

Migration Sentiments, Social Justice and Inequality of the Assessment of the Far Eastern Border-Zone Students

Sentimientos migratorios, Justicia Social y Desigualdad de la Evaluación de los Estudiantes de la Zona Fronteriza del Extremo Oriente

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ABSTRACT:

This paper deals with the main results of a sociological research, the object of which are students studying at universities in the border-zone regions of the Russian Far East. The main attention is focused on the analysis of the migration sentiments of the Far Eastern students, the students' opinions regarding justice/injustice, equality/inequality in the field of education, labor and professional employment. The characteristics of the student assessments regarding social justice and inequality through the prism of poverty and wealth, through the relationship of the individual and society has been given. As basic methods, we used statistical tools and sociological analysis. The results of the study revealed a high migration activity of students. In addition, an analysis of the opinions of the Far Eastern border-zone students showed that a just society is a society that allows you to work and earn money; a society where equal opportunities for all are created.

Keywords: students, social justice, social inequality, poverty and wealth, migration, regional development, Far Eastern border-zone

RESUMEN:

Este artículo trata de los principales resultados de investigación sociológica, cuyo objeto son los estudiantes de las universidades de las regiones fronterizas del extremo Oriente de Rusia. La principal atención se centra en el análisis de los sentimientos de migración de los estudiantes del Lejano Oriente, sus opiniones con respecto a la justicia/la injusticia, la igualdad/la desigualdad en el ámbito de la educación, el trabajo y el empleo profesional. Se han dado las características de las evaluaciones de los estudiantes con respecto a la justicia social y la desigualdad a través del prisma de la pobreza y la riqueza y de la relación del individuo y la sociedad. Como métodos básicos, se utilizaron herramientas estadísticas y de análisis sociológico. Los resultados del estudio revelaron una alta actividad migratoria de los estudiantes. Además, un análisis de las opiniones de los estudiantes de la zona fronteriza del Extremo Oriente mostró que una sociedad justa es una sociedad que permite trabajar y ganar dinero y donde se crean oportunidades iguales para todos.

Palabras clave: estudiantes, justicia social, desigualdad social, pobreza y riqueza, migración, desarrollo regional, zona fronteriza del Extremo Oriente

1. Introduction

Modern global society is affected with social transformation, which is expressed in relatively quick, deep and high-quality transformations in all spheres of human life. In other words, social transformation is the process by which the society acquires new features that meet the calls of the times, changes in living standards, patterns of behavior and needs (*Kostina, Orlova & Panfilova,*

2018). Transformational processes are observed in both developed and developing countries, they are especially pronounced in the modern Russian society.

With the development of the Russian society in the context of social transformation, several basic characteristics that have a negative connotation may be distinguished. First of all, these are adverse changes in the level and quality of life of the population, combined with the ongoing deterioration of the state of the social infrastructure. In this regard, the aggravation of employment issues and widespread dissemination of additional (secondary) employment as a form of adaptation of the population to a dramatic decrease in the level of material well-being is by no means unimportant. There is an increase in the differentiation of the population and, as a consequence, a sharper stratification, leading to adverse changes in the social structure of the society. Consequently, the characteristics that we are currently observing in the social space of the Russian society are in a change in the ratio of groups and layers, their hierarchy and role functions, in deepening social inequality between them. And not all forms of inequality may be attributed to the category of "just", therefore the main task of the state and society is to ensure that these forms do not exceed certain "normal" limits. The "Norm" in this case "acts as an assessment of inequality that meets the conditions when almost the entire economically active population would have an opportunity to fully realize their potential, and the rest of the population would be provided with an acceptable standard of living" (Gladysheva & Stoyanov, 2016). Normal inequality creates incentives for productive competition and efficient use of resources for socio-economic development.

