Pridnestrovian Migrant Workers in the Country of the Recipient: Quality of Life and Employment Features

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Abstract

The article pays the attention to the role of Pridnestrovian migrants at the Russian labor market regarding the life's quality, social interaction and employment. Authors think that migration policy of native and welcoming sides should be based on pragmatic approach when migrants' labor should promote the development of human capital. Positive prerequisites of such process are social, demographic, professional, linguistic and cultural characteristics of Pridnestrovian migrants. The article contains the results of the survey of migrants (n=270), living in all regions of Pridnestrovie, conducted by the employees of the Pridnestrovie State University named after T.G. Shevchenko. The sample is formed based on heterogeneity of respondents and includes such criteria as gender, age, level of education, ethnicity and citizenship. The main emphasis in the research has been done on the study of the relationship of the following indicators: goals, quality of life, social relationships, and employment.

Keywords: Migrants; labor migration; social network; discrimination; migration phobia; migration policy; Pridnestrovie.

Introduction

Labor migration became one of the characteristics of the modern labor market. The number of international migrants, persons outside their country of birth a year or more, doubled between 1980 and 2010, from 103 million to 214 million (Martin, 2013). Migration flows are formed in almost all the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Russia is the world's second largest host country for labor migrant workers, after the U.S. The official number of registered migrants from Uzbekistan was 2.32 to 2.22 million, and the number of registered Tajik migrants was about 1 million (Zhambekov, 2015).

Modern migration is spontaneous and can hardly be subject to internal or transnational regulations. The intensity of it gave birth to multiple problems. In the 1990's J. Guismans started to consider them in the context of security (Huysmans, 1996).

The authors of the article think that the analysis of the migrants' behavior is one of the key questions of the development and implementation of the migration policy, because the effective regulation of the corresponding processes is possible only if peculiarities of a welcoming state and a donor state are taken into account.

Some researchers consider labor migration as an investment in human capital together with education and medical care. According to the theory, the decision about migration is connected with the wish to use somebody's skills to get the best effect from their labor. By the way, they point out the drawbacks of the move which can be temporary or long term. Today this model underlies the majority of works about the labor migration (Bekker, 1993; Brooks, N.R. Hairston & Nafukho, 2004).

Applied research of sociologists is devoted to the problems of employment of migrant workers from Pridnestrovie. According to various estimates, they amount to about one-third of the population (Ostavnaya, 2016).

American politologist K. Rudolph analyses migration through the lance of security and draws attention to three points: military protection; economic productivity; internal stability or "societal security" (Rudolf, 2006).

On the basis of the results of the focus group conducted by sociologists deals with the problems of structuring and functioning of the public sector in the system of social protection

of migrant population of the region, the prospects for integration of commercial structures in the system of social protection of the population (O.A. Volkova & Grebenikova, 2016).

Data and Methodology

The results of the initiative sociological research are presented in this article. It was carried out by the method of questionnaire by the researchers of scientific research laboratory "Sociology" of the Pridnestrovian State University named by T.G. Shevchenko in 2016. Sampling covered 270 migrants from Pridnestrovie. The poll was carried out in all regions of Transdniestria. While the respondents' content was inhomogeneous they took into account the level of education and age as well as citizenship and ethnicity of migrants. Empirical model of the research embraced such indicative blocks as the goals, quality of life, social relationships and employment of migrants.

Empirical Results

The subject of the research of this article is the specificity of migration behavior of Pridnestrovie and the potential of its regulation. Labor migration is one of the most important processes that characterize this region: from 20.0 % to 33.0 % of the population are involved in the migration process. Migration behavior is indicative for all ethnic, civil, age, professional, educational and gender social groups.

Ethnic composition of Pridnestrovie population is presented by three main ethnic groups: 31.9 % Moldavians, 30.4 % Russians, and 28.8 % Ukrainians. Everywhere in the Republic dual citizenship is widely spread. Besides the Pridnestrovian passport (which is legal only in the territory of the Republic) people also have the citizenship of Moldova Republic, Russian Federation or Ukraine. More than 90 % of migrants choose Russia as a migration country. There are political, economic, social and cultural bases for that: common religion, mentality, knowledge of Russian language, history and culture as well as political reality of Russia which help Pridnestrovian migrants to avoid problems, which J. Berry called "acculturing stress", and to adapt successfully in the welcoming country (Berry, 1990).

