor migrants do not feel adapted for new living conditions and work that becomes an essential factor which negatively influences their psychological state during this period of life;



— for overcoming adaptation barriers of labor migrants it is necessary to develop and popularize technologies of social interaction of representatives of various cultures, based on the principle of dialogicality. “Dialogicality requires from society and personality the existence of the attitude towards the contact, formation of tolerance as one of the leading personal qualities, excluding the person’s destructive conflictness in a situation connected with other social norms: formation of readiness to trust, to make a compromise” [1, p. 47].

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