It should be added that the observed social transformations, processes of social inequality, relations of social justice significantly affect the generation of young people who face the complex issue of life's self-determination (Deeva & Kuzmich, 2011; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Bartram, 2013; Orlova, 2016; Simonyan, 2018; Retivina, 2019). The present and, to a greater extent, the future of our society depends on how Russian youth solves this problem. This is of particular importance in relation to the students whose professional and personal potential is formed largely by the institution of education. Student youth, demonstrating high aspirations in various spheres of life, considers the institution of higher education as the main way to achieve them. At the same time, the trends in the transformation of society - social polarization, a high level of anomie, shadow economy expansion processes, contradictions in the reform of the social institution of education create restrictions on the use of the students' potential (Kostina & Orlova, 2018). In this regard, the study of students' judgements and opinions regarding their understanding and interpretation of the issues in the field of social justice and inequality in the context of the changes taking place in Russia is of particular relevance.

These issues are even more significant in relation to the Far Eastern students.

The Far East is a very specific territorial entity of the Russian Federation. Almost all regions of the Russian Far East are port and border zones, some of them have direct access to the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The Russian Far East is removed as far as possible, on a Russian scale, from the European part of the country and the federal center.

Major investment projects are being implemented in the Far Eastern federal district: the development of oil and gas deposits in Sakhalin, wolfram deposits in the north of Primorye, the "East Siberia-Pacific Ocean" oil pipeline system, the creation of the "Zvezda" shipbuilding complex, the construction of the "Nakhodka-Vostochny" transport junction, and "Free Port of Vladivostok", etc. The border-zone regions of the Far East have a long coastline, many bays suitable for vessels calls, including ice-free ones, some of the bays are deep-sea. There is a powerful economic potential: seaports with a total cargo transshipment volume of 200,4 million tons in 2018 (Results of the work of the Russian seaports), aircraft-building, ship-repairing, instrument-making, car assembly, mechanical, mining enterprises, proceedings for the processing of biological land and sea resources, constructional materials, other enterprises.

At the same time, despite certain economic successes, a negative migration situation is still preserved in the regions of the Far Eastern border zone over the past five years (see table. 1).

Table 1
General results of the population migration in the regions of the Far Eastern border zone

Territorial subject	Migration gain (+) / loss (-) (pers.)				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Amur region	-6135	-4983	-4172	-3380	-3252
Jewish Autonomous region	-2196	-1933	-2088	-1675	-1953
Primorye Territory	-8811	-6178	-5197	-4452	-4946
Khabarovsk Territory	-2638	-5859	-6841	-4453	-4153

The data in table 1 show that in the specific conditions of the Far East, far from always the opportunities for the efficient use of human potential and labor resources are created. All this is in full and to the potential of student youth. In this regard, the research of migration sentiments, social justice and inequality through the prism of goals, students' life plans is fundamentally important for planning an efficient regional youth policy in the regions of the Far Eastern border zone and stopping the outflow of qualified personnel.

2. Methodology

In this context, we undertook a reconnaissance sociological research, the object of which are the students studying at universities in the Far Eastern border zone (Far Eastern Federal University – Vladivostok; Pacific National University – Khabarovsk; Amur State University – Blagoveshchensk; Sholem Aleichem Amur State University – Birobidzhan). The main goal of the research was to identify the migration sentiments of the Far Eastern students through the prism of perception of the social justice and inequality in the modern Russian society. The research was conducted in April-May 2019 by questionnaire survey, the sample volume made up 215 respondents. The sample population was calculated as follows. The total number of students in the selected universities is 42000 (Far Eastern Federal University – 21000; Pacific National University – 12000; Amur State University – 6500; Sholem Aleichem Amur State University – 2500). With a confidence probability (accuracy) of 85% and a confidence interval (error) of $\pm 5\%$, the required minimum sample size is 207 people. We interviewed 215 people in proportion to the percentage of students enrolled in our chosen universities (Far Eastern Federal University – 105 respondents; Pacific National University – 55 respondents; Amur State University – 35 respondents; Sholem Aleichem Amur State University – 20 respondents). The sampling procedure was based on the "available cases" method. First, spatial localization was carried out – the selection of border cities of the Russian Far East where universities are located, then the possibility of "access" to universities was determined, after that, student groups (clusters) were selected, which were then interviewed in a continuous manner.