Speaking about the reasons of migration 60.8 % migrants speak about hard material situation, 52.0 % – problems of employment, 26.4 % – wages delays, 21.6 % – reduction of wages. Among other reasons, 52.9 % are named their worry about absence of life

perspectives, 18.6 % long-lasting political crisis, 8,8% – apathy to everything in the country, 5.9 % – reduction of social payments.

Employment abroad is appealing to 90.2 % because of substantial and regular wages. For 41.2 % that is good working conditions, for 20.6 % is the professional growth, for 19.6 % is the work corresponding to their education, for 19.6 % is the convenient work schedule, for 18.6 % is career development, for 17.6 % is comfortable social and psychological climate at work, for 7.6 % is high social status, for 6.9 % is possibility to be initiative. So, the majority of Pridnestrovian migrants improved their material situation due to migration. From the other hand, migration has a negative impact on the future development of children and other family members. For example, "in Moldova, 100,000 children have been left behind by migrant parents; the country has become reliant on remittances, which equal nearly US$2 billion. Ukrainian migrants, who left 200,000 children behind, sent home an estimated 9 billion US $ in remittances in 2014" (Yanovich, 2015).

Labor migration has seriously changed material situation in many Pridnestrovian families. One-third of families lived below poverty line before the labor migration. The index of medium material situation grew after the migration from 12.4 % to 61.8 %. The proportion of migrants' families whose material welfare up to the level "can afford everything" grew from 4.7 % to 22.9 % also increased.

But the improvement of material welfare of families is not always connected with the improvement of migrants' quality of life. To consider the problem we chose variables like life conditions, quality of food and clothing – these are the aspects of quality of life of migrants which should be taken into account. Research among the migrants from Pridnestrovie showed that 38.2 % of respondents rent the dwelling, 14.7 % live with relatives or friends, 16.7 % live in hostel, 24.5 % live at the place of employment (at the object, in the market, etc.), 5.9 % have their own dwelling in the welcoming country. It is clear that the most uncomfortable conditions have people who live at the place of employment.

Assessing of everyday's migrant life, 21.6 % of them are satisfied completely with it, 67.6 % are satisfied in general, 6.9 % are not satisfied, 3.9 % could answer the question. Only 11.8 % of respondents think that everyday life conditions are better than at home, 36.3 % consider them equal, and 52% see them worse than at home. The situation with the feeding of

migrants is more favorable – 33.3 % of them eat what they want, 37.3 % eat well, but can't afford delicacies, 29.4 % try to buy cheaper products.

As for the clothing, only 3.9 % of being abroad wear modern and expensive clothes, 62.7 % prefer medium price clothes, 30.4 % decent and cheap clothes, 2.9 % dress poorly, wear clothes for a long time.

Results of the research show that migrants' life is not always trouble free. High wages are often connected with unsatisfactory living conditions, food and low-quality clothing. This situation can be explained by the fact that their income is used not to support themselves but their families at home or for use abroad after their labor term is finished.

Migrants' behavior is traditionally considered from the point of view of their psychological state and their integration into welcoming community: 42.2 % said that they feel good, 52 % – satisfactory, 5.9 % – bad. This problem is deteriorating by the fact that only 28.4 % of migrants have an opportunity to use free medical care.

An important resource for migrants' adaptation is a social networking which provides migrants with useful information, cultural heritage, and stimulates national discourse. They also can secure defense from discrimination and development of psychological security in the group, can take access to cultural and religious capital; they can form space segregation and refusal from economic connection with other representatives in favor of family and ethnic business; they can construct and use specific language, create favorable conditions for migration of relatives and other citizens. The migrant's network is a self-regulatory institution which secures organizational and information structure of migration.