3. Results

3.1. Migration Sentiments of the Far Eastern Border-Zone Students

In particular, in the course of the survey, we revealed the judgements and opinions of the students regarding their plans for choosing a place of residence, related conditions and factors. When answering the question "Do you plan to work in Russia or try to leave to work abroad after graduation?" the responds were distributed as follows: in any case, in Russia – 33,95%; it all depends on where they will offer a good job – 42,79%; in any case abroad – 7,44%; found it difficult to answer – 15,81%. The obtained data confirmed that the migration component was an essential element in the life plans of the Far Eastern students. In the group of potential migrants, 25,12% plan to go abroad for permanent residence. But many respondents (mainly those who chose the option "it all depends on where they offer a good job") intend to only work there under a contract or a temporary contract, and then return to Russia. For them, the Asia-Pacific countries, primarily China and South Korea are the main centers of attraction. A significant part of those who plan to stay in Russia after graduation from the university, but by no means the majority, intend to leave for the central part of Russia, most often in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Here are some illustrative examples of the life plans development: *"After studying, I think I'll move to St. Petersburg or Kaliningrad, and I can also go to Novorossiysk ... I have a specialty in the sea, I will be able to find work there ...", "I want to leave and that's it ... I am pissed off... They put and put in my car two cents (the respondent lives with her parents) ... And in Moscow I will not be with them on the hook. I want to prove that I'm worth something, I can do without their help."* The individual students plan gradual migration movements. For example, first moving to the European part of Russia, and then abroad. *"There was a school reunion ... Wherever and whoever even has not been ... Only I stay here ... After university I want to study further, a second higher education, languages are needed ... The main thing is to move, show oneself to advantage. If you have a good experience, you can go further - to Moscow, St. Petersburg, and then to Europe or America ... "*

3.2. Poverty and Wealth: Opinions and Judgements of the Far Eastern Border-Zone Students

In addition, we note the wide spread in the student environment of the commitments to a high standard of living, which include highly paid work, material well-being, a successful career, freedom and independence. According to the results of the researches conducted by us earlier, it was found that the Far Eastern border-zone students associate success in life with a guaranteed future, the presence of an interesting and beloved job, a solid position and wealth.

To this we can add that the current research described by us has shown the following. Upon reaching wealth, one of the most significant factors, the students surveyed consider having a good education (average score on a 5-point scale is 2,81; this is the third position in the rating after such options as "hard work" – 2,86 and "useful relations" – 3, 41). At the same time, students connect a good education not only with the level of teaching, acquired competencies, etc., but also with the justice of their knowledge assessment. The overwhelming majority of the respondents (61,86%) said that in school their studies were almost always assessed fairly. This correlates with the answers to the question about the final grades in the school certificate: 65,58% of the respondents indicated that they studied at "4" and "5". The same situation, according to our respondents' opinion, is preserved when assessing their knowledge at a university: 61,4% chose the option "in most cases, my studies are assessed fairly".

Analyzing the data on the determination of the causes of poverty and wealth, we can conclude that, most often, according to the students' opinion, the cause of poverty is excessive drinking, drug addiction, laziness and a lack of desire to work, poor conditions for education and growing up. In other words, the individual characteristics of people's behavior and the specifics of their socialization. And the rich, from the respondents' point of view, are not at all workaholics from good families, leading a healthy lifestyle; useful relations, industriousness, and good education lead them to wealth, as it has already been noted above. This is largely due to the fact that before the eyes of the modern students there is the experience of their parents, who achieved social well-being/found themselves in a situation of social ill-being in the period of 1990s – 2000s, when the differentiation of income and lifestyle reached a significant level. And those who "went around" had big earnings and a decent social status; and those who failed to adapt showed deviant forms of behavior and lifestyle. However, it should be noted that labor occupies a special place among the causes of both wealth and poverty. Such an answer option as "lack of desire to work" occupies the second position in the ranking of assessments of the causes of poverty. As well as "industriousness" occupies the corresponding (second) position in the ranking of assessments of the causes of wealth. Thus, labor and its activity are some of the important indicators of achieving a high personal and social status, removing barriers of the social inequality.

3.3. The Far Eastern Border-Zone Students about the Social Inequality

It should be noted that social inequality is also expressed in how just or unjust in Russia is the labor remuneration of the representatives of various professional and social groups. The students' opinions were distributed as follows (see table 2).

Table 2
Distribution of answers to the question "How just is the labor of the representatives of different professions and pensioners in our country remunerated?" (in %)

No	Social-professional categories	Receives much less, than deserves	Receives less, than deserves	Receives as much, as deserves	Receives more, than deserves	Receives much more, than deserves	Index
1	Federal Minister	1,08	1,08	11,29	31,72	54,84	0,691
2	Common officer in the local administration	0,00	4,12	24,23	42,27	29,38	0,485
3	Head of a large plant	0,00	3,24	52,97	35,68	8,11	0,243
4	Owner of a small grocery store	3,68	14,21	74,21	7,89	0,00	-0,068
5	University professor	15,35	42,08	37,62	3,47	1,49	-0,332
6	Common engineer in	10,55	53,77	35,68	0,00	0,00	-0,374

	a large plant						
7	Surgeon of a high qualification a city hospital	23,30	42,23	30,58	3,40	0,49	-0,422
8	Yard-keeper, cleaning the city streets	34,80	36,76	27,45	0,49	0,49	-0,525
9	Worker in a plant	32,51	53,20	13,79	0,49	0,00	-0,589
10	Doctor in a polyclinic	48,33	42,11	7,66	1,44	0,48	-0,682
11	Pensioner, having a forty-year working life	62,80	31,40	5,80	0,00	0,00	-0,785

(Was created by the authors)

The data in table 2 show that, on the one hand, the most unfair, according to the students' opinion, is the labor remuneration of the state and municipal employees. About half of the respondents believe that these categories of workers earn more/much more than they deserve.

On the other hand, our research shows the lack of the social justice also in the remuneration of the representatives of the socially significant professions (doctors, teachers, engineering and technical workers, etc.), pensioners and other weakly protected groups. On average, 60–90% of the responses expressed the opinion that they receive less/much less than they deserve.

The presence of a high social status due to the sphere of employment is important not only in the distribution of income, but also in various life situations. As a part of one of the research questions, the students were offered the following situation: five cars hit in the ice-slick. Three people were seriously injured – a federal high-level public official, the owner of a large trading company, and a worker of an agricultural enterprise, located nearby. Who do you think will be rescued first? Most of the respondents (71,63%) believe that in such a situation the official will have the right to primary assistance. The fact that the owner of the company will be rescued first was indicated by 18,6% of the respondents, and only 9,77% of the students surveyed said about the priority of saving the local worker.

According to the students' opinion, this "just" distribution is connected with the fact that in such cases everything is decided by relations (24,76%) and money (21,84%). Who else but an official has the opportunity to take advantage of both? The answers options to the question "in such cases, everything is decided by relations" and "in such cases, everything is decided by money" have a small gap (about 3%) in comparison with the all-Russian data, which include 31% and 21%, respectively. The least popular answer was "the doctors chose anyone" (3,88% of the respondents). Despite the fact that in this situation such a way of behavior of health workers would be quite probable, young people with great preference explained the situation through the prism of social inequality: the availability of large funds, relations, and priority in the society.

In a qualitative analysis of the category of independently suggested answer options explaining the reason for the doctors' behavior, the most popular answer is "you must rescue everyone, therefore, the choice depends on random factors or on who has a more/less chances to survive" (2 of 4). This option is also the most mentioned in the all-Russian indicators (17 references). Among the unique answers put forward by the Far Eastern students, one can single out the option "because at least in the survey I want to give hope to people who don't have a lot of money or do not have a high social position", which, in our opinion, demonstrates an explicit attitude towards the implementation of social justice lack thereof in the described situation.