To study relationships in migration sphere we chose such indicators as social environment of migrants, attitude of the local population to them, involvement in conflicts. 47.5 % of Pridnestrovian migrants work in collaboration with local workers, 21.8 % work with representatives from other countries, 7.9 % work only with their nationals, 22.8 % work in groups consisting only of local workers.

In general, Pridnestrovian migrants have favorable relationships with the local population and other migrants. Only 12.7 % mention about taking part in conflicts with other migrants; 6.9 % with local population, 80.4 % don't have interpersonal conflicts in the

welcoming country; 31.4 % assess the attitude of the local population as "good"; 52.0 % think that it is neutral; 3.9 % think it is bad; 12.7 % can't answer the question.

Analysis of Russian scientists' research connected with the problem of migration phobia shows the difference in perception of different categories of migrants (Tab.1). Pridnestrovian migrants can be referred to three clusters: according to the region of living; language and culture; and political identification and behavior.

Table 1 − Local population's attitude to different categories of migrants (%)

Clusters	Groups of migrants	Attitude to migrants			
		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Indefinite
1	Residents from disadvantaged regions of Russia	14,6	31,4	13,4	40,6
2	Representatives of Caucasian peoples of Russia	6,5	20,8	40,3	32,4
3	Russian people, lived in former republics of the USSR	25,7	32,8	6,9	34,6
4	Representatives of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia	4,5	19,8	39,3	36,4
5	The representatives of Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova	12,3	33,6	12,3	41,8
6	The representatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan etc.	9,1	25,3	29,1	36,5
7	The representatives of Vietnam, China, etc.	3,6	15,4	36,8	44,2

Analogous results are in the research work of V.I. Mukomel who wrote that "respondents are tolerant to migrants from Moldova and Ukraine. Towards other ethnic groups they mostly feel irritation, resentment, distrust and fear" (Mukomel, 2011). Analysts from "Public Option Fund" came to the same conclusions. Low level of migration phobia can be explained by entering of the migrants into various social networks of the local population. Personal contact eliminates or softens stereotypes of perception of a migrant as a person.

To study the problem of employment we used such indicators as legality, the place of employment, the form of employment, job position, etc. Only 61.4 % of Pridnestrovian migrants are employed legally, 38.6 % are employed illegally (without any official contract). Every fourth respondent said that illegal status does not deteriorate his position.

Traditional fields of employment for Pridnestrovian migrants are: construction (38.2%), trade (22.5%), transportation (12.7%), communication (8.8 %), catering (7.8%),

industry (5.9%), and medicine (2.9%). So, 51% of them are workers; 38.2 % are specialists; 10.8 % are office workers; 49.4 % are permanently employed; 37.6% temporary employed; 7.1% are entrepreneurs hiring their stuff; 3.5 % are individual entrepreneurs; 2.4% have a part-time job.

Research results show that considerable part of Pridnestrovian migrants positively assess regularly paid wage and good working conditions. They note that there is no violation of working schedule, days off and leaves, there is any physical and psychological violence, difference in wages of local and foreign workers and threat of discharge because of the migrants' status.

There are positive and negative aspects in the employment of Pridnestrovian migrants. On the one hand, Russian labor market is favorable to them because it allows using their qualifications without spending money and time for additional training. On the other hand, some forms of discrimination in labor sphere are characteristic not only for migrants but also for local employees. That means the Russian labor market needs complex regulation.

Questionnaire shows that Pridnestrovian migrants are very well informed about where they have to address in case of violation of basic labor rights of foreign workers (55.9%). But the portion of those who think that they will manage to protect their legal interests if they apply to the law enforcement agencies is not high (38.2%).

The results of the initiative sociological research in this article show that the behavior of Pridnestrovian migrants is various. Russian researches show more favorable position of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova in comparison to the representatives from other countries. This concerns their living conditions, employment and adaptation strategy in the welcoming country.