The reaction to the national-ethnic component is of particular interest. Students were suggested the question of the following content: "It turned out that the injured are people of different nationalities: Russian, Dagestani and Jew. From your point of view, did this fact affect the decision of the doctors? "

The results of the answers to this question showed: 71,16% of the respondents believe that this fact would not affect the doctors' decision; 28,84% believe that nationality is of crucial significance in this case. The percentage ratio, in general, is correlated with the all-Russian indicators. However, it should be noted that most of the students in the Far Eastern border-zone study in a multicultural and multinational environment where positive images of inter-ethnic relations are sufficiently developed. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the residents of the Far East have

recently expressed some concerns regarding migrant workers on a national basis, as evidenced by the results of studies we conducted earlier (Vinokurova, Ardalyanova, Kostina, Orlova & Zhurbey, 2017).

Further, the respondents were asked a question regarding assessing their own behavior in this situation. So, the majority of the respondents (44,65%) consider it necessary, first of all, to rescue the one who is more likely to survive. The second most popular answer (33,95% of the respondents chose it) is "I would have acted according to medical instructions". It should be noted that, in answering the previous question, explaining the doctors' behavior, only 4,85% of the respondents indicated that "the doctors acted according to the instructions governing such situations". Such a "mirror" reflection can only indicate that, assessing their own behavior as just, the students note the injustice of the environment and the injustice of the society as a whole.

3.4. Just Society in Assessments of the Far Eastern Border-Zone Students

What should life be like in a just society? When answering this question, the respondents were offered several statements. Most students completely agree with the statement that "in a just society, people have different incomes, but equal opportunities for promotion." 47,44% of the respondents think so. Also, in general, the students agree with the statement that "in a just society, highly qualified specialists earn more than workers with low qualifications" (43,26%). The greatest number of negative answers received the statement that "in a fair society, all income is distributed equally among all citizens". Total disagreement with this statement was expressed by 28,84% of the respondents.

Also, for assessment of the level of social justice in modern Russia, the respondents were asked the question: "What feelings do you have when you think about how budget incomes are distributed in our state?". The highest frequency of references was recorded with regard to such emotional states as irritation (32,62%), despair (27,81%) and bitterness (21,39%); the smallest one was noted in relation to such feelings as calmness (5,65%) and optimism (9,63%).

Thus, the Far Eastern students do not consider the distribution of income in the modern Russian society to be just.

The modern Russian society in the judgments and assessments of students of the Far Eastern border-zone is a society of the "average justice", where pensioners still receive less than they deserve; and high-level public official, possessing a large number of relations and opportunities, receive an undeserved priority in all respects, even in obtaining the right to emergency rescue in the first place. The formation of such an opinion, from our point of view, is facilitated by the negative situation that has developed over recent years around high-level public officials and their activities (lurid criminal cases in connection with abuse of powers, resignation with the wording "in connection with the loss of trust", etc.).

4. Conclusions

In general, preliminary results of the research of the opinions of the Far Eastern border-zone students regarding the state and dynamics of social justice and inequality in the modern Russian society showed that a just society is a society that allows you to work and earn money; a society where equal opportunities for all are created, but those who study more, work more and bring more benefits to society, as well as achieve more. The analysis of assessments of the wealth and poverty causes allows us to conclude that one of the main components of overcoming social injustice is professional activity. This is a favorable trend, which demonstrates a fairly high potential of the modern students in the field of labor and employment, an active life position of young people.

Our study has also showed that in the current conditions of the Far East, it is especially important to conduct regular monitoring of the social well-being and migration sentiments of students. The object of monitoring should be not only universities, but also authorities, public organizations and other entities interacting with students. The researches of this kind would help to make a forecast of the life strategies of young people living in border-zone regions, which is crucial for planning state youth policy.

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