Correlation analysis of the results shows that position of the labor migrants from Transdniestria depends highly on such factors as sex, age, education, ethnic and citizenship. The most vulnerable groups are people aged 16-24 and 45 and older, males without higher education, Moldavians and Ukrainians without Russian passport. Men more often than women speak about unsatisfactory living conditions, bad food and clothing quality. They are less integrated into the local community and more often get into conflicts. Young migrants aged 16–24 are characterized more often as illegal employees and mostly as workers. Migrants older than 45 years usually live in less comfortable conditions, they eat and dress worse than younger people and often get into some forms of discrimination.

In M. Ruhs' studies the characteristics of 104 distinct labor migration programs in 46 countries were analyzed, 90 % of which admit migrants on a temporary basis. The author used

novel quantitative indexes to measure, the degree of "openness" of each labor migration program and, as well as the extent to which each program grants rights to migrant workers (Ruhs, 2013).

The migration policy must become a part of the internal and external policy of Pridnestrovie. The development of the policy is based on the understanding of objective character of migration behavior of Pridnestrovian population and should be considered as a development factor of social, political and economic integration. Work abroad should not only be the means of improving financial situation of migrants, but it should improve their quality of life.

The research shows that migrants need the following services: medical care (53.6%), employment (42.8%), renting of dwelling (38%), legal help in defending labor rights (34.3%), consultations in labor and migration legislation (30.7%), professional education courses (27.7%), convenient banking services to send money home (27.1 %). Favorable conditions of migration certainly can motivate a person to final emigration. Every fifth migrant plans to stay abroad forever; any way 54.7 % are not going to move their family abroad.

The research carried out by Russian public opinion research center showed that the migration's regulation in Russia is very controversial. 74% of Russian population think that big amount of migrants was dangerous for the country, 53% were eager to thought the migration legislation, and 10 % suggested to stop migration at all (Public opinion polls, 2013).

The nature of public opinion towards migrants based on the following propositions: immigrants fill labor shortages in the low-skilled and low-paid jobs (81.0%); immigration is generally good for the development of the economy (53.0%); immigrants make Russia more open to new ideas and cultures (49.0%); using immigration can solve the demographic situation in Russia (41.0%) (Immigration in Russia, 2013).

Traditionally migration policy of the state has two levels: national and international. Realization of the latter is complicated because Transdniestria is not recognized by the International community. But it is compensated by the fact that the main migration partner is Russia which has been a metropolis for Transdniestria for a long time already.

Russian policy towards labor migrants is based on pragmatic approach. Employers need highly qualified workers as well as those who can work in a low qualified industrial sector. The task of migration policy is to use optimally the migrants labor taking into account the interest of the Russian labor market. For that purpose, there are taken political, legal,

economic, organizational measures of regulation of foreign workers' position at the Russian territory.

Conclusion

The opinion of Russian population about migrants is contradictory and depends on the region of their origin, ethnicity and culture: the vast majority of Russians of Russians agree that we should be more selective – to support young educated migrants and restrict the migration low qualified and low educated people.

Cooperation between Pridnestrovie and Russia on migration questions can be carried out on the basis of the transnational project "Eurasian integration". One of its modules includes the basis to form common political regime, principles, norms and procedures for the migration processes regulation, as well as coordination of its goals between the participant countries. To summarize, it should be noted that the migration policy of any country should be based on pragmatic approach when people's labor can be optimally expressed and promote the development of human capital for both partners.

Outcome

To summarize the results of the survey, we can give the following outcome:

1. The most traditional industries of employment for Pridnestrovian migrants are construction, trade, transport, communication, food, medicine.

2. Migrants with higher education diploma have significantly high level and quality of life than people without special education who are more likely to belong to illegal migrants and are employed as workers.

3. In general, the relationship of Pridnestrovian migrants with the local population and other migrants can be characterized as favorable, almost conflict-free behavior.

4. The important resource of migrants' adaptation is the social networking as conductors of useful information, cultural values, as well as national discourses.

5. The study shows that every fourth migrant intends to stay permanently abroad.

6. The opinions of Russian citizens regarding migrant are very selective and depends on the region of origin, migrants' ethnicity and total capacity, because from the one hand they make up for the shortage of workers for low-skilled and low-paid jobs, from the other hand, it is necessary to limit the entry of disabled and low-educated migrants.

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